

1906 Navigating the unknown: Exploring the predictors of future anxiety in university students

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The transition from adolescence to adulthood often coincides with significant academic and personal pressures, particularly for university students facing an uncertain future. Individuals who struggle to tolerate ambiguity and unpredictability may perceive future events as threatening, leading to heightened anxiety. This suggests that anxiety may stem from the inability to cope with the uncertainty surrounding future career paths, financial stability, and personal relationships. It is known that anxiety is common in university populations and victims suffer from some comorbid psychological problems such as depression, OCD, and also physical problems. On the other hand, studies show that cognitive flexibility (CF) acts as a protective factor against future anxiety. Individuals with greater CF exhibit adaptability and the ability to shift thoughts and perspectives, enabling them to cope with the uncertainty of future possibilities. Strong problem-solving skills might enhance CF, allowing individuals to navigate unforeseen challenges and adapt to uncertain situations, ultimately reducing anxiety. Therefore, identifying risk factors associated with future anxiety is important to develop early interventions. This study aims to investigate the role of three key psychological factors – intolerance of uncertainty, cognitive flexibility, and problem-solving skills– in shaping future anxiety levels among university students and also detect the predictors of future anxiety. In addition, whether or not future anxiety differs according to age and gender will be examined. The sample consists of 358 university students(263 female, 65 male) between the ages of 18–30. The survey method was preferred to assess variables and questionnaires consisted of demographics, Intolerance to Uncertainty Scale, Cognitive Control and Flexibility Scale, Problem-Solving Inventory, and Future Anxiety Scale in University Students. The data collection process has recently been completed and the analysis process is continuing. The data will be analyzed with ANOVA and Multiple Regression Analysis. After the analysis is completed, results will be discussed according to current literature.