



## The Relationship Between Trait Anxiety Levels And Future Expectations Of Young Individuals

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**Abstract:** The future expectations of the youth of university-age can influence many of their decisions like the choice of university till their life plans. Many factors, including the psychological state, can affect the expectation for the future. In this study, the relationship between anxiety, which is one of the mentioned psychological factors, and future expectation was examined. A total of 1026 people from various cities of Turkey were enrolled in the special talent exam held by Bayburt University School of Physical Education and Sports. The state and trait anxiety scale developed by Spielberger and his friends was used. The Turkish reliability and validity study of the scale was conducted by Öner and Le Compte. The trait anxiety dimension of the related scale was used. The Future Visions Scale developed by Ginevra and his friends was used. The Turkish reliability and validity study of the scale was conducted by Akça and his friends. Research data were analyzed using SPSS 25 package program. As a result, there is a moderate negative relationship between the trait anxiety scores of all individuals participating in the research and the optimism and hope sub-dimensions of the future expectations scale, and a moderate positive relationship was found in the pessimism sub-dimension. In the correlation test according to gender, there is a negative moderate relationship in the optimism and hope sub-dimensions, and a positive moderate relationship in the pessimism sub-dimension in both female and male individuals. In the analysis made for another variable, the type of high school graduation, although there was a negative moderate relationship between trait anxiety and optimism and hope sub-dimensions, a positive moderate relationship was found with the pessimism sub-dimension.

**KeyWords:** Sports Education, Physical Education and Sports, Trait anxiety, Talent Examination,

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Future expectations of young individuals, who constitute the most dynamic structure in society, are important for it directs their own lives and the society they are living in. Future expectations of young people, especially those of university age, can play a role in many of their decisions, from the choice of university to plans on life. The young people's expectations and decisions regarding the future will be an indicator of the society they are living in and its future position. The future expectation can be affected by many factors, such as the individual's psychological status. Anxiety is, in general, an emotion that causes discomfort and uneasiness, which originates from the uncertainty about the future and can affect almost the individual's entire life.<sup>1</sup> Although the causes of anxiety can change from one individual to another, socio-economic changes, instability of work conditions, uncertainty, and job insecurity encountered nowadays are the main factors that cause anxiety, especially in young people. The same factors can also cause negative expectations about the future among young people.<sup>2</sup> Important components that reflect expectations about the future are hope, optimism, and pessimism.<sup>2</sup> The word hope is used in daily language to refer to the positive expectations in any area and includes positive emotions and expectations about the future. Hope is an emotion that increases the quality of life, gives a sense of well-being, plays an efficient role in coping with problems, and is stimulating and motivating.<sup>3</sup> Optimism can be referred to as having positive expectations and thoughts in general in any condition and about the future.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, in contrast to optimism, pessimism is the belief and expectation that bad things will happen about any condition and the future.<sup>5</sup> Future expectations of young people affect both their existing behavioural motivations<sup>6</sup> and their future plans. When the hope and optimism are low and pessimism is high about the future among young people, it can be difficult to determine an educational or career goal, make a professional or educational choice, and continue moving in the direction of education or profession.<sup>4</sup> However, young people with low expectations from the future have a higher probability of having an unhealthy lifestyle and exhibit unhealthy behaviour.<sup>7</sup> Hope and optimism about the future are important because they increase the possibility of motivation and success among young people. Moreover, these emotions also cause young people to focus on their future plans, thereby keeping them away from bad habits. As an emotion that can negatively affect the individuals' relationships in social life and their daily lives, anxiety can also affect the future expectations of the young generations in particular.<sup>1</sup> In this context, it is necessary to reveal the relationship between the level of trait anxiety, which is a component of the psychological state of young people, and their future expectations. Understanding this relationship will also help to understand the factors that affect young people's future expectations. In this context, understanding the relationship between trait anxiety, which is a psychological state of young people, and future expectations of young people will help to understand the factors that affect young people's future expectations. In this study, the relationship between anxiety, one of the aforementioned psychological factors, and future expectations, was investigated.

## 2. MATERIAL OF METHODS

In this study, which examined the relationship between trait anxiety levels and future expectations of young candidates, screening model was used from quantitative research methods.

### 2.1. Population and Sample

The universe of the study consisted of 6220 individuals who applied for the special ability test (evaluation of physical ability and technical skills) at Bayburt University, School of Physical Education and Sports. The study sample constitutes a total of 1026 people from various cities of Turkey, 281 women and 745 men, aged between 18 and 24 years, who entered the special talent exam held by Bayburt University School of Physical Education and Sports in 2020. Young people were chosen as the study population as they have a lot of potential to guide the future of societies and are considered to be the most dynamic structure in society. There were no practical or clinical studies conducted on individuals or groups of people in the study. Study data was obtained from the voluntary participants of the survey. Prior to the survey, individuals were informed about the aim of the study and the content of the surveys. In the study, no application or clinical examination process was carried out on human groups in any way. In terms of ethical compliance, permission (dated 21.12.2020, numbered 063569) was obtained from the institution where the research would be conducted. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the content of the questionnaires, and their consent was obtained to participate in the study.

### 2.2. Data Collection Tools

#### 2.2.1. State-Trait Anxiety Inventory

In the study, the state and trait anxiety inventory developed by Spielberger et al. was used.<sup>36</sup> The Turkish reliability and validity study of the scale was carried out by Öner and Le Compte.<sup>8</sup> The Inventory's trait anxiety dimension was used. The inventory is a 4-point Likert-type scale consisting of 20 items. The inventory includes direct statements and reverse-coded statements expressing positive and negative emotions.

#### 2.2.2. Visions About Future Scale

The scale was developed by Ginevra et al.<sup>2</sup> and was adapted to Turkish by Akça et al.<sup>4</sup> The scale consists of 18 items and has three subdimensions, which are hope, optimism, and pessimism. While the scores of the scale's subdimensions can be calculated separately, it is also possible to obtain a total score from the scale. The total score was calculated using the reverse-scored pessimism subdimension items.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data obtained in this study was analysed using SPSS 25.0 software package. Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted to analyse the relationship between trait anxiety and future expectations according to the gender of the participants and the type of high school they graduated from.

4. RESULTS

**Table 1: The results of the Pearson Correlation Analysis demonstrating the relationship between the anxiety and future expectations of the young candidates participating in the study**

		Optimism	Pessimism	Hope
Anxiety	r	-.465**	.496**	-.429**
	p	0	0	0
	N	1026	1026	1026

\*\*p < 0.01

According to Table 1, the participating young candidates' trait anxiety inventory mean scores have a moderate negative relationship with the visions about future scale's optimism (r= -0. 465) and hope (r= -0. 429) subdimensions mean scores, and a moderate positive significant relationship with the pessimism (r= 0. 496) subdimension mean score.

**Table 2: The results of the Pearson Correlation Analysis demonstrating the relationship between the anxiety and future expectations of the young candidates by gender.**

Gender		Optimism	Pessimism	Hope	
Male	Anxiety	r	-.456**	.515**	-.425**
		p	0	0	0
		N	745	745	745
Female	Anxiety	r	-.495**	.468**	-.454**
		p	0	0	0
		N	281	281	281

\*\*p < 0.01

According to Table 2 demonstrating the relationship between anxiety and future expectations among young candidates by gender, among both male (Optimism r= -0.456, Pessimism r= 0.515 Hope r=-0.425) and female (Optimism r= -0.495, Pessimism r= 0.468 Hope r=-0.454) candidates, the trait anxiety inventory mean scores have moderate negative relationship with the visions about future scale's optimism and hope subdimensions mean scores and a moderate positive significant relationship with the pessimism subdimension mean score.

**Table 3: The results of the Pearson Correlation Analysis demonstrating the relationship between the anxiety and future expectations of the young candidates by the type of high school of graduation**

The Type of High School of Graduation		Optimism	Pessimism	Hope	
Industrial Vocational High School	Anxiety	r	-.476**	.483**	-.438**
		p	.000	.000	.000
		N	195	195	195
Sports High School	Anxiety	r	-.461**	.334*	-.568**
		p	.003	.035	.000
		N	40	40	40
Anatolian High School	Anxiety	r	-.476**	.536**	-.424**
		p	.000	.000	.000
		N	549	549	549
Regular High School	Anxiety	r	-.386**	.658**	-.373**
		p	.000	.000	.001
		N	80	80	80
Open High School	Anxiety	r	-.473**	.542**	-.501**
		p	.002	.000	.001
		N	40	40	40
Imam Hatip High School	Anxiety	r	-.474**	.338**	-.413**
		p	.000	.000	.000
		N	122	122	122

\*\*p < 0.01

According to Table 3 demonstrating the relationship between anxiety and future expectations among young candidates by the type of high school of graduation, in all types of high schools, the trait anxiety inventory mean scores have a moderate negative relationship with the visions about

future scale's optimism and hope subdimensions mean scores and a moderate positive significant relationship with the pessimism subdimension mean score (Industrial vocational high school (Optimism r= -0.476, Pessimism r= 0.483, Hope r=-0.438), Sports high school (Optimism r= -0.461,

Pessimism  $r = 0.334$ , Hope  $r = -0.568$ ), Anatolian high school (Optimism  $r = -0.476$ , Pessimism  $r = 0.536$ , Hope  $r = -0.424$ ), Regular high school (Optimism  $r = -0.386$ , Pessimism  $r = 0.658$ , Hope  $r = -0.373$ ), Open high school (Optimism  $r = -0.473$ , Pessimism  $r = 0.542$ , Hope  $r = -0.501$ ), İmam hatip high school (Optimism  $r = -0.474$ , Pessimism  $r = 0.338$ , Hope  $r = 0.413$ )).

## 5. DISCUSSION

When the data obtained as a result of the analyses performed were evaluated, the participating young candidates' trait anxiety inventory mean scores had a moderate negative relationship with the visions about future scale's optimism and hope subdimensions mean scores and a moderate positive significant relationship with the pessimism subdimension mean score (Table 1). This suggests that as the level of anxiety among young candidates increases, their levels of optimism and hope about the future decrease, and their levels of pessimism increase. In a study that reached similar conclusions on the subject, Sousa<sup>9</sup> stated that adolescents experiencing stress and anxiety do not have future expectations, whereas adolescents with a low level of stress and anxiety have positive expectations for the future. When the correlation results by gender (Table 2) and the type of high school of graduation (Table 3) are analysed, a statistically significant and negative relationship was found between the participating young candidates' trait anxiety scale mean scores - and the visions about future scale's optimism subdimension mean score. Anxiety can be defined as the state of feeling worried or having excessive emotions about real or imaginary situations.<sup>10</sup> Optimism is defined as a strong expectation that everything in life will go well despite difficulties and obstacles.<sup>11</sup> Optimism, in which negative situations are perceived less and positive situations are perceived more<sup>12</sup>, is considered as a factor associated with the skills of having positive expectations for the future<sup>13</sup>, of finding future goals, of meaningful attachment to life, of coping with pain, and of self-recovery.<sup>14</sup> From this point of view, it is argued that optimism plays an effective role in the development of psychological hardiness.<sup>14</sup> It can be thought that people's optimism affects the way they handle events, the way they deal with events, and their well-being.<sup>15</sup> Consistency in looking at the future from a positive or negative perspective defines the level of optimism tendency.<sup>16,17</sup> Positive emotional expressions, such as optimism, is known to protect individuals against depression and anxiety, as well as encourage them to cope in a positive emotional and behavioural manner.<sup>18, 19, 20, 21</sup> Siddique<sup>22</sup> states that there is a negative relationship between optimism and anxiety. In light of this information, it can be said that participants cope with the difficulties they face much easier because they have a high level of optimism and a tendency to look positively toward the future, and therefore their anxiety levels decrease. When the data obtained as a result of analyses performed were examined, correlation results by gender (Table 2) and the type of high school of graduation (Table 3) demonstrated a statistically significant and positive relationship between trait anxiety and pessimism subdimension. Anxiety is an emotional component that manifests as worry and uneasiness, within the struggle of life of the human.<sup>23</sup> The fundamental characteristic of anxiety is to be excessively worried about situations with uncertain consequences.<sup>10</sup> Pessimism can be defined as having pessimistic thoughts about the future.<sup>24</sup> Pessimistic individuals are said to have a tendency to look at the world and future

experiences from a negative point of view.<sup>25</sup> Pessimism is known to become an incompatible response that leads to negative outcomes associated with higher anxiety levels.<sup>26</sup> Pessimism has been associated with anxiety and depression, anger, guilt, and hopelessness.<sup>27</sup> Pessimism about the future is known to be an important component of anxiety.<sup>28</sup> In light of this information, it can be said that participants are anxious due to the uncertainties about the future they are facing, and adopt a pessimistic point of view as their anxiety about the future increases. When the data obtained as a result of analyses performed were evaluated, correlation results by gender and the type of high school of graduation demonstrated a statistically significant and negative relationship between trait anxiety and hope subdimension. Trait anxiety is the individual's predisposition to a life of anxiety and tendency to perceive the situations he/she is in as stressful or to interpret them as stress.<sup>8</sup> Hope is defined as the ability to generate strategies (planning) toward one's ambitions and to encourage oneself to use these strategies with mediator thinking (motivation).<sup>29</sup> It is stated that individuals with a high level of hope have goals about life, exhibit consistency and motivation to obtain these goals, and have more methods and techniques.<sup>30</sup> Hope is a particularly interesting quality that can serve as a motivating factor to initiate and continue the action toward the goals and is also said to be associated with happiness, tenacity, success, and health.<sup>31, 32</sup> There is a negative relationship between hope and anxiety.<sup>33, 35</sup> Siddique<sup>22</sup> stated that there is a negative relationship between optimism and anxiety whereas Salehian<sup>34</sup> did not find any relationship. In this context, we can say that participants with a high level of hope have a low level of anxiety, and a high level of hope about the future due to their certain future goals and their beliefs in these goals.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In this study, the relationship between trait anxiety levels and future expectations of young individuals, who participate in special talent examinations of faculties and sports colleges of Sports Sciences in Turkey, was analysed. As a result, a relationship was found between trait anxiety levels and future expectations among the young candidates. This relationship mainly emerges as a decrease in the level of optimism and hope for the future and an increase in the level of pessimism, as the level of anxiety increases among young candidates. According to the results of the research, it is necessary to ensure that young individuals have more optimistic and hopeful expectations for the future. For this, it is thought that it will be beneficial to develop skills to cope with anxiety and factors that may cause anxiety. According to the results of the research, we think that it would be beneficial to develop the skills of coping with anxiety and factors that may cause anxiety so that young individuals' future expectations are more optimistic and hopeful.

## 7. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Mevlüt Gönen and Tuncay Öktem jointly contributed to the conceptualization of the study, data collection, data analysis, discussion and conclusion sections.

## 8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest declared none.

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