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Research paper



The Effect of Future Anxiety on Academic Motivation Behavior among University Students: A Study on Tourism Students

Cihan Yilmaz [1], Fatma Uyar [2] *

[1] Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, Doğuş University Istanbul, Türkiye
[2] Department of Medical Documentation and Secretarial Program, Doğuş University Istanbul, Türkiye
**Corresponding author E-mail: fuyar@dogus.edu.tr*

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the effect of future anxiety on academic motivation among university students and to reveal how this relationship differs particularly in the context of tourism students. Due to its structural uncertainties, job insecurity, and seasonality, the tourism sector increases students' future-related anxieties, which in turn play a decisive role in their academic motivation behaviors. The significance of the research lies in addressing students' psychological and academic processes together, thereby providing data that may contribute to educational policies, guidance services, and sectoral practices. A quantitative research method was employed, and a survey was administered to 398 students enrolled in tourism departments of universities in Türkiye. The findings indicate that students experience a considerable level of future anxiety while simultaneously maintaining high levels of academic motivation. According to the analysis results, future anxiety has a significant and strong effect on academic motivation. Significant differences were observed with respect to income level, while no significant differences were found regarding gender. In conclusion, future anxiety emerges as a critical factor directly influencing the academic orientations of tourism students. This highlights the necessity of strengthening career planning support in universities and developing practices aimed at reducing inequalities based on income level. The findings of the study are expected to contribute to educational policies and sectoral practices.

Keywords: *Future Anxiety; Academic Motivation; Tourism Students; University Youth.*

1. Introduction

In contemporary society, accessing information, personal development, and achieving social status have become largely dependent on academic success. University education, in particular, emerges as a critical period during which individuals establish their professional identity, experience independent living practices, and concretize their future plans. However, the social, economic, and academic responsibilities accompanying this period may lead to various psychological pressures on the individual. In this context, one of the psychological conditions frequently encountered among university students and directly affecting academic life is future anxiety. Future anxiety is the feeling of concern, fear, and uncertainty that an individual experiences regarding events that have not yet occurred but are assumed to potentially yield negative outcomes at a mental level [1]. While the Turkish Language Association [2] defines anxiety as "worry, sadness, thought causing concern," Köknel [3] associates the origin of anxiety with the ancient Greek concept of "anxietas" indicating that it is a structure encompassing emotions such as fear, curiosity, and restlessness. Anxiety is a complex psychological response that emerges when an individual perceives an internal or environmental threat, involving the coordinated functioning of mental and physical processes [4]. According to Kula and Saraç [5], this condition represents an intense state of arousal that the individual finds difficult to inhibit.

The neurotic anxiety type defined by Freud is related to the perception of threat that an individual develops based on mental representations rather than reality [6]. In this context, future anxiety predominantly forms through the individual's mental construction of potential threats and the development of emotional and cognitive stimulation against these threats. According to Öztürk and Uluşahin [7], this type of anxiety has the potential to render the individual's mental functioning dysfunctional. Multilayered expectations such as identity development, career choice, establishing independent living, and internalizing social roles lead to the intense experience of future anxiety, especially among individuals in late adulthood, such as university students [8] [9] The high proportion of young population in Turkey, increasing unemployment rates after university graduation, and economic instability are structural factors that deepen future anxiety among university students. According to TUİK [10] data, youth unemployment rates exceeding 25% reinforce feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness among young people. Indeed, Kula and Saraç's [5] study revealed that university students' trait anxiety levels are moderate, with significant variations based on variables such as gender, income level, and accommodation status. At this point, the impact of future anxiety on students is not limited to the psychological level but directly affects cognitive and academic processes. It poses a serious threat particularly

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to academic motivation, which is shaped by elements such as an individual's participation in the learning process, level of effort, and determination to achieve success.

Motivation, derived from the Latin word "movere" (to move), encompasses the mental and emotional processes that initiate, sustain, and direct an individual's behaviors [11] [12]. Academic motivation refers to the educational context of this process, expressing the aspect related to the student's interest in academic tasks, effort, and determination toward goal achievement [13] [14]. Vallerand and Bissonnette [15] examined academic motivation in three dimensions: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. In intrinsic motivation, individuals derive pleasure from learning itself, while in extrinsic motivation, learning occurs in relation to external expectations such as rewards, grades, or approval. Amotivation refers to the state where an individual cannot derive either intrinsic or extrinsic satisfaction from any learning activity. In this case, individuals may develop feelings of inadequacy, loss of control, and helplessness.

In individuals who intensely experience future anxiety, mental resources are directed toward threat perception, which significantly complicates the student's ability to focus on academic tasks. Symptoms frequently observed in this process include weakening of beliefs about academic performance, distractibility, learned helplessness, avoidance of academic responsibilities, decreased effort level, and reduced intrinsic motivation [16] [1]. The perception of uncertainty about the future negatively affects not only students' achievement of success goals but also fundamental psychological processes such as enjoying the learning process, feeling competent in the academic field, and identifying with long-term career goals. In this context, future anxiety is considered a directly determining variable in university students' level of academic motivation; this situation threatens both individual development and the quality of educational outcomes. Therefore, the development of individual protective factors such as psychological resilience, self-efficacy belief, and academic self-concept, and the systematic strengthening of guidance and psychological counseling services in university environments play a critical role in helping students cope with such anxieties [17] [18] [5].

Although future anxiety has predominantly been conceptualized in the literature as a negative psychological state that undermines academic motivation and learning engagement, empirical findings regarding its functional role remain inconclusive. Most existing studies emphasize the debilitating effects of anxiety, while relatively little attention has been paid to contexts in which future-oriented concerns may operate as a motivating force. In fields characterized by high levels of structural uncertainty, such as tourism education, future anxiety may not only hinder academic functioning but also stimulate greater effort, persistence, and goal-oriented behavior as a strategy to cope with perceived career risks. However, empirical evidence examining this potential facilitative role of future anxiety, particularly within the context of tourism students in Türkiye, remains limited. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the effect of future anxiety on academic motivation behavior among university students, with a specific focus on tourism students.

The primary aim of the study is to analyze the effect of future anxiety on academic motivation behavior in university students and to reveal how this relationship shows differentiation particularly in the context of tourism students. Since the tourism sector is structurally characterized by uncertainties such as temporary workforce employment, seasonality, income fluctuations, and lack of job security, students studying in this field are likely to have higher anxiety levels in their post-graduation career perspectives. Additionally, tourism students' expectations of success based on service-oriented skill development, internship, and practical experience in their educational processes can make the relationship between future anxiety and academic motivation more complex and meaningful at both individual and sectoral levels. Within this framework, it is thought that the findings obtained through empirical study will provide concrete contributions to the development of service field-based psychological support programs in universities, the restructuring of academic guidance practices, and the improvement of educational policies.

2. Academic Motivation

The success of contemporary educational systems is directly related not only to the quality of curricula but also to individuals' intrinsic orientations toward learning. In this context, academic motivation, shaped by an individual's attitude, interest, and effort toward the learning process, has become one of the fundamental variables that both educational sciences and psychology focus on. The concept of motivation, derived from the Latin word "movere" (to move), is defined as an internal force that activates the individual [11] [12]

Motivation is a force that influences the initiation, maintenance, and direction of a behavior toward a goal; it ensures the learner's active participation and level of engagement in the learning activity [17]. The concept of motivation has provided the foundation for many contemporary theories such as attribution theory, expectancy-value theory, and Self-Determination Theory [18].Academic motivation, which is the adaptation of this process to the educational context, expresses an individual's desire, persistence, interest, and effort to fulfill academic tasks [13] Motivated students show interest, actively participate in the learning process, and maintain high learning motivation, thus achieving academic success more easily [14] [12]

In the literature, academic motivation is often addressed in three dimensions: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to deriving direct pleasure from the learning process. Extrinsic motivation is related to an individual's orientation toward learning due to external factors such as rewards, grades, or punishment. Amotivation, however, refers to a lack of orientation and disinterest, often resulting in a loss of control and the potential for learned helplessness [15]. Academic motivation is determined by numerous variables. Among these, cognitive and affective determinants such as self-esteem [19] past achievement experiences, values attributed to learning [20], and especially attribution styles [21] [22] and self-efficacy beliefs [23] [24] play significant roles. Students' evaluations of their success or failure experiences and their belief in their capacity to successfully execute tasks are determinants that directly affect their level of academic motivation [11] [25].

Research consistently indicates that academic motivation has a direct effect on students' academic achievement, learning quality, and cognitive processes [26]. Highly motivated students dedicate more time and effort, engage with stronger mental representations, and have increased probabilities of achieving academic success. Therefore, academic motivation is not merely a factor that initiates learning but also a central construct that determines its quality and continuity.

3. Future Anxiety Among Students

In modern societies, individuals' ability to plan their lives often brings emotions such as uncertainty about the future, anxiety, and fear of failure. This phenomenon is experienced more intensely among young individuals in transitional periods. In this context, future anxiety, which emerges from the perception of uncertainty and threat regarding one's future throughout life, is considered a widespread psychological problem among university students today. Anxiety is a complex response that emerges when an individual perceives an internal or environmental threat [4]. Psychological literature fundamentally divides anxiety into two dimensions: state anxiety (response to stress at a

specific moment) and trait anxiety (a long-term perception of threat related to personality) [27]. Future anxiety can be considered a psychological construct primarily falling within the scope of trait anxiety, as it is characterized by a persistent focus on anticipated future threats. Furthermore, it aligns with neurotic anxiety [28], which describes concern experienced toward negative events that have not yet occurred but are presumed to occur. Zaleski [1] defines future anxiety as the totality of cognitive and emotional responses developed in advance to prevent the realization of potential threats, revealing its inherently cognitive nature.

University students are in a multidimensional phase where identity construction, career choice, and transition to independent living are intertwined [8]. Economic inadequacy, examination pressure, and especially post-graduation unemployment concerns lead to the manifestation of future anxiety [4]. In countries with a high proportion of young population, such as Turkey, the uncertainty in the job search process [10] diminishes young people's hopes, fostering a widespread sense of hopelessness [5].

The impact of future anxiety extends to cognitive and academic domains, demonstrating a moderate positive relationship with test anxiety [16], which is shaped by the fear of failure during performance [28]. Crucially, one of the significant sources that fuels future anxiety is the individual's level of self-efficacy. Individuals with low self-efficacy internalize the perception of failure, viewing their problem-solving skills as inadequate. This situation leads them to develop negative scenarios about the future [5]. This perceived lack of control and expectation of failure directly undercuts the functional self-efficacy beliefs and positive attribution styles that are critical for sustaining high academic motivation.

In conclusion, the future anxiety observed in students is a multi-layered phenomenon formed by the developmental period, social roles, economic conditions, and academic expectations. For the reduction of this anxiety, strengthening students' self-awareness and stress management skills is critical. Understanding and managing future anxiety will not only enhance an individual's psychological well-being but is also essential for maintaining the academic motivation necessary for success, which will be the focus of the subsequent sections of this study.

4. Literature Review

In the literature, it appears that numerous studies address academic motivation and future anxiety separately or evaluate these two concepts with other variables. However, a significant gap remains regarding the specific nature of the relationship between future anxiety and the multi-dimensional structure of academic motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic, amotivation). Recent research, particularly in the post-pandemic context, has strongly suggested an indirect link between distress and motivation. For example, Troncone's [29] research determined that psychological distress and loneliness negatively affected academic motivation through emotional regulation skills. Similarly, Camacho et al. [30] reported the negative impact of students' anxiety levels on academic motivation during the COVID-19 period. While these studies establish that general distress and anxiety are detrimental to motivation, they often treat anxiety as a situational state rather than a trait-based cognitive orientation toward the future.

Furthermore, studies have highlighted the influence of related future-oriented constructs. Li [31], for instance, examined the connection between students' future orientation and academic anxiety, demonstrating that goal orientation (a critical motivational component) mediates this relationship. This points to the importance of cognitive planning in managing anxiety and motivation. Focusing directly on future anxiety, Hammad [32] concluded that increasing future anxiety among university students due to economic and social changes negatively affected both academic motivation and attitudes toward their fields. More recently, Çelik [33] directly confirmed this finding, concluding that future anxiety negatively affects students' academic motivation and complicates the sustainability of success in educational processes. The common suggestion from these studies to address future anxiety and academic motivation together underscores the need for integrated research.

While existing research clearly demonstrates that future anxiety reduces overall academic motivation [33] [34], it suggests that two critical dimensions require further synthesis. First, the specific dimensions of motivation are affected. Existing literature generally examines global academic motivation. However, the theoretical distinction between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation [14] is crucial. Future anxiety, a state of perceived helplessness and lack of control (as highlighted in Koçeroğlu et al. [34], regarding job search difficulties), is theoretically expected to lead to amotivation and erosion of intrinsic motivation to a greater extent than the weakening of extrinsic rewards. The precise impact of trait-based future anxiety on these three distinct motivational subscales has not yet been adequately explored. Second, the mechanism of action. The literature suggests that anxiety is triggered by a lack of control and low self-efficacy [5], which are known determinants of motivation [23]. It is necessary to directly examine how future anxiety acts as a confounding variable that disrupts the self-efficacy and attributional styles that are essential for maintaining motivation.

Existing studies largely approach the relationship between future anxiety and academic motivation within a generalized and unidirectional framework, assuming predominantly negative effects while overlooking contextual and structural differences. Moreover, the multidimensional nature of academic motivation is rarely examined in this relationship, as most studies focus on overall motivation rather than distinguishing between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. In addition, the potential mechanisms through which future anxiety influences motivation such as perceived lack of control, reduced self-efficacy, and attributional styles remain insufficiently explored. Particularly in fields characterized by high levels of sectoral uncertainty, such as tourism education, empirical evidence examining how future anxiety interacts with different dimensions of academic motivation remains limited.

Therefore, this study aims to move beyond confirming a general negative correlation and instead, provide a detailed synthesis by directly investigating the predictive power of future anxiety on the intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation sub-dimensions among university students. This approach will contribute to the literature by specifying the psychological pathways through which future uncertainty translates into academic disengagement.

5. Methodology

This research aims to assess academic motivation and future anxiety levels among tourism students and examine their relationship. Academic motivation is vital for professional development while future anxiety affects academic performance. The study explores differences in these variables based on demographics like gender and income status. The research employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive survey model. Academic motivation was measured using Bozanoğlu's [11] scale, while future anxiety was assessed with Geylani and Yıldız's [36] scale. Expert opinions validated both scales. The survey comprised two sections: scale items for measuring the key variables and demographic questions. All items used a five-point Likert scale (1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree). The study population included tourism students from Turkish universities. The sample consisted of 398 students from various universities, approved by the ethics committee on 11.02.2025 (E-42435178-050.04-76777). Data analysis included descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVA to

identify significant differences in academic motivation and future anxiety based on demographic variables. All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS software with findings reported according to significance levels.

6. Normal Distribution, Reliability and Validity Analyses

Exploratory statistical analyses were conducted to assess the conformity of data obtained from the future anxiety scale to normal distribution. As a result of the analyses, the mean (Mean = 4.1140), median (Median = 4.6111), skewness (Skewness = -0.765), and kurtosis (Kurtosis = -0.911) values related to the future anxiety scale were calculated. The proximity of mean and median values, along with skewness and kurtosis coefficients falling within the ±1 range, indicates that the data set exhibits normal distribution. Similarly, exploratory statistical analyses for the academic motivation scale yielded mean (Mean = 4.1194), median (Median = 4.5000), skewness (Skewness = -0.852), and kurtosis (Kurtosis = -0.699) values. These results also demonstrate that the data set meets the normal distribution assumption. Following the determination that both scales' distributions were normal, parametric test methods were selected for relational and comparative analyses. Additionally, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were examined to determine the reliability levels of the scales. In the literature, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 and above indicates that scales possess high internal consistency and provide reliable measurements [36] [37]. Analysis findings revealed that all scales used in the study exceeded this threshold value. Consequently, it was concluded that the measurement reliability of the scales used was high. The relevant statistical findings are presented in detail in Table 1

Table 1: Reliability Analysis Results of the Scales

Reliability Analysis of Future Anxiety Scale	
Cronbach's Alpha	Items
,957	18
Reliability Analysis of Academic Motivation Scale	
Cronbach's Alpha	Items
,956	20

Factor analysis was applied to make the dataset more descriptive and meaningful. As a result of the analysis, some differences were observed in the factor loadings of items in the scales related to students' future anxiety and academic motivation, compared to the original scale structures. This situation may be attributed to differences in participants' perception structures within the context of the study, as well as cultural or contextual effects. When examining the eigenvalues and explained variance ratios related to the scales, it was determined that the factors' levels of explaining total variance were high, indicating strong factor structures in this respect. Detailed findings regarding the factor analysis results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Factor Analysis Results of the Scales

Future Anxiety Scale Items	Factor Loadings
FA - I am afraid of being unsuccessful in the future.	,826
FA - I am afraid of things going wrong in my life.	,803
FA - I am afraid of not being able to overcome difficulties in the future.	,757
FA - Even when everything is going well, I am afraid of experiencing a setback.	,782
FA - Even when things are going well, I find myself thinking something bad will happen.	,753
FA - I am afraid of what the future will bring.	,789
FA - I am anxious about not being able to provide good financial conditions for my family.	,757
FA - The thought of my plans remaining incomplete devastates me.	,781
FA - The future appears vague and uncertain to me.	,775
FA - I am afraid that economic and political changes will threaten my future.	,744
FA - I am afraid of making important decisions in the future.	,833
FA - I am afraid that a major catastrophe will occur soon.	,746
FH - I think I will be happier in the future.	,725
FH - I hope that I can achieve what I desire in the future.	,720
FH - My past experiences have prepared me well for the future.	,747
FH - I look at the future with hope and enthusiasm.	,759
FH - I have enough time to accomplish the things I really want to do.	,718
FH - I believe that I can achieve my goals in the future.	,690
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin: .961	
Total Variance Explained: 64.602%	
Career Choice Scale Items	FactorLoadings
AL - I seek opportunities to use what I learn outside of school.	,741
AL - Everything I learn creates curiosity to learn more.	,773
AL - As soon as classes begin, I focus my attention on the lesson.	,775
AL - Things taught at school do not interest me.	,649
AL - I feel happy when I look back and see how much I have learned.	,766
AL - I think I am more eager about classes and learning than other students in my class.	,734
AL - When I have a choice, I generally choose assignments that will challenge me.	,754
AL - I prefer subjects that force me to think.	,764
AL - The goals I set for myself require extensive work and long-term commitment.	,752
AL - I enjoy working on somewhat difficult topics.	,770
AL - Sometimes I become so engrossed in my studies that I am surprised and annoyed by how quickly break times pass.	,711
AL - I have always enjoyed studying new and different topics.	,763
AL - I prepare more comprehensive assignments than required by the instructor just to learn more.	,705
AL - New things excite me.	,749
AL - I enjoy helping others with what I have learned.	,756
AL - When I encounter a difficult topic, I enjoy the challenge of understanding it.	,713
AL - I enjoy making an effort to learn something even if it will not be graded.	,731
AL - Many times I have been so absorbed in learning something that I did not notice how time passed.	,745
AL - If I cannot find sufficient information on a topic in the textbook, I immediately turn to other sources.	,778
AL - In exams, I often feel like I am solving an enjoyable puzzle.	,662

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin: .968 Total Variance Explained: 54.814%

According to the factor analysis findings, the Future Anxiety Scale demonstrates a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of .961, explaining 64.602% of the total variance. The Academic Motivation Scale's KMO value was determined to be .968, with a total variance explanation of 54.814%. These high KMO values and explained variance ratios indicate that both scales possess strong structural validity and sufficient measurement power.

7. Analysis of Research Data and Findings

This section summarizes the descriptive and correlational analysis findings obtained within the scope of the research. The study examined the relationships between future anxiety levels and academic motivation behaviors of university students studying in the field of tourism, and whether these variables differ in terms of gender and income status. Initially, descriptive statistics related to the scales were presented; subsequently, independent samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were applied to determine differences according to demographic variables. The findings contribute to revealing significant differences and relationships regarding tourism students' future anxiety and academic motivation levels.

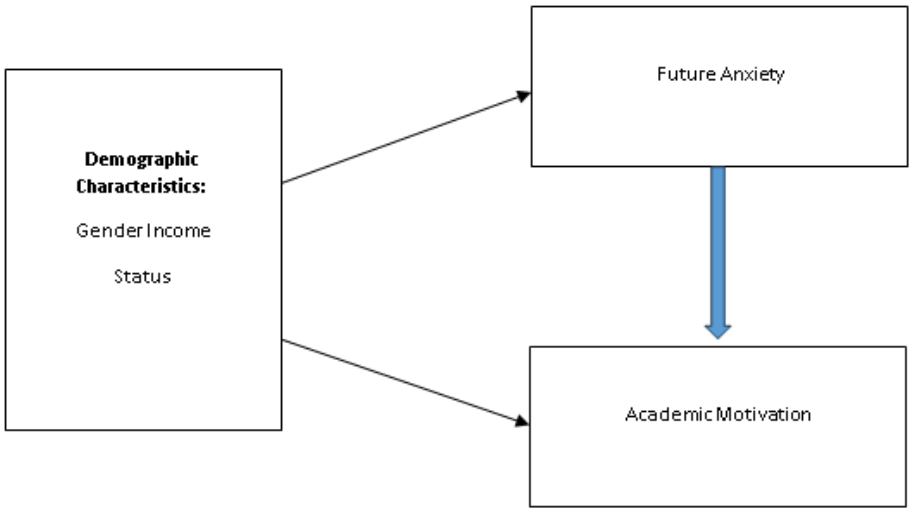


Fig. 1: Research Model.

H1: Students' levels of future anxiety have a significant effect on their levels of academic motivation.
H2 (Main Future Anxiety Hypothesis): Students' levels of future anxiety demonstrate significant differences according to their demographic characteristics.

- H2a: There is a significant difference in future anxiety levels based on students' gender.
- H2b: There is a significant difference in future anxiety levels based on students' income levels.

H3 (Main Academic Motivation Hypothesis): Students' levels of academic motivation demonstrate significant differences according to their demographic characteristics.

- H3a: There is a significant difference in academic motivation levels based on students' gender.
- H3b: There is a significant difference in academic motivation levels based on students' income levels.

H4: Students' levels of academic motivation and future anxiety are positive. (Explanation: This hypothesis aims to test students' general levels by considering 3.00 as the neutral value for the scale mean scores. Mean values above 3 will indicate positive attitudes regarding these variables.)

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Participants' Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Variable	Demographic Variable	Demographic Variable	Demographic Variable
Gender	Male	100	25.1
	Female	298	74.9
	Total	398	100.0
Income Level	Very Low	11	2.8
	Low	82	20.6
	Medium	55	13.8
	High	85	21.4
	Very High	165	41.5
	Total	398	100.0

An examination of the data presented in Table 3 reveals that, of the 398 students participating in the study, 25.1% were male and 74.9% were female. This distribution indicates that female students were significantly overrepresented in the sample. Regarding the income level variable, 2.8% of participants were in the "very low" category, 20.6% in "low," 13.8% in "medium," 21.4% in "high," and 41.5% in the "very high" income group. This finding shows that a substantial proportion of the sample consisted of students with high or very high income levels, whereas students in the low-income categories were relatively underrepresented. This demographic distribution can be considered an important contextual factor in interpreting the study's findings on future anxiety and academic motivation levels. In particular, the differences in attitudes observed among higher-income groups may provide meaningful insights when evaluating the results.

Table 4: Mean Response Results for Scale Items

Future Anxiety Scale Items	Item Mean
FA - I am afraid of failure in the future.	3,8970
FA - I am afraid of things going wrong in my life.	4,0075
FA - I am afraid of not being able to overcome difficulties in the future.	4,0578
FA - Even when everything is going well, I fear the possibility of experiencing a setback.	4,0226
FA - Even when things are going well, I find myself anticipating that something negative will occur.	4,0603
FA - I am afraid of what the future holds.	4,0829
FA - I experience anxiety about not being able to provide adequate financial conditions for my family.	3,9874
FA - The thought of my plans remaining incomplete devastates me.	4,0126
FA - The future appears ambiguous and uncertain to me.	4,0704
FA - I fear that economic and political changes will threaten my future.	4,1683
FA - I am afraid of the prospect of making important decisions in the future.	4,0050
FA - I fear that a major catastrophe will occur soon.	4,0829
FH - I believe I will be happier in the future.	4,1482
FH - I hope to attain the things I desire in the future.	4,0955
FH - My past experiences have prepared me well for the future.	4,0201
FH - I look toward the future with hope and enthusiasm.	4,0879
FH - I have sufficient time to accomplish the things I greatly desire to do.	4,0678
FH - I believe I can achieve my goals in the future.	4,0503
Career Preference Scale Items	Item Mean
LA - I seek opportunities to utilize what I have learned outside of school.	4,0729
LA - Everything I learn generates curiosity to learn more.	4,0427
LA - As soon as classes begin, I direct my attention to the lesson.	4,0678
LA - The subjects taught in school do not interest me.	3,9497
LA - Looking back, I am pleased to see how much I have learned.	4,0176
LA - I consider myself more eager to learn than other students in my class.	3,9925
LA - When given a choice, I generally select assignments that will challenge me.	4,1633
LA - I prefer subjects that compel me to think critically.	4,0101
LA - The goals I set for myself require extensive effort and time.	4,1206
LA - I particularly enjoy working on somewhat challenging topics.	4,1080
LA - Sometimes I become so immersed in a lesson that I am surprised and frustrated by how quickly breaks are given.	3,9849
LA - I have always enjoyed studying new and diverse subjects.	4,0955
LA - I prepare more comprehensive assignments than required by the instructor, solely to learn more.	4,0804
LA - Novel experiences excite me.	4,1709
LA - I enjoy using my knowledge to assist others.	4,1231
LA - When confronted with a difficult topic, I derive pleasure from striving to understand it.	4,0553
LA - I enjoy making the effort to learn something even if no grade will be assigned for it.	4,0879
LA - There have been many instances where I was so engaged in learning that I lost track of time.	3,9598
LA - If I cannot find sufficient information on a subject in the textbook, I immediately turn to other resources.	4,0503
LA - I often experience exams as if I am solving an enjoyable puzzle.	4,0427

According to the descriptive analysis results, the mean scores of the Future Anxiety Scale items range between 3.89 and 4.16, indicating that students generally experience moderate to high levels of future anxiety. Similarly, the mean scores of the Academic Motivation Scale items range between 3.94 and 4.17, suggesting that students demonstrate high levels of academic motivation. The fact that the mean scores obtained from both scales are above the neutral value supports the conclusion that students' levels of future anxiety and academic motivation are positive.

Table 5: Regression Analysis on the Effect of Students' Future Anxiety States on Academic Motivation

Model Summary					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	251,794	1	251,794	876,904	,000
Regresyon Artık Toplam	113,708	396	,287		
	365,502	397			
Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	P
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Ortalama	,906	,110		8,251	,000
	,778	,026	,830	29,613	,000
Test					
Model	R		R Square	Adjusted R Square	
	,830		,689	,688	

According to the results of the simple linear regression analysis, the future anxiety variable has a significant effect on academic motivation levels ($F(1,396) = 876.904$; $p < 0.001$). The explanatory power of the model is high; the obtained R^2 value of 0.689 indicates that approximately 68.9% of the total variance in academic motivation levels is explained by the future anxiety variable. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.830$) reveals that a one-unit increase in future anxiety corresponds to a positive and strong increase in the level of academic motivation. The analysis findings strongly support the H1 hypothesis.

Table 6: ANOVA Analysis of Participants' Future Anxiety Perceptions According to Income Status

Levene Statistic	df1		df2	Sig.	
8,082	4		393	,000	
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	223,314	4	55,828	114,127	,000
Within Groups	192,247	393	,489		
Total	415,561	397			

The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether future anxiety levels differ according to family income status indicate statistically significant differences between groups ($F(4,393) = 114.127$; $p < 0.001$). The significant result of the Levene's test ($p < 0.001$) showed that the variances were not homogeneous; therefore, Dunnett's C test was used for post-hoc comparisons. According to the findings of Dunnett's C test, students with "high" and "very high" income levels have significantly higher future anxiety averages compared to students in the "middle," "low," and "very low" income groups. This situation can be interpreted as students with high income levels potentially experiencing increased future-oriented anxieties related to their educational lives due to their desire to maintain their current economic status and the possibility of potential income loss.

Table 7: T-Test Analysis of Participants' Future Anxiety Perceptions by Gender

	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
FAMEAN	Male	100	3,9761	,94711	,09471
	Female	298	4,0766	1,04769	,06069

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
FAMEAN	2,470	,117	-,850	396	,396

Independent samples t-test results, conducted to determine whether future anxiety levels differ by gender, indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between male students ($M=3.9761$) and female students ($M=4.0766$) ($t(396) = -0.850$; $p > 0.05$). The non-significant result of Levene's test ($p = 0.117$) demonstrates that the assumption of homogeneity of variance between groups is met. This finding suggests that gender does not have a significant effect on future anxiety levels in the study sample.

Table 8: ANOVA Analysis of Participants' Academic Motivation Behaviors According to Income Status

Levene Statistic	df1		df2	Sig.	
20,975	4		393	,000	
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	221,805	4	55,451	151,655	,000
Within Groups	143,697	393	,366		
Total	365,502	397			

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether academic motivation levels differ according to family income status, with results indicating statistically significant differences between groups ($F(4,393) = 151.655$; $p < 0.001$). As the Levene's test was significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating heterogeneity of variances, Dunnett's C test was preferred for post-hoc comparisons. According to Dunnett's C test findings, students with "high" income levels demonstrated significantly higher academic motivation levels compared to those with "very good," "good," and "medium" income levels. Additionally, the difference between the "high" income group and the "very low" and "low" income groups was also significant. This situation may be interpreted as students with high income levels having increased academic motivation due to factors such as being able to allocate more resources to educational activities, having broader opportunities to achieve academic goals, and having higher expectations for the future.

Table 9: T-Test Analysis of Participants' Academic Motivation Behaviors According to Gender

	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
AFMEAN	Male	100	4,0090	,81002	,08100
	Female	298	4,0768	1,00537	,05824

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
AFMEAN	11,740	,001	-,611	396	,541

Independent samples t-test results, conducted to determine whether academic motivation levels differ by gender, indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between male students ($M=4.0090$) and female students ($M=4.0768$) ($t(396) = -0.611$; $p > 0.05$). The significant result of Levene's test ($p = 0.001$) reveals that the assumption of homogeneity of variance between groups is not met. However, the t-test results demonstrate that gender does not have a significant effect on academic motivation levels.

The factor analyses conducted for the two scales used in this study indicate that both measurement instruments yielded results consistent with the factor structures reported in their original studies. The items loaded meaningfully and adequately on their theoretically expected dimensions, with no evidence of cross-loading, and no item removal was required during the analysis process. These findings demonstrate that the construct validity of the measurement instruments is supported within the present research sample.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

Although the existing literature predominantly associates anxiety with decreases in academic motivation, the findings of the present study reveal a different pattern among tourism students. The strong and positive relationship identified between future anxiety and academic motivation suggests that future-oriented anxiety does not always function as a debilitating psychological state. In contexts characterized by high levels of structural uncertainty, such as the tourism sector, future anxiety may operate as a facilitative mechanism that encourages students to increase academic effort as a means of securing control over uncertain career outcomes. Rather than leading to withdrawal or disengagement, heightened future anxiety appears to stimulate externally regulated motivation, prompting students to invest more strongly in their academic performance in order to enhance employability and reduce perceived risks associated with post-graduation uncertainty. This finding indicates that the motivational consequences of future anxiety are highly context-dependent and may vary according to sectoral conditions and career-related pressures.

The academic lives of university students constitute a multidimensional process that extends beyond course achievement, encompassing personal development, professional orientation, and expectations for the future. One of the most common challenges faced in this process is future anxiety, defined as the feelings of worry and concern individuals experience in the face of uncertainties. Academic motivation, on the other hand, is a fundamental element that determines students' interest, effort, and desire to achieve in the learning process.

Understanding the complex link between these two concepts is critical for ensuring the sustainability of students' psychological well-being and academic success.

This study, which specifically examines the relationship between future anxiety and academic motivation among tourism students, has revealed several important findings. The results show that students experience significant levels of future anxiety while simultaneously maintaining high levels of academic motivation. This points to a phenomenon unique in the sector; students not only harbor anxieties about the future but also transform these anxieties into greater academic effort.

However, the study confirmed that future anxiety has a significant and strong predictive effect on academic motivation. The results show that future anxiety (stemming from external uncertainties such as job market concerns) can threaten an individual's sense of competence and autonomy, but the pressure brought about by high expectations can redirect energy towards external motivation (e.g., higher grades to secure employment). This highlights the adaptive, but potentially unstable, coping mechanism adopted by students in high-pressure fields.

From a demographic perspective, while gender did not create a significant difference in either variable, income level emerged as a key factor shaping both anxiety and academic orientation. Students from higher-income groups experienced more future anxiety, potentially driven by a higher desire to maintain their current economic status and higher expectations. Crucially, their academic motivation was also higher. This finding underscores that financial security creates a foundation upon which higher achievement goals are set, but simultaneously introduces a greater fear of losing status, there by intensifying future anxiety. Based on the findings, managing future anxiety and supporting sustainable academic motivation should be regarded as primary responsibilities of universities and supporting institutions.

In this context, career centers should play a more active role. To reduce students' perception of sectoral uncertainty, priority should be given to expanding opportunities such as internships, mentoring, and career planning activities; this should facilitate students' early and realistic interaction with the professional world. Financial support mechanisms such as scholarships, project funding, and paid internships should be developed to reduce inequalities stemming from income levels. Increasing the academic motivation of low-income students requires not only pedagogical support but also alleviating economic pressure. Universities should review their curricula to align with the needs of the labor market and design educational models that reduce sectoral uncertainties. By strengthening students' professional skills and ensuring high employability, these measures will allow students to envision their futures more clearly, thus transforming paralyzing anxiety into constructive effort. Given the high correlation between anxiety and motivation, universities should integrate programs focusing on stress management techniques and cognitive restructuring, helping students transform external pressure into more sustainable, internal goal setting.

Although the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between future anxiety and academic motivation, they should be interpreted within certain limitations. The relatively higher representation of female students and individuals from higher income groups in the sample may limit the generalizability of the results to broader student populations. These sample characteristics may have contributed to the observed patterns being more pronounced for specific demographic groups. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution. Future research employing more diverse samples in terms of gender and income levels would help to further validate and extend the present results.

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