

# The Relationship between Academic Motivation Levels and Career Decisions of Physical Education and Sports Science Students

CEMAL ÖZMAN<sup>1</sup>, AYDIN PEKEL<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Nişantaşı University, Vocational School of Higher Education, Sports Management Department, Turkey, Istanbul,*

<sup>2</sup>*Istanbul Gelişim University, College of Physical Education and Sports, Istanbul, Turkey,*

*Correspondence to: Aydın Pekel, Email: [apekel@gelisim.edu.tr](mailto:apekel@gelisim.edu.tr)*

## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** The purpose of this study is to evaluate the relationship between academic motivation levels and career decisions of physical education and sports science students.

**Methods:** In accordance with the aim of the study, the research model was designed based on correlational survey model. The universe of the research is made up of students of Istanbul City Public and Foundation Universities, Physical Education and Sports Vocational School of Higher Education and Faculty of Sports Science, while the sample is made up of 398 voluntary students. Participants were asked to fill personal information forms, academic motivation scales and career decision scales. The data gathered were transferred to the SPSS 25 packaged software, and correlation and regression analyses were performed.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, it was determined that students of physical education and sports science have a good level of academic motivation while the perception of career decision is at medium level. It was determined that, there is a low level relationship between academic motivation and informed career decision and uninformed career decision, a medium level relationship between academic motivation and career decision general score, and that the academic motivation level predicts the career decision and explains 22% of the total variation.

**Keywords:** Physical Education and Sports, Academic Motivation, Career Decision, University Students

## INTRODUCTION

In order for the individuals that make up societies to live healthy, the importance of expert physical education and sports scientists and academicians is an undeniable truth. Great responsibility falls on the shoulders of sports scientist when the public interacts with sports. Sports scientists ensure that societies do sports and exercise correctly and guide them in many ways such as pre-exercise performance development, sports for health<sup>1,2</sup>. Educating qualified sports scientists is an important topic that shouldn't be overlooked. That's why sports scientists' education quality and learning motivation throughout their university years should be the best it can.

Individuals being able to get the most out of their university educations and becoming happily successful depends on many factors, primarily the quality of the education received and individual differences. Many topics such as talent, motivation, success, studying habits and self-esteem have been subjects of research as individual differences. Academic motivation, which is one of the fundamental concepts in this study, is defined as; the production of the energy needed to do things in the academic field<sup>3,4</sup>. Another concept, career, means; all the experiences acquired and the occupational progress made while practicing one's profession<sup>5</sup>. Career decision can be described as; an individual making a choice out of their education program, school or job options or leaning toward one of the options<sup>6,7</sup>.

University years is an important phase in which students choose a specific field and start preparing for their futures. If during this period student can better improve their academic motivation, they'll inevitably lean towards professions that suit their interests, talents and values.

Specifically, career decision making difficulties mean, having difficulties when trying to make the final decision in choosing a career. Individuals have difficulties choosing what kind of path they want to follow throughout their

careers or choosing one out of several such<sup>8,9,10</sup>. How a smart career choice is formulated plays an important role in the hiring process. However, many university students are unable to make rational career decisions and end up having difficulties making career choices that could lead them to being successfully employed. That's why, from theory to practice starting right and researching the important factors is crucial<sup>11,12</sup>.

Much like in every other sector, the sport sector unemployment problem in Turkey is a structural and continuous situation. Universities' sports science departments raise teachers, trainers, exercise specialists, managers and recreation specialists for the sports institutions and organizations in our country. However, despite being sufficiently educated, these graduates are unable to find employment opportunities in the labor market. That's why in the career decision making stage and during their education, individuals' academic motivation is important<sup>13</sup>. That's why the direction and level of the relationship between physical education and sports science students' academic motivation levels and career decisions as well as academic motivation's ability to explain career decision is studied.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

**Research Model:** In accordance with the aim of the study, the research model was designed based on correlational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. Correlational survey model is a research method that seeks to find out if two or more variables change in conjunction<sup>14</sup>. Survey method was used to collect data.

**Research Group:** The universe of the research is made up of students of Istanbul City Public and Foundation Universities, Physical Education and Sports Vocational School of Higher Education and Faculty of Sports Science, while the sample is made up by 398 voluntary students that were selected using simple random sampling.

**Data Collection:** Google Forms platform was utilized in order to gather data. This method was chosen in order to maintain social distancing rules during the pandemic. In the process of data gathering, information and surveys were delivered to the participants via social networks. Voluntary participants were asked to fill personal information forms and academic motivation and career decision scales.

**Demographic Information Form:** Participants were asked 5 questions regarding their school type, gender, age, GPA and career state.

**Academic Motivation Scale:** Participants were asked to fill the academic motivation scale developed by Bozanoğlu (2004)<sup>4</sup> which contains 20 items. The 4th item of the scale was reverse coded. Academic motivation scale's internal consistency coefficient was calculated to be 0.86. The scale offers the opportunity of Likert type fivefold grading. The lowest possible score participants could get from the scale was 20, with the highest being 100. A higher grade points to a higher level of academic motivation<sup>4</sup>.

**Career Decision Scale:** The career decision scale that was used was developed by Yusupu (2015)<sup>15</sup> and contains 30 items and 3 subscales. The 13 item informed career decision subscale is made up of the questions; 1, 8, 9, 24, 18, 16, 20, 11, 29, 27, 6, 5 and 14; the 11 item uninformed career decision subscale is made up of the questions; 7, 3, 10, 19, 30, 26, 23, 21, 17, 12 and 28; and the 6 item environmental factors subscale is made up of the questions; 2, 4, 13, 15, 22 and 25. The informed career decision subscale's internal consistency coefficient was calculated to be 0.898, uninformed career decision subscale's internal consistency coefficient was calculated to be 0.852, environmental factors subscale's internal consistency coefficient was calculated to be 0.768 and the entire scale's internal consistency coefficient was calculated to be 0.918<sup>15</sup>. The scale questions were graded in fivefold Likert style.

**Analysis of Data:** The data gathered in the study were analyzed in a computer. Skewness and kurtosis distribution was measured according to the statistics of the data. After the variables' normality and the variances' homogeneity prerequisites were checked, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was evaluated. The variables were expressed using average  $\pm$  standard deviation, percent and frequency values. To find out the connections between the scales, correlation and regression analyses were performed. For the significance level of the tests  $s < 0.05$  and  $s < 0.01$  values were taken.

## RESULTS

When Table 1 was examined it was determined that, 28.6% of sports sciences students were women and 71.4% were men; 14.3% were between the ages 16-19, 59.5% were between the ages 20-23, 13.8% were between the ages 24-27, 5.8% were between the ages 28-31, 3.8% were between the ages 32-35, and 2.8% were 36 and over; 28.7% had a GPA of 2.01-2.50, 33.7% had 2.51-3.00, 27.1% had 3.01-3.50, and 10.6% had 3.51-4.00; 42.0% were state university students, and 58.0% were foundation university students; 64.8% considered a career in academics, 10.8% did not and 24.4% were unsure.

Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test results in Table 2, it can be concluded that the scores students got

from the scales significantly deviated from normal. The application of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is just one of the methods used to analyze the normality. Normal distribution curves indicate that these values that don't deviate excessively from the normal, are in the range of  $\pm 1.5$ .

Table 1: Descriptive statistics-frequency and percentage values

Variables	Groups	N	%
Gender	Woman	114	28.6
	Man	284	71.4
	Total	398	100.0
Age	16-19	57	14.3
	20-23	237	59.5
	24-27	55	13.8
	28-31	23	5.8
	32-35	15	3.8
	36 and over	11	2.8
	Total	398	100.0
Grade Point Average	2.01-2.50	114	28.7
	2.51-3.00	134	33.7
	3.01-3.50	108	27.1
	3.51-4.00	42	10.6
	Total	398	100.0
School Type	State University	167	42.0
	Foundation University	231	58.0
	Total	398	100.0
Would You Consider a Career in Academics?	Yes	258	64.8
	No	43	10.8
	Unsure	97	24.4
	Total	398	100.0

Table 2: Skewness-kurtosis and kolmogorov-smirnov test significance level results of the participants' scale grades

	N	Skewness	Kurtosis	s
Informed Career Decision	398	-1.156	1.108	.100
Uninformed Career Decision	398	.517	-.274	.058
Environmental Factors	398	.895	.471	.049
Career Decision General	398	1.120	.538	.000
Academic Motivation	398	-.406	-.587	.117

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the scores gotten from the scales

	N	Min	Max	X $\pm$ Sd
Informed Career Decision	398	23.00	65.00	57.10 $\pm$ 7.70
Uninformed Career Decision	398	11.00	55.00	27.28 $\pm$ 9.82
Environmental Factors	398	6.00	30.00	12.75 $\pm$ 4.88
Career Decision General	398	61.00	148.00	97.14 $\pm$ 12.22
Academic Motivation	398	45.00	100.00	80.12 $\pm$ 13.18

When the figures shown in Table 3 were analyzed, participant

students' career decision scale informed career decision subscale average was found to be 57.10 $\pm$ 7.70, uninformed career decision subscale average to be 27.28 $\pm$ 9.82, environmental factors subscale average to be 12.75 $\pm$ 4.88, career decision general average to be 97.14 $\pm$ 12.22 and academic motivation general average to be 80.12 $\pm$  13.18.

Table 4: The relation between academic motivation and career decision

		Informed Career Decision	Uninformed Career Decision	Environmental Factors	Career Decision General
Academic Motivation	r	.330	-.255	-.030	.470
	p	.002*	.001*	.053	.000**

n: 398; \*P<0.05; \*\*P<0.01

When the direction and level of the relation between academic motivation and career decision was examined in Table 4; it was determined that there is a low level positive relationship between academic motivation and informed career decision; (r=.330; p=.002), a negative low level relationship between academic motivation and uninformed career decision (r=-.255; p=.001), and a positive medium level relationship between academic motivation and career decision general score (r=.470; p=.000).

Table 5: Regression analysis regarding career decision level prediction

	β	t	p	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p
Constant				.470	.220	14.246	.000**
Academic Motivation	.470	7.070	.001				

N=398; \*\*p<.001

Findings shown in Table 5 present a model significant relationship between students' academic motivation levels and career decision actions (R=.470; R<sup>2</sup>=.220, p<0.001). T-test results regarding the significance of the regression coefficients indicate that academic motivation predicts the career decision (t=7.070; p=.001) and explains 22% of the total variance.

## DISCUSSION

Study shows the behavior of students of physical education and sports science towards academic motivation is at a desirable level. The reason for this situation can be traced to the sample group students' interest in academic topics and the effort they put into learning them. It is understood that the perception regarding career decision is at medium level. Sports science students' behavior towards their career is insufficient. This can be explained by the students not knowing enough about their personality and the profession.

There is a positive low level relationship between academic motivation and informed career decision dimension, a negative low level relationship between academic motivation and uninformed career decision, and a positive medium level relationship between academic motivation and career decision general score. In other words, while academic motivation and informed career decision dimension and career decision general score have a linear relationship, academic motivation and uninformed career decision have an inversely proportional relation. As the academic motivation level increases, informed career dimension and career decision general score also increase in the same direction, while the uninformed career dimension tend to decrease. This is actually in line with our expectations. It is expected that sufficiently motivated

students will be academically successful<sup>16</sup>. Thus, academic motivation, success and career certainty are directly related to each other. The study on university students by Yusupu (2015)<sup>15</sup>, suggests a significant positive relationship between students' academic success and career certainty. In another study, Avara (2015)<sup>17</sup> states there's a positive medium level relationship between academic motivation and academic self-efficacy and carrier decision competency expectations. Upon reviewing the literature, it can be concluded that there are significant relations between variables related to the academic field, such as career decision competency and academic GPA<sup>18,19,20</sup>, and institutional integration<sup>20,21,22,23</sup>.

The academic motivation level of sports science students predicts their career decisions and explains 22% of the total variation. In this sense, it can be observed that academic motivation is a decisive variable in the career decision making process.

Our understanding is that, the students' learning effort, investigative approach, interest in the education and learning process and participation is an important determinant in their behavior towards their career decisions. Universities play a critical role in the decisions students make regarding their careers. The education and examination systems, and social and physical structures of universities play an important part in both the academic motivations and career decisions of the students. In addition, familial and personal characteristics are considered to be important determinants in the relationship between academic motivation and success reflecting on the career decision. Upon reviewing the literature, in the study by Yusupu (2015)<sup>15</sup>, together the career decision scale's informed decision making, uninformed decision making and environmental factors subscale scores, explain approximately 5.2% of the total variation in academic success. This study partially coincides with our findings.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it was determined that students of physical education and sports science have a good level of academic motivation while the perception of career decision is at medium level. It was determined that, there is a low level relationship between academic motivation and informed career decision and uninformed career decision, a medium level relationship between academic motivation and career decision general score, and that the academic motivation level predicts the career decision and explains 22% of the total variation. It is our opinion that universities, which play an important part when the student's lives transition from school life to working life, should better provide students with elements like physical, social, cultural, academic and occupational development opportunities. In order for students to have a more fruitful learning life they should be supported by their universities. Academicians should also be more incentivizing so that students can have successful university lives. Aside from the education they provide, universities should support and incentivize students to participate in career planning oriented activities.

## REFERENCES

1. Bayer R, Eken Ö. The Acute Effect of Different Massage

- Durations on Squat Jump, Countermovement Jump and Flexibility Performance in Muay Thai Athletes. *Physical Education of Students* 2021; 25 (6): 353-358.
2. Bayer R, Eken Ö. Some Anaerobic Performance Variations From Morning To Evening: Massage Affects Performance and Diurnal Variation. *Revista on line de Política e Gestão Educacional* 2021.
  3. Bedel A, Hamarta E. The Relationship between Interpersonal Problem Solving and Academic Motivation. *Elementary Education Online* 2014; 13(2): 674-681.
  4. Bozanoğlu İ. Academic Motivation Scale: Development, Reliability, Validity. *Ankara University, Journal of Faculty of Educational Sciences* 2004; 37 (2): 83-98.
  5. Aytaç S. *Career in Working Life*. 2005; İstanbul.
  6. Waberi FA, Öge E. The Relationship between Professional Expectations and Self-Competence of Career Decision-Making. *ACU International Journal of Social Sciences* 2020; 6 (1): 25-39.
  7. Doğan H. Examination of Contemporary Career Decision Making Approaches and Models. *OPUS Journal of Society Research* 2014; 4(6): 100-130.
  8. Long LR, Peng YX. Research on foreign professional decision-making difficulties and its enlightenment. *Ergonomics* 2000; 6(4): 45-49.
  9. Wang P, Zuo D, Guo A. Difficulties in career decisionmaking: connotation, approach and development trend. *Journal of Shanghai Normal University Philosophy and Social Sciences* 2012; 41(2): 41-49.
  10. Gati I, Krausz M, Osipow SH. A taxonomy of difculties in career decision making. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 1996; 43(4): 510-526.
  11. Xie BG, Xia W. Review of research on career decision making difficulties. *Advances in Psychological Science* 2013; 21(6): 1112-1124.
  12. Martincin KM, Stead GB. Five-factor model and difficulties in career decision making a meta-analysis. *Journal of Career Assessment* 2015; 23(2): 3-19.
  13. Şaşmaz Ataçoçuğu M, Zelyurt MK. A qualitative research on the unemployment experiences of graduates of sport sciences faculties. *Journal of Sports and Education* 2017; Özel Sayı 1: 70-97.
  14. Karasar N. *Scientific Research Method Concepts Principles Techniques* 2017; Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.
  15. Yusupu R. Relationships between career decisions, perfectionism, learning morivation and academic success among universtiry students. Higher License Thesis. University Institute of Educational Sciences Department of Educational Sciences Guidance and Psychological Counseling Program. 2015;
  16. Çakır MA. The Development of Career Decision Inventory. *Ankara University, Journal of Faculty of Educational Sciences* 2004; 37(2): 1-14.
  17. Avara K. Academic self - efficacy, career decision making self - efficacy and school burnout as predictor of academic motivation in high school student. *Mevlana University Institute of Social Sciences Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department. Higher License Thesis*. 2015; Konya.
  18. Lent RW, Brown SD, Larkin KC. Relation of self-efficacy expectations to academic achievement and persistence. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 1984; 31(3): 356-362.
  19. Lent RW, Brown SD, Larkin KC. Self-efficacy in the prediction of academic performance and perceived career options. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 1986; 33(3): 265-269.
  20. Peterson SL. Career decision-making self-efficacy and institutional integration of underprepared college students. *Research in Higher Education* 1993; 34(6): 659-685.
  21. Peterson SL, Delmas RC. Effects of career decision-making self-efficacy and degree utility on student persistence: a path analytic study. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice* 2001; 3(3): 285-299.
  22. İlkim M, Çelik T., Mergan B.(2021) Investigation of Sports Management Students' Perceptions and Attitudes towards the COVID-19 Pandemic, *Pakistan Journal Of Medical & Health Sciences*, Volume15 Issue 2 Page799-803,
  23. Karaca Y., İlkim M.,(2021) Investigation Of The Attitudes Distance Education Of The Faculty Of Sport Science Students In The Covid-19 Period, *Turkish Online Journal Of Distance Education* Volume22, Issue 4, Page114-129