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An examination of the perception of future time among university students from the perspective of demographic variables

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the future time perspective of students in the faculty of sports sciences and the factors influencing this perception in relation to various variables. The population of the study consists of university students, while the sample includes a total of 266 students (128 males, 48.1%, and 138 females, 51.9%) studying at the Faculty of Sports Sciences at Kütahya Dumlupınar University. The data collection instruments include a personal information form developed by the researcher, as well as the Future Time Perspective Scale (FTPS), developed by Husman and Shell (1996) and adapted to Turkish culture with validity and reliability studies conducted by Avcı and Erden (2009). In this study, a non-experimental causal-comparative model, one of the quantitative research methods, was employed to identify the current situation. The data were analyzed using the SPSS program. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, and percentages were included in the analysis. Skewness and kurtosis values were examined, revealing a normal distribution, and Independent Samples T-Test and MANOVA were used to compare the differences. According to the findings, no statistically significant differences were found regarding students' gender, participation in recreational sports, and academic success ($p>0.05$). However, significant differences were found in favor of students in upper classes based on the class variable ($p<0.05$). These findings indicate that students become more focused on career goals as they approach graduation, which creates differences in their future time perspectives.

Keywords: Future Time Perspective, Recreational Sports, University Students

1. Introduction

The concept of time is one of the most difficult phenomena to define, and various definitions have been proposed for it, especially considering the increasing attention it receives today (Üstün et al., 2016). For some, time is seen as a transient phenomenon that should merely be spent, while for others, it is considered the most valuable aspect of life. Future time perspective, on the other hand, refers to the tendency of individuals to make plans regarding the future and their inclination to achieve these plans (Husman & Shell, 1996). This perspective provides the essential motivational source that individuals need to shape their future-oriented plans (Nuttin, 2014). While the past is known and the present is predictable, it is impossible to know the future

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(Hazzlett, 2011). This uncertainty makes our plans for the future even more important, and this is where the concept of future time perspective comes into play. Future time perspective is defined as the influence of an individual's expectations and goals for the near or distant future on their current actions (Avcı & Erden, 2013).

For young individuals such as university students, future perceptions play a crucial role in their educational processes and career planning (Seginer, 2009). Future time perspective is not only related to individuals' academic performance but also to their participation in social activities and personal development processes (Keough & Boyd, 1999). It is inevitable for students to have doubts, anxieties, and plans about their future. The behaviors and thoughts they exhibit during their education play a significant role in shaping their future (Üstün et al., 2013). Several studies have been conducted on how participation in recreational activities during university education affects individuals' future perceptions. Recreational sports contribute to individuals' use of free time, stress management, and overall life satisfaction (Iso-Ahola & Weissinger, 1990). The impact of these activities on individuals' future plans is mainly through strengthening social bonds and increasing motivation for the future (Passmore & French, 2003). It has been observed that individuals who engage in physical activities experience less boredom, and these types of activities also play an important role in overall health (Strasser, 2013). In this context, examining the relationship between university students' participation in recreational activities and their future time perspective is crucial (Schwarzer & Luszczynska, 2008). Particularly as students approach their final year, focusing more on career planning leads to significant changes in their future perceptions (Pekel & Dallı, 2017). Furthermore, various studies emphasize that factors such as gender, academic success, and participation in social activities also influence individuals' future time perspectives (Aksoy, 2021; Yılmaz & Kurtipek, 2022).

In this context, this study aimed to examine the future time perspectives of students in the Faculty of Sports Sciences and the factors affecting these perspectives. Specifically, it aims to investigate the impact of students' gender, class levels, and participation in recreational activities on their future time perspectives.

2. Material and Method

2.1. Study Design

In the study, a cross-sectional analytical method was used as the study design, and according to Gratton and Jones (2010), this method is perhaps the most commonly used in social and sport-based studies. According to this method, the data obtained from a sampling group relationship is identified and generalized back to the population.

2.2. The Research Group

The population of the study consists of university students. The sample group consists of a total of 266 students, 128 males, and 138 females, selected by random sampling method from probabilistic techniques, studying at Kütahya Dumlupınar University Faculty of Sport Sciences.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

Within the scope of the study, the "Personal Information Form" developed by the researcher to collect the demographic information of the participants and the "Future Time Perception Scale" were used to determine the future time perceptions of the individuals. The future time perception scale developed by Husman and Shell (1996) is a measurement tool for measuring individuals' perceptions of any time. The scale consists of 27 items and 4 sub-dimensions. The 1st sub-dimension is "Commitment", the 2nd sub-dimension is "Value", the 3rd sub-dimension is "Breadth", and the 4th sub-dimension is "Speed of Reaction". The scale was adapted into Turkish by Avcı and Erden (2009). The statements in the scale are in a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree (1)" to "Strongly Agree (5)". The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the Turkish scale is .82 for the commitment subscale, .72 for the value subscale, .72 for the speed subscale, and .74 for the breadth subscale.

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2.4. The Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was performed using the SPSS 22.0 program. Normality tests, and descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and percentages, were among the analyses conducted. Upon examining the skewness and kurtosis values of the data, it was determined that the data showed a homogeneous distribution, and Independent Samples T-Test and MANOVA were applied to compare the differences.

2.5. Assumptions

1. It is assumed that the method applied in this study is appropriate.
2. The selected sample of the group is assumed to represent the population of the study.
3. It is assumed that the answers given by the students in this study to the data collection tools are given following the sincere and facts.

3. Findings

In this section, the findings regarding the variables of our study are given. The findings which demonstrate the distributions of the participants with regard to their personal information were analyzed and interpreted.

Table 1: Distribution of Scale Scores

Dependent Variable	Number of Items	N	$\overline{X}$	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach Alpha
Commitment	12	266	3.87	-.227	-.623	.805
Value	7	266	2.54	-.182	-.441	.687
Speed	3	266	3.46	-.475	-.455	.775
Breadth	5	266	2.64	.094	.041	.643

Table 1, the mean scores of the subdimensions of the Future Time Perspective Scale are presented. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of the scale range from 0.805 to 0.643. The skewness and kurtosis values of the sample indicate that the data exhibit a homogeneous distribution within the ± 1.5 range. Therefore, parametric test techniques assuming normal distribution have been used to analyze the data.

In Table 2, examining the demographic distribution of participants in various subgroups shows that 51.9% of the participants are female, 38% are 4th-year students, 41% have a grade point average of 2.51-3.00, and 53.8% do not participate in recreational sports.

In Table 3, it is observed that the mean scores of the scale subdimensions do not show significant differences by gender ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2: Demographic Distribution

Independent Variables	Subgroups	Frequency	%	Total
Gender	Male	128	48.1	226
	Female	138	51.9	
Grade Level	1	28	10.5	226
	2	68	25.6	
	3	69	25.9	
	4	101	38.0	
Academic Grade	2.00 and below	31	11.7	226
	2.01 – 2.50	69	25.9	
	2.51 – 3.00	109	41.0	
	3.01 and above	57	21.4	
Participation to Recreational sports	Yes	123	46.2	226
	No	143	53.8	

Ekinci, N. E. (2024). An examination of the perception of future time among university students from the perspective of demographic variables. *Journal of Human Sciences*, *21*(4), 377-382. doi:10.14687/jhs.v21i4.6496

Table 3: Independent Samples T-Test Results Regarding Gender

Dependent Variables	Gender	N	$\overline{X}$	Sd	df	t	p
Commitment	Male	128	3,82	,740	237	-1,145	,253
	Female	138	3,91	,567			
Value	Male	128	2,54	,823	264	,010	,992
	Female	138	2,54	,752			
Speed	Male	128	3,42	1,102	264	-,592	,554
	Female	138	3,50	1,043			
Breadth	Male	128	2,63	,888	264	-,161	,872
	Female	138	2,65	,730			

Table 4 shows that the average scores for the scale did not reveal significant differences based on participation in recreational sports (p> 0.05).

Table 4: Independent Samples T-Test Results Based on Participation in Recreational Sports

Dependent Variable	Gender	N	$\overline{X}$	Sd	df	t	p
Commitment	Yes	123	3,82	,691	264	1,048	,296
	No	143	3,91	,625			
Value	Yes	123	2,61	,863	236	1,422	,156
	No	143	2,47	,709			
Speed	Yes	123	3,46	1,056	264	,017	,986
	No	143	3,46	1,087			
Breadth	Yes	123	2,67	,867	264	,482	,630
	No	143	2,62	,756			

In Table 5, the MANOVA test results indicate that the main effect of the university grade level on the subdimensions of the Future Time Perspective Scale is significant [$\lambda 1\ (1 + \lambda 1) = 0.006$, $F = 3.682$, $p < 0.05$]. Significant differences were found in the "Value" subdimension between the 4th and 3rd years, and in the "Breadth" subdimension between the 4th and 3rd years as well as between the 2nd and 4th years.

Table 5: MANOVA Test Results for Grade Level

Depandent Variable	Grade	N	$\overline{X}$	Sd	f	p	Differences between Groups
Commitment	1	28	3,67	3	1,854	,138	
	2	68	3,98				
	3	69	3,92				
	4	101	3,81				
Value	1	28	2,33	3	3,159	,025	4-3
	2	68	2,50				
	3	69	2,40				
	4	101	2,71				
Speed	1	28	3,45	3	,962	,411	
	2	68	3,54				
	3	69	3,58				
	4	101	3,33				
Breadth	1	28	2,65	3	3,296	,021	4-3, 2-4
	2	68	2,51				
	3	69	2,50				
	4	101	2,83				

Ekinci, N. E. (2024). An examination of the perception of future time among university students from the perspective of demographic variables. *Journal of Human Sciences*, *21*(4), 377-382. doi:10.14687/jhs.v21i4.6496

Table 6: MANOVA Test Results for Academic Grade

Depandent Variable	Academic GPA	N	$\overline{X}$	Sd	f	p
Commitment	2,00 and belove	31	3,79	3	,370	,774
	2,01-2,50	69	3,84			
	2,51-3,00	109	3,91			
	3,01 and above	57	3,85			
Value	2,00 and belove	31	3,79	3	2,009	,113
	2,01-2,50	69	3,84			
	2,51-3,00	109	3,91			
	3,01 and above	57	3,85			
Speed	2,00 and belove	31	3,79	3	2,103	,100
	2,01-2,50	69	3,84			
	2,51-3,00	109	3,91			
	3,01 and above	57	3,85			
Breadth	2,00 and belove	31	3,79	3	2,174	,092
	2,01-2,50	69	3,84			
	2,51-3,00	109	3,91			
	3,01 and above	57	3,85			

Table 6 shows that the MANOVA results indicate no significant differences in the Future Time Perspective Scale scores based on academic grade [$\lambda = 0.059$, $F = 1.716$, $p > 0.05$].

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, it was found that participants' future time perspectives did not show a significant difference based on gender. This finding suggests that gender does not have a determining effect on individuals' future time perspectives. A study by Dallı and Pekel (2017), which examined the future time perspectives of sports science students, also did not find a significant difference based on gender, which aligns with the results of this study. However, other studies in the literature have reported differing results regarding the influence of gender on future time perspective. For example, in the study by Yıldız, Şekerci, and Kırtepe (2020) conducted with sports science students, it was found that male students had significantly higher future time perspectives compared to female students. Similarly, Demirel et al. (2016) found a significant difference in the "breadth" subdimension of the Future Time Perspective Scale in favor of female students in their research on physical education and sports college students.

In this study, students' future time perspectives did not show a significant difference based on participation in recreational sports. However, Demirel et al. (2016) study found that students in the recreation department had significantly higher future time perspectives in the "breadth" subdimension compared to students from other departments.

The study also revealed that students' future time perspectives showed significant differences in the "value" and "breadth" subdimensions based on their grade level. This difference was observed between 4th and 3rd-year students in the "value" subdimension and between 4th, 3rd, and 2nd-year students in the "breadth" subdimension. The "breadth" dimension refers to the distance between the goals an individual sets and the time frame in which these goals are located (Nuttin & Willy, 1985). The "value" dimension, on the other hand, defines the importance an individual attaches to goals they aim to achieve in both the near and distant future (Husman & Shell, 1996). These findings may reflect the increased focus on career goals as students approach graduation. As students reach their 4th year, their professional and academic goals become clearer, which leads to an increased emphasis on the future. However, there are also studies in the literature that argue grade level does not have a significant effect on future time perspective. For instance, Aksoy (2021) found no significant differences in the subdimensions or total scores of the Future Time Perspective Scale based on grade level among physical education and sports teacher candidates. Similarly, Yılmaz and Kurtipek (2022)

Ekinci, N. E. (2024). An examination of the perception of future time among university students from the perspective of demographic variables. *Journal of Human Sciences*, *21*(4), 377-382. doi:10.14687/jhs.v21i4.6496

found no significant differences in participants' future time perspectives based on grade level in their study.

Additionally, the study found no significant difference between students' future time perspectives and their academic grade point averages. Similarly, Aktaş (2021) found no significant relationship between academic grade point average and future time perspective in his study. This finding suggests that academic achievement level does not significantly influence students' perceptions of the future.

4.1. Limitations and Future Studies

Although this study revealed significantly meaningful results about future time perspective for university students, it is impossible to assess general time perspective information in a single study. The limitations of our study: all the participants were from the same faculty that's why they may have the same behavior attitudes. For future studies, it will help to get information about students' economic wealth and family communication.

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