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The Focus Group Interview Technique: An Application on The Future Anxiety of University Students

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety about the future is an emotion that people can feel at every stage of their lives. Specifically, students feel anxiety about the future at certain periods throughout their education life. One of these periods is university time. As students start their university education, their anxieties about the future, such as finding a job and having a career increase. While this state of anxiety is at its lowest level at the beginning of university and increases gradually as one approaches graduation. It reaches its highest level in the last year of the university. The aim of this study is to examine the future anxiety of university first and fourth-year students and to compare their anxiety levels. Two focus group interviews were conducted with 8 participants each for the research. In the study based on question and answer, it was tried to reveal the real feelings and thoughts of the students who participated in the focus group interviews about the research topic. 7 questions were asked to the participants for this purpose. Results from the analysis and evaluation of the data indicated that fourth-year students have more future anxiety than first-year students. Fourth-year students are more realistic and planned, and they do internships and attend training in order not to worry about their professional future. In addition, the students who have a family business have lower future anxiety than other students.

Keywords: Focus Group Interview Technique, Qualitative Research Method, The Future Anxiety of University Students

1. INTRODUCTION

The future emerges as a significant concept that directs behavior in human life. As well as motivating the individuals and enabling them to work more diligently, the concept of the future carries uncertainty, obscurity, and risks. Conscious individuals plan their future in order to minimize the uncertainties and risks that may occur in the life process (Aytar and Soylu, 2019, p.329). Because of reasons such as economic and social changes, sometimes the plans made become difficult to implement. This situation causes individuals to worry about their future.

Future anxiety can be thought of as a state of worry, uncertainty, and fear about changes that may occur in a more distant personal future (Zaleski, 1996, p.165). Waiting in an uncertain situation, not knowing what to expect in the future, constantly thinking about negative situations, and being disappointed and hopeless reinforce the individual's anxiety. People can feel anxiety about the future at many moments in their lives. In particular, the issues that people care most about, and cause anxiety are education, occupation, career, and unemployment (Aytar and Soylu, 2019, p.329).

Education is one of the most important and worrying issues for many people as it is of great concern in shaping future life. Having a good job, income and social status often depend on how a person spends his/her education. An inevitable part of educational life is exams that measure the performance and success of students (Softa et al., 2015, p.1483). Students, who have to pass several exams to go to one of the top high schools and then to one of the top universities, are faced with a feeling of anxiety because of the thought that their future lives depend on these exams. This state of anxiety, which increases, especially at the time of entering the university exam, generally decreases after starting university.

After overcoming a long study period and exam stress, students who start their first year of university enter into a process free from anxiety with the excitement of leaving high school and stepping into university life. However, as graduation time approaches and responsibilities increase, anxieties come back (Aydın and Tiryaki, 2017, P.720).

Since it is the last step of the education life, the last year of the university is one of the periods in which the students are more worried about the future. A state of anxiety arises as a result of questioning that one cannot find a job or cannot do the desired job and whether the job found will be liked or not by students who will enter a new period in their lives after graduation (Türköz et al., 2021, p.133). Among the most important factors affecting this state of anxiety is the students' thoughts on difficulties finding a job (Dursun, 2019, p. 73).

The majority of the young population in Turkey (the ratio of the young population in the 15-24 age group is 15.3%), the number of young people studying at the university (the net enrollment rate in higher education is 44.4% in the 2020 /'21 academic year) and all in addition to this, the problem of finding a job (the ratio of young people who were neither in education nor in employment was 24.7% in 2021) can be seen from the statistical studies and research results (Kurt, 2007, p.205; TUIK, 2021). The unemployment problem of the young population in Turkey causes university students to worry that they will not be able to find a job when they graduate (Dursun and Aytaç, 2019, p.74).

There are many studies investigating the future anxiety of university students (Çan et al., 2000; Kurt, 2007; Özsarı, 2008; Tuncer, 2011; Kula and Saraç, 2016; Hammad, 2016; Dağtekin et al., 2020; Türköz et al., 2021), unemployment concerns, hopelessness and anxiety levels of university students (Canbaz et al., 2007; Duman et al., 2009; Dereli and Kabataş, 2009; Dursun and Aytaç, 2009; Tayfun and Korkmaz, 2016) in the literature.

The aim of this study is to examine the future anxiety of first and fourth-year university students and to compare the anxiety levels between the students who are just starting university and those who will graduate soon. A focus group interview was used in the research. The reason for using the focus group interview is to create a discussion environment by enabling students to interact with each other and thus reveal their real thoughts and ideas of students about future anxiety. The future mentioned here is the professional life that students will start after graduating from university. There are many studies in the literature on students' future anxieties. However, no study was encountered in which students' future anxieties were examined with focus group interviews. In this respect, the study differs from previously published studies in that it determines the future anxieties of university students using the focus group interview. In this direction, the method used in the study is explained in the second part of the article. In the third part, the application phase is mentioned, in the fourth part the findings of the research are given, and finally, the results and recommendations are shared.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Focus Group Interview Technique

The focus group interview, which is used as one of the data collection techniques in qualitative research, can be defined as a negotiation technique in which a predetermined group of participants discusses their ideas and opinions on a particular subject. The aim of the interview is to expand the range of knowledge by creating an environment that will allow participants to express themselves comfortably about the research topic (Hennink et al., 2011, p. 136). The focus group interview is one of the most appropriate methods that can be used to learn people's ideas, thoughts, experiences and beliefs about a subject (Kitzinger, 2005, p. 57). Compared to one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews are more advantageous in terms of obtaining different perspectives on the researched subject in the same time period (Sevim, 2008, p.81).

Focus group interview technique is not a new technique and its emergence dates back to the 1920s (Smitson, 2008, p.357). The focus group interview, which started to be used in the field of social sciences in the 1930s, gained its main importance with its use in marketing research in the 1950s (Hennink, 2013, p.4). It has been widely used in academic studies about social sciences since the 1980s (David and Sutton, 2011, p.133). For example; there are many academic studies that used the focus group interview in the field of communication (Shrank et al., 2005; Zwaanswijk et al., 2007; Telg and Barnes, 2012), education (Cheng, 2007; Türker et al., 2012; Seydi, 2013) and marketing (Cox et al., 1976; Welch, 1985; Küçüksaraç and Sayımer, 2016).

The focus group interview can be used for purposes such as generating new ideas, evaluating a specific topic, measuring the usability of a newly produced product and developing a survey or scale (Edmunds, 1999). Some features of the focus group interview are given below (Hennink, 2013, p.1-2).

- ✓ Focus group interview usually consist of 6 to 8 participants. Depending on the purpose of the research, this number can be between 5 and 10.
- ✓ Participants should have similar characteristics or similar experiences about the research topic.
- ✓ A predetermined subject or a limited number of concepts should be discussed in detail within a certain period of time.

- ✓ The group should be moderated by someone who has training and experience, encouraging participants to participate in discussions.
- ✓ The moderator should ask questions that will stimulate the discussion and bring out the thoughts of the participants.
- ✓ Creating an environment where participants can freely express their thoughts and ideas, not be judged by other participants and interact easily with each other is one of the most important features required for the application of the focus group interview.

2.1.1. Planning The Focus Group Interview

In order for the focus group discussions to be successful, participants, moderator, time and place must be determined accurately and appropriately. Planning should be done for each stage in order to avoid the risk of wasting time and obtaining false information (Gündüz et al., 2020, p.22). First of all, the purpose and problems of the research should be determined in focus group interviews. Then, it should be decided which information should be collected according to the purpose of the research and how this information will be used (Cinoğlu, 2007, p.96).

Determination of Questions: Prepared questions should be clear and simple enough to be easily understood by the participants. The number of questions should be limited in order not to deviate from the purpose of the research (Gündüz et al., 2020, p.23).

Selection of Participants: People with relatively homogeneous characteristics who are expected to produce ideas related to the research topic are selected while determining the participants in the focus group interviews. The number of people to be selected should be determined in a way that can be managed by the moderator. If more participant than necessary is selected, there is a risk that some of them will not be able to participate in the discussion. On the other hand, if a group with few participants is formed, it may be difficult to create a discussion environment (Cinoğlu, 2007, p.96).

Selection of Moderator: In focus group interviews, the selection of a moderator is very important as it is the person who manages and directs the discussion. While determining the moderator, attention should be paid to the fact that the person to be selected has knowledge about the determined subject, has strong communication skills, is a good listener and does not judge the participants because of their opinions (Gibbs, 1997, p .5).

The Role of Moderator: The moderator should prepare an environment in which each participant can express himself comfortably, ensure that they are actively involved in the discussion, and should keep the discussion focused on the research topic for the quality of the data aimed to be obtained in the focus group interviews (Kroll et al., 2007, p.695).

Determination of the Meeting Place and Time Planning: While determining the meeting place and time for focus group interviews, a suitable time and a location that can be easily reached by all the determined participants should be chosen. It is recommended that an ideal focus group interview should not exceed two hours a day or five hours a week (Freitas et al. 1998, p.18).

2.1.2. Process of Focus Group Interview

After the planning is conducted for the focus group interview, the application phase starts with the meeting of the participants at the determined place and time. Gaižauskaitė (2012) explained the process of focus group interview in four steps.

Step 1: Introduction

Focus group interview starts with the moderator and the assistant (if any), introducing themselves and greeting the participants. Then, information is given about the purpose of the research, its requirements, ethical rules and the necessity of recording devices. Interview rules are shared with the participants. The introduction ends with the moderator stating that participants must have equally participated in the discussion and how this will be achieved.

Step 2: Getting participants used to the group discussion process

Going directly to the main discussion topics can risk not getting the requested information from the participants. Therefore, at least a few minutes should be taken to get the participants used to the focus group discussion process. Asking participants to provide personal information about the topic of discussion during this allotted time allows participants to get used to the process. This step also helps to reduce the reaction of the participants to the recording.

Step 3: Discussion

The discussion process begins with general questions and continues with more specific discussion questions. At this stage, the moderator should avoid questions for which “yes” or “no” answers can be given. If it is not possible, the moderator should encourage participants to give more descriptive answers with questions that will stimulate the discussion.

The moderator should be patient while participants answer questions. If there is a prolonged silence while responding to any question, the question should be explained in a way that the participants can understand. The moderator should notice the mostly silent participants and encourage them to express their ideas and thoughts.

Step 4: Summary of the discussion

Focus group interviews are conclusion by summarizing the discussion and asking the participants if they have any ideas they would like to add or have missed.

2.1.3. Analysis and Reporting of Focus Group Interview

The video-audio recordings obtained during the focus group discussions and the notes taken by the moderator are analyzed and reported. During the analysis phase, the video is watched, the audio recordings are listened and the notes taken by the moderator are read in depth. The aim here is to see the connection between the data as a whole (Rabiee, 2014, p.658). It is tried to reveal the main themes, remarkable words about the research topic and any unexpected findings from the collected data (Breen, 2006, p.472).

As the final stage, the report of the focus group interview is prepared. The prepared report should include a group of quotations, discussion summaries, tables, maps or basic information from each of the main topics of the discussion (Freitas et al., 1998, p.21).

3. APPLICATION

In the light of the information explained in the method section, this study was carried out in the departments of the faculty of business in Adana, which provide English education (Business Administration, Management Information Systems (MIS) and International Trade and Finance (ITF) departments) were applied to first and fourth year students. Two groups of 8 participants were formed, one consisting of first-years and the other consisting of fourth-years. Before starting the focus group interview, some demographic questions were asked in order to get to know the students better.

Table 1. Focus Group Demographic Characteristics

Group	Participant No.	Gender	Department	Family Structure	Parental Attitude	Accommodation	Working Status
Group 1 (First-year Students)	1	Female	MIS	Core	Over Protective	Homestay	Yes
	2	Male	Business A.	Extended	Repressive and Authoritarian	Dormitory	No
	3	Male	Business A.	Extended	Over Protective	Homestay	No
	4	Female	MIS	Core	Democratic	Dormitory	No
	5	Male	MIS	Core	Democratic	Dormitory	No
	6	Female	Business A.	Core	Democratic	Homestay	No
	7	Male	Business A.	Core	Democratic	Homestay	No
	8	Female	MIS	Extended	Repressive and Authoritarian	Dormitory	No
Group 2 (Fourth-year Students)	9	Male	ITF	Core	Over Protective	Homestay	No
	10	Male	ITF	Core	Over Protective	Homestay	No
	11	Female	ITF	Core	Over Protective	Homestay	No
	12	Male	ITF	Core	Democratic	Homestay	Yes
	13	Female	ITF	Core	Democratic	Homestay	Yes
	14	Female	ITF	Extended	Democratic	Homestay	No
	15	Male	ITF	Extended	Repressive and Authoritarian	Homestay	No
	16	Male	Business A.	Extended	Repressive and Authoritarian	Dormitory	No

Separate focus group interviews were conducted with the two groups on different days and times. Each interview lasted an average of 1 hour and 10 minutes. The seating arrangement was arranged in a U-shape and an environment was tried to be created in which the participants could feel comfortable. Audio recording was preferred because of the concern that the video recording might affect the participants' ability to freely express their true thoughts and ideas. Interviews were held in the presence of a moderator and assistant.

In the interviews, 7 questions were asked in accordance with the purpose of the research. The questions have been prepared in accordance with the daily usage style so that they can be understood more easily.

- ✓ What do you plan to do professionally after graduation? Do you have any plans?
- ✓ Do you worry about not being able to find a job after graduation or the possibility that your professional plans will not come true?
- ✓ If you will not get the chance to realize your professional plan, do you think you can work at any job?
- ✓ Do you find the education you received at the university sufficient for your professional life after graduation? Do you think that graduating from a department which uses English as an educational language will give you an advantage in the future?
- ✓ Do you have any plans to start your professional life abroad after graduation and continue there?
- ✓ Can you imagine the position you will be in professionally when you turn 35?
- ✓ What do you do or plan to do to avoid professional anxiety after graduation?

The audio recordings and notes obtained at the end of the interviews were examined and evaluated.

4. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

4.1. Professional Plans of the Participants After Graduation

After the participants were informed about the purpose of the research, its requirements, ethical rules and the necessity of recording devices, they first asked, “What do you plan to do professionally after graduation? Do you have any plans?” question was posed. This question was asked to obtain the information whether the participants have professional plans that will enable them to worry less about their future after graduation.

In the focus group interview held with first-year students of the university, all of the participants stated that they had a professional plan after graduation, but these plans could change as they could not foresee what the life would bring.

Four students studying in the Management Information Systems (MIS) department stated that they preferred this department because they were interested in software before starting university and they wanted to work in this field in the future. However, while two students stated that their ideas had completely changed, participant 1 and participant 5 stated the following expressions respectively.

“... I want to work in the field of human resources after graduation”

“... I want to be an academician in a department in the field of business administration”

Results from the focus group interview indicated that first-year students studying in the department of business administration have various professional plans for post-graduation. Two of the students stated that they have family businesses and that they want to work in those companies after graduation and expand their family businesses further. Unlike others, participant 2 expressed that

“... I will do internships in different departments every summer until I finish university in order to decide which field I want to work, so I will choose the most suitable profession for me.”

Results from the focus group interview with fourth-year students indicated that all of the participants had a professional plan after graduation, and some of them even had more than one plan. Two of the participants stated that they have a family business and that they will work there after graduation. The other two participants stated that they would take the Public Personnel Selection Exam (PPSE), but they actually wanted to establish their own companies, and that they are currently meeting with companies operating in the private sector. While participant 10 stated that he would take PPSE, but actually wanted to become an academician, participant 15 stated that he was preparing for the Administrative Judgeship Exam but he wanted to establish his own organization company if he did not pass the exam.

4.2. Opinions of the Participants About the Possibility of Not Realizing Their Professional Plans After Graduation

Results from the focus group interview with the first-year university students indicated that most of the participants did not experience any anxiety about the possibility of not being able to find a job or not realizing their professional plans after graduation. The reason for this situation can be cited as having just graduated from high school and disposed of university exam anxiety. In addition, some participants are worried about their future because of the

uncertainty of the economic conditions in the world and in Turkey, but this anxiety is at a minimum level since there are at least 3 years before they graduate.

Results indicated that first-year students who plan to work in the family business after graduation do not have any anxiety about not being able to find a job. 3 participants do not have any anxiety about not being able to find a job after graduation because they are self-confident. Participant 5 stated that

“... I want to be an academician and I know that my grade point average should be high for academics, and this situation creates anxiety on me.”

Unlike the others, participant 7 said that,

“... Even if I can't get to the position I want professionally, I think I can minimize my anxiety about not finding a job by turning my hobbies (painting-music) into a source of money.”

Results from the focus group interview with the fourth-year students indicated that more than half of the participants were anxious about the possibility of not being able to find a job or not realizing their professional plans after graduation.

The fourth-year students who want to establish their own companies in the future are anxious due to the economic and social changes in the world and in Turkey. In order to minimize these anxious, they stated that they would work in other companies related to the business they wanted to establish and try to both gain experience and learn the market.

While participant 10, who wants to become an academician, stated that he knew the difficulty of finding a position in universities after graduating and was worried about this issue, participant 15 stated that he was worried about not being a judge someday because even those who ranked first in the Administrative Judge Exam sometimes could not be appointed as judges.

Participant 13, who stated that she did not have any anxiety about finding a job after graduation, said,

“... I have no worries about not being able to find a job thanks to the connections and references my family has. However, if the conditions were equal for everyone, I would be anxious about not being able to find a job.”

4.3. Opinions of the Participants About Working in A Different Job If They Cannot Realize Their Professional Plans After Graduation

In the focus group interview held with university first-year students, most of the participants stated that if they cannot realize their professional plans after graduation, they can work in jobs that will help them to realize their professional plans. For example, participant 4 said,

“... I will work in other jobs related to the department I have completed at university until I have the job I aim for.”

Unlike the others, participants 2 and 6 stated that they could wait until they realize their professional plans. Participant 6 expressed that,

“... I cannot work in a job that I am not happy with. I'll wait until I realize my professional plan. During this time, I will try to improve myself.”

In the focus group interview with the fourth-year students of the university, almost all of the participants stated that they could work in different jobs in order to maintain their lives and gain experience until they realize their professional plans. This situation shows the attitudes of the students in order to jump into life as soon as possible and not experience economic concerns. Only participant 11 said,

“... If I don't need money, I won't work in other jobs. I'll wait until I have the job I want to work.”

4.4. Opinions of the Participants About the Education They Received at The University

In the focus group interview held with the first year of the university, all the participants stated that they think that graduating from a department that uses English as an educational language will provide an advantage in finding a job. However, most of the participants stated that they had difficulty understanding the lessons because they received the preparatory training online during the pandemic period.

Participant 1 said,

“... I don't see my knowledge of English as sufficient since I took the preparatory training online during the

pandemic period. I'm having a hard time understanding the lessons right now."

Participant 3 added,

"... There are differences in the level of difficulty between the English I learned in preparation class and the technical English I received in department classes. The education given at the university varies from academican to academican."

Participant 4 expressed,

"... I preferred this university and department because the education language is English. I think that graduating from a department that uses English as an educational language will give me an advantage in my job search in the future. The education that I receive at the university varies from academican to academican, but I find the education given in general sufficient."

In the focus group interview held with the fourth-year students of the university, all the participants stated that graduating from a department that uses English as an educational language will provide an advantage in their business life. However, they stated that they believed that the education at the university was insufficient for their future professions.

Participant 14 said,

"... I have been doing an internship in a company since February. The language of instruction of my department at the university is English, which gives me an advantage at the company where I do my internship. I do not think that the education at university is sufficient. I learned what I know about foreign trade at the company where I do my internship."

Participant 9 added a suggestion

"... Must have practical training or compulsory internship after the second-year of the university."

Participant 13 supported participant 9 and added,

"... I do my internship in the accounting and finance department of a company and we use accounting programs there. I had a hard time at first because I did not learn to use these programs at university. I think accounting programs should also be taught at the university. Practical training should definitely be at the university."

4.5. Opinions of the Participants About Starting and Continuing Their Professional Life Abroad

In the focus group interview held with first-year university students, most of the participants stated that they would like to work abroad.

Participants 4 and 7 expressed respectively,

"... I would very much like to work in a country abroad. I have such a goal. Even if I cannot work in my dream job, I will work any job to stay in another country."

"... I am willing to work and live abroad under lower conditions, even if I find a job that will enable me to live financially more comfortably in Turkey."

Other participants stated that they would like to work abroad for a while, but they do not want to live abroad permanently.

In the focus group interview with the fourth-year students, most of the participants stated that they do not want to work and live abroad for a long time. Again, this situation shows the realistic approach differences and anxiety differences between first and fourth-years.

Participants 11 and 13 said respectively,

"... I want to go abroad to learn a different language, but my family do not allow me."

"... I want to go abroad for traveling and vacation, but I do not want to work there. I don't want to leave my family behind and go to another country to work."

Participants 10 and 15 also stated that they do not want to leave their families in Turkey and go abroad to work.

Participants 9 and 12 stated that respectively,

"...I want to work abroad, but I cannot realize my plans because there is no necessary opportunity and financing."

“... I want to open branches of the company I will establish abroad.”

4.6. Opinions of the Participants About the Position They Will Be in Professionally When They Reach the Age of 35

Results from the focus group interviews indicated that the first-year students were able to dream about their professional position when they reached the age of 35.

Participants 2, 4 and 8 stated that when they reach the age of 35, they can imagine themselves as a senior manager in a private company. Participant 8 said,

“... I am an indecisive person. I don't know exactly what position I will be in professionally at 35, but according to my current thoughts, I would like to have a job where I work from home.”

Participants 5 and 7 stated that they imagine themselves as academicians. Unlike the others, participant 3 said,

“If everything goes the way I want when I'm 35, I'll have established my own company.”

Results indicated that the fourth-year students who participated in the focus group interview generally cannot dream about the position they will be in professionally when they reach the age of 35.

Participants 9, 11, 14 and 15 generally stated that they could not have a clear dream about what position they would be in professionally when they reached the age of 35. Participant 9 said,

“... I can't really imagine, but I believe that I will work hard until I'm 35, I think I won't have any financial problems.”

Participant 13 stated that when she turned 35, she could imagine herself as the CFO of the family company where she works as an intern. Participant 10 stated that when he reached the age of 35, he could imagine himself as an academician. Participant 12 expressed,

“... By the time I am 35, my company will have many branches and I will oversee them.”

4.7. The Practices That the Participants Did and Will Do in Order Not to Experience Professional Anxiety

Results from the focus group interview with the first-year students of the university indicated that most of the participants did not do much to avoid professional anxiety, but they had plans.

Participants 4 and 7 said respectively,

“...I preferred the MIS department to find a job easily after graduating. I try to be successful in the classes that I take”.

“... Since I have no worries about the future, I do not make a plan to relieve my professional anxiety.”

Participants 2, 3 and 6 stated that they plan to do Work and Travel during the summer vacation and then do internships regularly every summer.

Unlike the others, participant 8 said,

“... I am preparing for PPSE because I have an associate degree. I plan to be appointed and become a civil servant. I am thinking of saving money while working and improving myself in the software field at the same time.”

Results from the focus group interview held with the fourth-year students of the university indicated that all participants attended training and did internships in order not to experience professional anxiety.

Participant 14 expressed that,

“... After the preparation class, I worked in the field of accounting in a company as an intern. After that, I continued my internship in different fields each summer. I also went to the course to improve my English.”

Participants 9 and 12 stated that they gained experience by working in different sectors and positions in order not to experience professional anxiety. Participant 10 said that,

“...I want to be an academic, so I attended seminars and training to improve myself academically.”

Participant 15 stated that he was preparing for the exam because he wanted to be an administrative judge and he attended many law seminars.

5. CONCLUSION

Anxiety about the future is an emotion that most people experience at least once in their lives. Especially this sense of anxiety is felt more in subjects such as education, career and unemployment, which can be called turning points in people's lives.

Generally, the university is an important stage in people's lives because it is the last step of education before starting a business life. Students start their university life with full self-confidence because they have survived a long period of study and exam stress, and they worry less about their future, thinking that they have at least four more years before they graduate from university. However, this situation changes as they approach graduation. Fourth-year university students, who realize that they will enter a new period in their lives after graduation, begin to feel anxiety about their profession and career.

In this study, a discussion environment was created by enabling students to interact with each other by using the focus group interview. Thus, it was ensured that the real thoughts and ideas of the students about their professional future anxiety were revealed.

Results of the research indicated that all of the first and fourth-year students of the university have a professional plan after graduation. However, the first-year students stated that their plans may change since they have at least three years to graduate. In addition, fourth-year students make more realistic plans because they have a very short time to graduate and start business life, and they even make other professional plans in case they cannot realize their first plans.

Results indicated that the levels of anxiety about not being able to find a job after graduation or the possibility of not realizing their professional plans differ between the first and fourth-year students. The first and fourth-year students are united in the idea that graduating from a department that uses English as an educational language will be an advantage when they start their professional life. The opinions of first and fourth-year students disagree about starting and continuing their professional life abroad.

Results from the question about the position they will be in professionally when they reach the age of 35 indicated that the first-year students clearly explained the position they will be in without hesitation, while the majority of the fourth-year students could not clearly talk about the position they would be in when they reached the age of 35. The most important reason for this situation is that while first-year students approach more imaginatively, fourth-year students approach more realistically and are aware that it is not easy to get the profession they want. In addition, they do not talk about it definitively, as they have the possibility of doing a different job than they imagined in line with the course of life.

In order not to experience professional anxiety, results of the study indicated that first-year students generally do not engage in any activity but make plans. However, fourth-year students work in different jobs and gain experience, do internships in the fields they are interested in, and attend various trainings in order to avoid professional anxiety.

Results of the research indicated that in general, fourth-year students have more future anxiety than first-year students. Fourth-year students are more realistic and planned, and they take many steps to avoid future anxiety. In addition, students who have a family business have a minimum level of future anxiety. Students who do not have a family business have a high level of future anxiety and they work to reduce this anxiety.

In the light of all these results, it is very important for university students to take steps individually and be guided by their advisors and professors at the university in order to minimize their professional anxiety and graduate as better-equipped individuals. The rise of students' professional anxiety in the last year at the university and the motivation to cope with this anxiety situation also prevents their potential and causes loss of motivation from time to time. The self-confidence of the students who spend their university life with educational activities such as internships, seminars, congresses, as well as various social activities will increase, and they will start life as individuals who know themselves and know what they want. At this point, it is of great importance to inform and guide students in their first year, to provide counseling on the basis of faculties and departments, and to continue university life with an active and dynamic interaction between the student and the university. In addition, the university should revise its career planning and alumni platform to take a supportive role in dealing with students' concerns.

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