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## Career Adaptability and Unemployment Anxiety in Turkish Senior Undergraduate Students: The Mediating Role of Career Stress

*Üniversite Son Sınıfı Devam Eden Türk Öğrencilerde Kariyer Uyumluluğu ve İşsizlik Kaygısı:  
Kariyer Stresinin Aracı Rolü*

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to reveal the mediating role of career stress in the relationship between career adaptability and unemployment anxiety. A total of 410 senior undergraduate students, 308 females (73.7%) and 110 males (26.3%), participated in this study. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 36 years with a mean age of 22.25 (SD:1.87). The data were collected using the Personal Information Form, the Career Adaptability Scale, the Career Stress Scale, and the Unemployment Anxiety Scale. The fit of the model was assessed using the path analysis technique. Also, the bootstrapping analysis was performed to provide evidence for the significance of the mediating effect in the model. The findings of the research confirmed that career uncertainty and lack of information partially mediated the relationship between career discovery and unemployment anxiety. Furthermore, the findings revealed that career uncertainty, lack of information, and pressure of finding a job fully mediated the relationship between career plan and unemployment anxiety. The results were discussed in the framework of the literature and the recommendations were proposed.

**Article Information****Keywords**

Career Adaptability  
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**ÖZET**

Bu araştırmanın amacı, kariyer uyumluluğu ile işsizlik kaygısı arasındaki ilişkide kariyer stresinin aracılığını ortaya koymaktır. Araştırmaya 308'i kadın (%73.7), 110'u erkek (%26.3) olmak üzere toplam 410 son sınıf lisans öğrencisi katılmıştır. Katılımcıların yaşları 18 ile 36 arasında ( $\bar{X}=22.25$ ,  $SD=1.87$ ) değişmektedir. Veriler, Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Kariyer Uyumluluğu Ölçeği, Kariyer Stresi Ölçeği ve İşsizlik Kaygısı Ölçeği ile toplanmıştır. Modelin veri ile uyumu, yol analizi tekniği ile analiz edilmiştir. Ayrıca modeldeki aracılık etkisinin anlamlılığına ek kanıt sağlamak amacıyla bootstrapping analizi yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın bulguları kariyer keşfi ile işsizlik kaygısı arasındaki ilişkide kariyer belirsizliği ve bilgi eksikliğinin kısmi aracı olduğunu doğrulamıştır. Ayrıca, bulgular kariyer planı ile işsizlik kaygısı ilişkisinde kariyer belirsizliğinin, bilgi eksikliğinin ve iş bulma baskısının tam aracı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Sonuçlar, literatür çerçevesinde tartışılmıştır ve öneriler geliştirilmiştir.

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**Ethical Statement:** The research was reviewed and approved by the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University (01.06.2020-2020/09).

## INTRODUCTION

According to Turkey Statistical Institute (2019), unemployed is used for all persons “who have used at least one of the job search channels in the last three months to look for a job from those who are not employed within the reference period and are able to start work within two weeks”. Unemployment is a social issue that was centralized in the literature for its relation to mental health (Helpman, 2010). In a recent study by Shah (2019), the participants reported that unemployment affects wide-ranging areas of their lives, including worsened physical health, increased difficulties with stress management, a reduced sense of self-control, and identity confusion. In another study, Paul and Moser (2009) studied the role of unemployment on mental health with meta-analytic methods across 237 cross-sectional and 87 longitudinal studies. Based on the meta-analyses of longitudinal studies and natural experiments, they reported that unemployment is not only correlated to distress but also causes it. A longitudinal study on unemployment, conducted by Hammarström and Janlert (1997), revealed that unemployment correlated positively with changes in nervous complaints and depressive symptoms.

Anxiety refers to negatively evaluated thoughts and images associated with potential threats or dangers (Borkovec, 1985), high negative affect related to a sense of uncontrollability (Barlow, 1988) that disrupts one's ability to function in the tasks of daily living (Emilien et al., 2002). Most people experience anxiety from time to time. However, unemployment, which is one of the biggest problems of our age, and the inadequacy of the work causes the undergraduate students to worry about not being able to find a job for the workforce who is underemployed for a lower wage or has to work in a job outside of their profession (Tekin & Korkmaz, 2016). Unemployment anxiety is defined as a state of despair and hopelessness in the individual's expectation of not being able to find a job and the state of being hopeless and anxious about his future (Kırcı, 2010). Several factors affect unemployment anxiety. For example, Tekin and Korkmaz (2016) reported, based on the findings of the study on university students in Turkey, that undergraduate students have unemployment anxiety caused by sub-dimensions of employment difficulties in the economy, personal pessimism and lack of self-confidence, environmental and social outlook, and lack of qualitative knowledge and skills. On the other hand, career adaptability was proposed as a protective related factor to unemployment anxiety in this study.

### **Career Adaptability and Unemployment Anxiety**

There are various definitions in the literature on career adaptability. For example; Creed et al. (2009) conceptualized career adaptability as a structure that includes factors such as individuals investigating themselves and their current opportunities, planning future career activities, choosing the best possible opportunities, and being good decision-makers in terms of managing personal or environmental factors. In another definition, career adaptability is defined as certain competence indicator that affects individuals' ability to adapt themselves to changing and unpredictable environmental conditions (Rottinghaus et al., 2005). When these definitions are examined, career adaptability is a psycho-social resource that includes a variety of competencies that enable individuals to cope with unpredictable environmental variables. These competencies are considered factors that constitute career adaptability (Savickas, 2013).

There are two approaches in the literature regarding the factors that comprise career adaptability. The first one is Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 1997, Savickas, 2005, Savickas, 2013), which explains career adaptability in the context of adaptability. In this theory, career adaptability is considered as a

structure consisting of four adaptation skills including concern, confidence, curiosity, and control (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Career concern refers to the ability of individuals to plan. Career confidence reflects the self-efficacy levels of individuals. Career curiosity is individuals' investigation about themselves and their environment. Career control, on the other hand, shows individuals' ability to make decisions and take responsibility (Savickas, 2005). Individuals increase their career adaptability by using these four adaptation skills (Eryılmaz & Kara, 2018). The second approach considers career adaptability in two dimensions (Han & Rojewski, 2015). The first dimension of career adaptability is career exploration, which shows individuals discovering themselves and their profession. The second dimension is career plan, which reflects individuals' determination of future goals. This study is based on two dimensions of career adaptability.

There is little research on the relationship between career adaptability and unemployment anxiety in the literature. A study was conducted by Kara et al., (2019) showed that career adaptability of senior university students is an important variable in reducing their unemployment anxiety. The results of the study by Vignoli (2015) also showed that adolescents' career exploration was positively and significantly related to general trait anxiety and career anxiety. Based on the findings of these studies, career adaptability was considered as an important individual characteristic affecting unemployment anxiety in the current study.

### **The Mediating Role of Career Stress**

Throughout their lives, individuals experience stress in the face of life events that they cannot predict, control, or consider as an overload (Cohen et al., 1983). Based on Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress model including a relational and process-oriented definition of stress, career stress is conceptualized as "a dynamic interaction between the individual and the environment that is appraised by the individual as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and jeopardizing his or her wellness" (Choi et al., 2011).

Literature review reveals that there are some studies revealing that career adaptability and career stress are related. For example, Yun (2016) found that career adaptability is a factor affecting career stress. The results of the study conducted by Stoltz et al. (2013) also showed that there is a significant and negative relationship between career adaptability and coping with stress. Fiori et al. (2015) found that career adaptability is an important variable that predicts career stress. Based on the results of the study, they concluded that since the individuals with high career adaptability experienced less negative affect they have lower levels of stress.

### **The Current Study**

Literature review shows that decrease in unemployment anxiety positively related to psychological well-being and cognitive flexibility of individuals (Alioat & El Keshky, 2020), career adaptability and career desires (Kara et al., 2019), mental health (Paul & Moser, 2006), self-esteem (Kıcır, 2010) and psychological resilience (Taşgın et al., 2017). Choi and Lee (2013) reported that unemployment stress of undergraduate students positively related to physical and mental health problems and negatively correlated with self-esteem. The authors also found that senior grade is the factor affecting unemployment stress.

In line with the above-mentioned research and findings, it is considered that the development of a model that addresses unemployment anxiety in terms of a personal and psychological context can contribute to both career development and mental health development of individuals. In Turkey, due to the high unemployment and the complexity of businesses, while the individuals tend to explore various career opportunities, they also face difficulties in finding satisfying and longer-term jobs (Konstam et al. 2015).

The findings of this study can facilitate the training of individuals who can structure their careers in a healthy and productive way and have mental health integrity. In addition, their mental health can be strengthened in terms of both raising awareness and regulating their emotions so that they are aware of their own potential and use it at the highest level. In this way, the goals of individuals to realize themselves as happier and more productive individuals and to reach successful and competent human resources that will contribute to society can be realized. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the mediating role of career stress in the relationship between career adaptability and unemployment anxiety. For this purpose, the hypotheses described below were developed and a hypothetical model was proposed (Figure 1).

Hypothesis 1. Career exploration, which is one of the career adaptability dimensions, significantly predicts career stress dimensions (career ambiguity, external conflict, and employment pressure).

Hypothesis 2. Career plan, which is one of the dimensions of career adaptability, significantly predicts career stress dimensions (career ambiguity, external conflict, and employment pressure).

Hypothesis 3. Career stress dimensions (career ambiguity, external conflict, and employment pressure) significantly predict unemployment anxiety.

Hypothesis 4. Career discovery, which is one of the career adaptability dimensions, significantly predicts unemployment anxiety.

Hypothesis 5. Career stress dimensions (career ambiguity, external conflict, and employment pressure) have a mediating effect between career exploration and unemployment anxiety.

Hypothesis 6. Career stress dimensions (career ambiguity, external conflict, and employment pressure) have a mediating effect between career plan and unemployment anxiety.

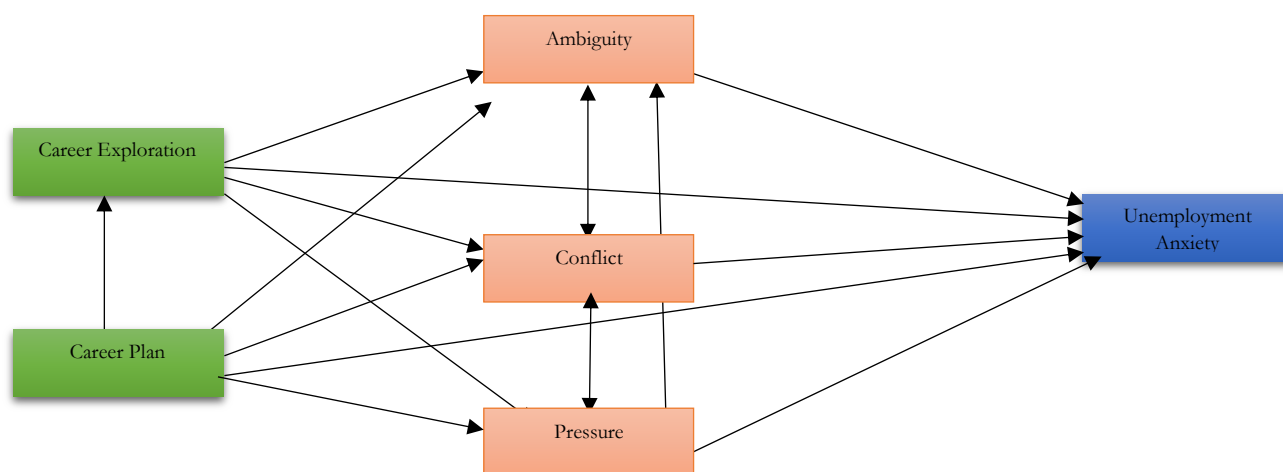


Figure 1. Hypothesized Model

## METHOD

### Participants and Procedure

A total of 410 undergraduates (senior students) participated in the study. Of these students 308 (73.7%) participants were women and 110 (26.3%) participants were male. The convenient sampling was used to choose the participants of the study. Cohen et al. (2011) stated that convenience sampling refers to “choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing that process until the required

sample size has been obtained or those who happen to be available and accessible at the time” (p. 155). The participants of this study were the senior students enrolled in the Faculty of Education of a university located in Antalya, Turkey. The age range of the students is 18-36 and the mean age is 22.25 (SD: 1.87). The data were collected in classroom settings by the researchers in the 2019-2020 second term. All students voluntarily participated in the study.

### **Ethical Statement**

The authors declare that they continue to work in this study in accordance with scientific work ethics and Helenski declaration. In addition, the participants participated in the research voluntarily. Accordingly, the research was reviewed and approved by the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University (01.06.2020-2020/09).

### **Measures**

***Personal Information Form.*** The form was created by the researchers to get personal information (age, gender, education program, grade) about the participants.

***Career Adaptability Scale (CAS).*** The CAS was developed by Eryılmaz and Kara (2016). It consists of 10 items and two dimensions including career exploration and career plan. The increase in the scores is an indicator of higher career adaptability. The exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis methods were used for the factor structure of the scale. In the exploratory factor analysis, the total explained variance was found to be 55.87%. Also, the results of the confirmatory factor analysis were showed that the two-factor model had high fit indexes ( $\chi^2/df$  70.75/34= 2.08; GFI=.94, CFI=.98, AGFI=.90, NFI=.95 ve RMSEA= .07) (Eryılmaz & Kara, 2016). Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient was found as .85. The results of the reliability analysis conducted in this study; it was calculated as .79 for career plan, .89 for career discovery, and .90 for the whole scale.

***Career Stress Inventory (CSI).*** The CSI was created by Choi et al. (2011) to measure career-related stress sources and experiences of university students. The original scale consists of 20 items and 4 factors (career ambiguity, lacking information, employment pressure, external conflict). The adaptation study of the scale to Turkish was carried out by Özden and Sertel-Berk (2017). Exploratory factor analysis was conducted within the scope of the construct validity of the Turkish form of scale, and as a result, a 3-factor structure that explains 64.7% of the total variance and called "career ambiguity and lack of information", "external conflict" and "employment pressure " was revealed (20 items). The internal consistency coefficient of the Turkish version of the CSI scale and the factors were calculated between .83 and .94 (Özden & Sertel-Berk, 2017). In this study, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of the scale and the factors were found between .83 and .94.

***Unemployment Anxiety Level Test (UALT).*** The UALT was created by Tekin (2015) to measure the unemployment levels of the individuals. It consists of 26 items and four factors. In this study, the unemployment anxiety levels of individuals were measured by taking the total score of UALT. It can be evaluated that the unemployment anxiety levels of individuals increase with the increase of the scores obtained from UALT. The exploratory factor analysis technique was used in the validity study by Tekin (2015). In the exploratory factor analysis, the factor loads of the scale varied between 0.41 and 0.74, and the variance explained was 47.43%. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the total scale was found .90 (Tekin, 2015). In this study, it was calculated as .92.



## Validity and Reliability Analysis for Measures within The Current Study

In this study, the validity and reliability analyses of the measurements were also conducted. Internal consistency coefficient was used in the reliability analysis. Validity analysis was examined using the confirmatory factor analysis technique. The results of these analyses were presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Validity and reliability analysis of measures**

Parameter	CAS	CSI	UALT
$\chi^2/sd$	4.32	4.89	3.54
RMSEA	0.08	0.09	0.07
NFI	0.93	0.85	0.81
CFI	0.95	0.87	0.86
GFI	0.93	0.82	0.80
TLI	0.93	0.86	0.84
RFI	0.91	0.83	0.80
IFI	0.95	0.87	0.86
Cronbach's Alpha	0.90	0.94	0.92

CAS: Career Adaptability Scale; CSI: Career Stress Inventory; UALT: Unemployment Anxiety Level Test

## Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the mediating role of career stress in the relationship between career adaptability and unemployment anxiety. For this purpose, the hypothetical model was tested by the path analysis. Standardized path coefficients and goodness of fit indexes were used to determine the fit of the model with the data. In this study,  $\chi^2$ ,  $\chi^2/df$  ratio, GFI, CFI, NFI, AGFI, and RMSEA values were examined. The model was evaluated according to the fit index criteria recommended by Schermelleh-Engel et al. (2003) (Table 4).

A mediation test was also performed in the model. For this purpose, the stages of testing mediation suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) were taken into account. In addition, bootstrapping analysis was conducted to provide additional evidence for the significance of the mediating effect in the model. In the bootstrapping analysis, 1000 bootstrap, indirect path coefficient, and confidence intervals were created (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). In the bootstrapping analysis, the fact that the indirect path coefficient confidence intervals do not contain zero shows that the mediating effect is significant (Hayes, 2017).

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Findings

The descriptive statistics regarding the observed variables in the hypothesized model within the scope of this study are given in Table 2. The outcome variable for the hypothesized model is unemployment anxiety. Total scores obtained from the Unemployment Anxiety Scale constitute the observed variable of unemployment anxiety. The predictor variable is career adaptability. Career adaptability has two observed variables: "career exploration" and "career plan". The mediator variable is career stress. Career stress is represented by three observed variables: "career ambiguity and lack of information", "external conflict" and "employment pressure."

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the variables in the model**

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skew.	Kurt.
Unemployment Anxiety	418	32.00	125.00	76.23	20.30	.00	-.58
Career Exploration	418	6.00	30.00	24.52	4.76	-1.46	2.64
Career Plan	418	4.00	20.00	14.93	3.22	-.69	.49
Career Ambiguity/Lack of Information	418	10.00	60.00	25.32	11.68	.77	-.13
External Conflict	418	4.00	24.00	9.91	5.16	.76	-.30
Employment Pressure	418	6.00	36.00	22.68	7.27	-.16	-.71

The skewness and kurtosis values given in Table 2 are within the limits of multivariate normality assumptions. Finney and Distefano (2006) state that multivariate normality assumptions are met if the skewness value is not greater than +/- 2 and the kurtosis value is not greater than +/- 7. Based on these results, it was concluded that the scores did not show a significant deviation from the normal distribution.

### The Correlations among Career Adaptability, Career Stress, and Unemployment Anxiety

The relationships among career adaptability, career stress, and unemployment anxiety were analyzed with Pearson correlation coefficient analysis. The findings from the correlation analysis are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Pearson correlation coefficients related to research variables**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Unemployment Anxiety	1					
2. Career Adaptability (Career Exploration)	-.371**	1				
3. Career Adaptability (Career Plan)	-.356**	.663**	1			
4. Career Stress (Career Ambiguity/LI)	.672**	-.503**	-.487**	1		
5. Career Stress (External Conflict)	.550**	-.311**	-.294**	.697**	1	
6. Career Stress (Employment Pressure)	.742**	-.239**	-.307**	.640**	.539**	1

\*\* $p < .01$ ; LI: Lack of Information

As presented in Table 3, there are significant relationships among all observed variables. The highest correlation coefficient was found to be high and positive ( $r = .742, p < .01$ ) between the employment pressure and unemployment anxiety. On the other hand, the lowest correlation coefficient was found to be low and negative ( $r = -.239, p < .01$ ) between career exploration and the employment pressure.

### Mediation Analysis

The purpose of this study is to test the mediating role of career stress in the relationship between career adaptability and unemployment anxiety. As a result of the path analysis conducted for this purpose, the standardized path coefficients of the hypothetical model are presented in Figure 2. The path analysis results of the hypothetical model are also presented in Table 4.

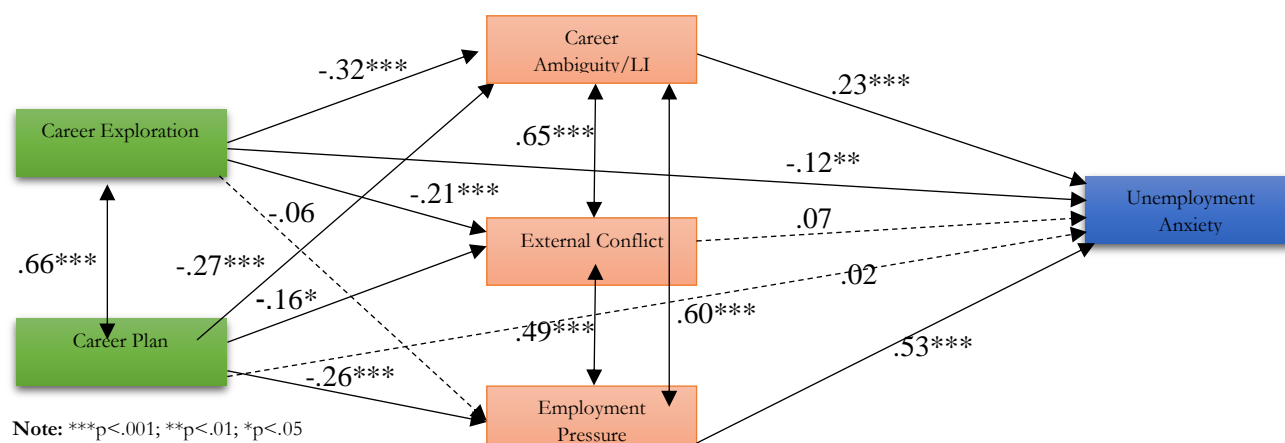


Figure 2. Standardized path coefficients of the hypothetical model

Table 4. Path analysis results of the hypothetical model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Career Ambiguity/LI	<---	Career Exploration	-.789	.135	-5.850	***
External Conflict	<---	Career Exploration	-.224	.067	-3.357	***
Career Ambiguity/LI	<---	Career Plan	-.991	.199	-4.972	***
External Conflict	<---	Career Plan	-.250	.099	-2.533	.011
Employment Pressure	<---	Career Plan	-.598	.141	-4.253	***
Employment Pressure	<---	Career Exploration	-.097	.095	-1.018	.309
Employment Anxiety	<---	Career Ambiguity/LI	.403	.090	4.476	***
Employment Anxiety	<---	Employment Pressure	1.487	.111	13.361	***
Employment Anxiety	<---	External Conflict	.277	.167	1.660	.097
Employment Anxiety	<---	Career Exploration	-.501	.179	-2.796	.005
Employment Anxiety	<---	Career Plan	.120	.260	.463	.644

\*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; LI: Lack of Information

As presented in Table 4, the path analysis results showed that some paths were not statistically significant. Accordingly, non-meaningful ways paths were excluded from the analysis, and the analysis was repeated.

Goodness of fit index values of the final model obtained after repeating the analysis were  $\chi^2(3, N = 418) = 4.09$ ,  $p > .05$ ;  $\chi^2/sd = 1.36$ ; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; NFI = .99; AGFI = .97; RMSEA = .03 (90% confidence interval for RMSEA = .000-.093). The model was evaluated according to the fit index criteria recommended by Schermelleh-Engel et al. (2003). These values are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The goodness of fit indices of the final model

Goodness of Fit Indices	Goodness of Fit	Values of the Model	Fit
p value	.05 < p ≤ 1.00	p=.25	Good fit
$\chi^2/sd$	0 ≤ $\chi^2/sd$ ≤ 2	1.36	Good fit
RMSEA	0 ≤ RMSEA ≤ .05	.03	Good fit
GFI	.95 ≤ CFI ≤ 1.00	.99	Good fit
CFI	.97 ≤ CFI ≤ 1.00	.99	Good fit
NFI	.95 ≤ NFI ≤ 1.00	.99	Good fit
AGFI	.90 ≤ AGFI ≤ 1.00	.97	Good fit

As presented in Table 5, the goodness of fit index values of the final model revealed that the model has a perfect fit with the data. Standardized path coefficients of the final model are shown in Figure 3. The path analysis results of the final model are presented in Table 6.



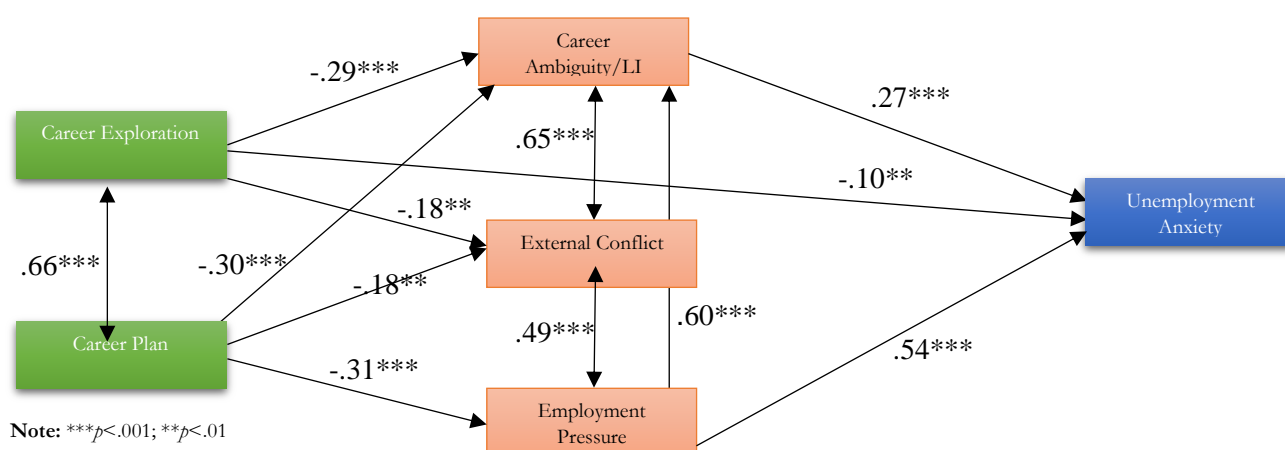


Figure 3. Standardized path coefficients of the final model

Standardized path coefficients of the final model are presented in Figure 3. The results showed that one-unit increase in career exploration reduces individuals' career ambiguity/lack of information with 0.29 units ( $t = -6.55$ ;  $p < .001$ ). One-unit increase in career exploration decreases external conflict with 0.18 unit ( $t = -3.28$ ;  $p < .01$ ). One-unit increase in career exploration decreases unemployment anxiety with 0.10 unit ( $t = -2.99$ ;  $p < .01$ ). One-unit increase in career plan reduces individuals' career ambiguity/lack of information with 0.30 units ( $t = -5.86$ ;  $p < .001$ ). However, a one-unit increase in career plan decreases external conflict with 0.18 units ( $t = -3.03$ ;  $p < .01$ ). In addition, one-unit increase in career plan decreases employment pressure with 0.31 unit ( $t = -6.57$ ;  $p < .001$ ). On the other hand, one-unit increase in career ambiguity/lack of information increases unemployment anxiety with 0.27 units ( $t = 6.16$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Also, one-unit increase in employment pressure increases unemployment anxiety with 0.54 units ( $t = 13.81$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

Table 6. Path analysis results of the final model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Career Ambiguity/LI	<---	Career Exploration	-.706	.108	-6.550	***
Career Ambiguity/LI	<---	Career Plan	-1.072	.183	-5.861	***
Employment Pressure	<---	Career Plan	-.693	.105	-6.578	***
External Conflict	<---	Career Exploration	-.191	.058	-3.281	,001
External Conflict	<---	Career Plan	-.283	.093	-3.032	,002
Employment Anxiety	<---	Career Ambiguity/LI	.474	.077	6.162	***
Employment Anxiety	<---	Employment Pressure	1.513	.110	13.818	***
Employment Anxiety	<---	Career Exploration	-.444	.148	-2.993	,003

\*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; LI: Lack of Information

### The Mediation of Career Stress in the Relationship Between Career Adaptability and Unemployment Anxiety

In this section, the mediating role of career stress in the relationship between career adaptability and unemployment anxiety was tested. The stages of testing mediation suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) were taken into account in this study. First, the mediating role of career ambiguity/lack of information in the relationship between career exploration and unemployment anxiety was investigated. The results showed that the direct effect of career exploration on unemployment anxiety ( $\beta: -.37$ ;  $t = -8.15$ ) was significant ( $p < .001$ ). When career ambiguity/lack of information is entered in this relationship, the effect of career exploration on unemployment anxiety ( $\beta: -.10$ ;  $t = -2.99$ ) decreases but the p-value is significant ( $p < .01$ ). This finding confirms that career ambiguity/lack of information partially mediated the

relationship between career exploration and unemployment anxiety. Second, the mediating role of career ambiguity/lack of information and employment pressure in the relationship between career plan and unemployment anxiety was tested. The results showed that the direct effect of career plan on unemployment anxiety ( $\beta$ : -.36;  $t = -7.77$ ) was found to be significant ( $p < .001$ ). When career ambiguity/lack of information and unemployment pressure were entered in this model, the effect decreases ( $\beta$ : .02;  $t = 0.55$ ) and the p-value becomes meaningless ( $p > .05$ ). According to this finding, it was concluded that career ambiguity/lack of information and unemployment pressure are full mediators in the relationship between career plan and unemployment anxiety.

### Significance of Indirect Effects – Bootstrapping

In Table 7, the indirect path coefficients and confidence intervals in the bootstrapping test were presented.

**Table 7. Bootstrap test results for career stress**

Model pathway	Bootstrap values		Bias %95CI	
	( $\beta$ )	SE	Lower	Upper
<b>Indirect effect</b>				
Career Exploration → Career Ambiguity/LI → Unemployment Anxiety	-.07	.01	-.11	-.05
Career Plan → Career Ambiguity/LI and Unemployment Pressure → Unemployment Anxiety	-.24	.03	-.32	-.17

Note. Bootstrap is based on 1,000 resamples (Hayes, 2009).  $\beta$  = Standardized coefficients. SE: Standard error, \* $p < .05$ .

The fact that the indirect path coefficient confidence intervals in the bootstrapping test do not contain zero indicates that the mediating effect is significant. The results of the bootstrapping test showed that the partial mediating role of career ambiguity/lack of information was found to be significant in the relationship between career exploration and unemployment anxiety ( $b = -.24$ , 95% CI = -.32, -.17). In addition, it was revealed that career ambiguity/lack of information and unemployment pressure had a significant mediating role in the relationship between career plan and unemployment anxiety ( $b = -.07$ , 95% CI = -.11, -.05).

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study showed that the hypothesized model which aimed to explain unemployment anxiety of university senior students was confirmed. The fit indices and standardized path coefficients obtained in the study revealed that the final path model was statistically significant. The results of the direct effects of the model showed that career exploration (the factor of career adaptability), career ambiguity/lack of information (the factor of career stress) significantly predicted external conflict. In addition, career exploration was found to be a significant predictor of unemployment anxiety. Career plan, (the other factor of career adaptability) was found to significantly predict career ambiguity/lack of information, external conflict, and employment pressure (the factors of career stress). Finally, it was found that career ambiguity/lack of information and employment pressure (the factors of career stress) predicted unemployment anxiety significantly. The results of the indirect effects of the model showed that career ambiguity/lack of information partially mediated career exploration and unemployment anxiety. In addition, career ambiguity/lack of information and employment pressure fully mediated the relationship between career plan and unemployment anxiety.

## **Career Adaptability and Employment Anxiety**

The findings of the current study showed that career adaptability correlated negatively with employment anxiety. We haven't met any studies in the literature that show the relationship between career adaptability and employment anxiety. However, there are some similar studies in the literature. For example, the recent study by Jia et al. (2020) provided evidence that career adaptability and general anxiety negatively correlated and both these variables mediated the relationship between future time perspective and career decision making-difficulty on undergraduates. Pouyaud et al. (2012) also found negative relationships between career adaptability and general anxiety on 11th-grade students. On the other hand, in a study by Maggiori et al. (2013) on a sample of employed and unemployed adults (N=2002), adaptability resources were found to be positively related to both general and professional well-being. In another similar study, Konstam et al. (2015) found a positive correlation between career adaptability and life satisfaction on a sample of unemployed emerging adults. These studies confirmed the relationship between career adaptability and employment anxiety. Moreover, university students are in the critical stage for their future careers. Without career adaptability students can become anxious about their employment. The results of the study by Tsai et al. (2017) indicate that if university students experience uncertainty about their career choices, abilities, and interests and what types of jobs suit them, they may be anxious about their career undecidedness. Career adaptability is an important psycho-social resource including a variety of competencies that enable individuals to cope with unpredictable environmental variables (Savickas, 2013). Our findings are consistent with prior studies.

## **The Mediating Role of Career Stress**

This study also revealed that career adaptability and career stress negatively correlated. This finding is consistent with the studies in which a negative relationship was found between these variables. For example, Fiori et al. (2015) reported that individuals higher on career adaptability experienced less negative affect, which led to lower levels of stress. A meta-analysis study by Rudolph et al. (2017), reported that career adaptability is related to the measures of adaptation results including stress. In another study, Yun (2016) found a significant relationship between career adaptability and career stress on a sample of college students. Furthermore, Creed et al. (2009) examined the relationship between career adaptability and career concerns on 245 first-year university students and found that decisionmaking and self-exploration (the dimensions of career adaptability) were negatively associated with career concerns of university students. These findings are consistent with our study. These results suggest that university students with higher career adaptability have lower career stress. In the relationship between career adaptability and career stress, self-regulatory mechanisms are important as they are activated in times of stress, change, or when confronted with career challenges (Creed et al. 2009).

One of the hypotheses of the study is that career stress and unemployment anxiety are related variables. This finding confirmed the findings of the study by Kıcır (2017) which revealed a significant relationship between sub-dimensions of the stress symptoms and unemployment anxiety. Herr (1989) stated that unemployment are reflected in behaviors which suggest various problems in mental illness. The findings of the current study show that high career stress is associated with high unemployed anxiety. In this relationship, career ambiguity which was found to be a dimension of career stress has a crucial role on anxiety stemming from not knowing exactly what to do in the future (Choi & Lee, 2013).

## Implications and Limitations

In the light of the relevant literature and based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the senior undergraduate students with career adaptability have a low-level of stress, thus they have a lower level of unemployment anxiety. This study examining the mediating role of career stress in the relationship between career adaptability and unemployment anxiety of undergraduate students has some limitations. One limitation of the study is that the participants were selected using the convenience sampling method. Similar studies on different samples can increase the generalizability of the research findings. Another limitation of the research is that the study is carried out in a cross-sectional design. Hence, further longitudinal and experimental studies are required in the context of cause and effect. Based on the mediation model found significant in this study, further research is also recommended to establish the paths for researchers in career counseling. The dimensions of this model can be considered as an important source in defining the problems of the clients, finding reasons and, intervention studies for career counselors. Also, the dimensions of this model for researchers can be a guide in experimental design studies to develop unemployment anxiety prevention programs. This research was designed in a quantitative design. In future research, qualitative research can be conducted in order to gather in-depth information to discover the causes of unemployment anxiety processes and the factors that may be effective.

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### **Author Contribution**

This study was conducted by all the authors working together and cooperatively. All of the authors substantially contributed to this work in each step of the study.

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It has been reported by the authors that there is no conflict of interest.

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This study was completed in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration. In line with this, the study was permitted by Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University, Human Research Ethics Committee.

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