

University Students' Employment Anxiety and Ways of Coping in the Context of Incomplete Learning During the Pandemic Period: A Qualitative Research

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Article History:

Received 20.07.2023

Received in revised form 01.09.2023

Accepted

Available online

01.10.2023

University students' employment anxiety is affected by economic crises, pandemics, lack of experience, incomplete learning, unemployment rates of the country, the department of study, occupational goals and environmental factors of individuals. This study aims to determine which factors affect university students' employment anxiety and to explore the impact of learning losses experienced during the pandemic on employment anxiety and the coping strategies developed by students. For this reason, qualitative research method was used in the current study. In the research, categories and codes were created using the Maxqda 2022 package program. Research data were collected through two different methods: focus-group interviews and semi-structured interviews. The sample of the study consisted of 16 participants, 9 female and 7 male. As a result, in addition to individual and environmental factors, incomplete learning experienced with the pandemic period affects university students' employment anxiety, and students have developed various ways of coping with them.

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Keywords: Employment Anxiety, Ways of Coping, Incomplete Learning, Future Anxiety

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions in Turkey have increased numerically since the 1980s, and in parallel, there has been an increase in the number of students both admitted to and studying at universities. While this increase provides new job and education opportunities for individuals, it also paves the way for the emergence of employment-related problems. How does the increase in the number of universities and the number of admitted students affect individuals' educational opportunities and how does this increase affect their access to employment? The answers to these questions are debated in developing countries such as Turkey (Li et al., 2014). In Turkey, the increase in the number of universities, students, departments and graduates leads to the problem of educated unemployment (Kıçır, 2017). In this context, factors such as employment, unemployment, and expectations of labor markets have an important place in the career development of university students. In this respect, it can be said that the ability of university graduates in Turkey to be employed in areas related to their specialization is largely related to the education they have received.

University education has an important place in terms of developing career opportunities, increasing socioeconomic status, and thus enabling individuals to improve their lives in many areas (Floers et al., 2019). The education received during the university period is a transitional and preparatory stage for students before they move to suitable job positions in the labor market (Hao et al., 2015). In many developed countries, the share of university education is important for individuals to have a profession (Wiedner et al., 2020). However, this is even more important in developing countries. Because it is observed that the unemployment rates of educated people in these countries are high. Therefore, while university education is in such a central position in the individual's career and career processes, the importance of the quality and sustainability of the education received cannot be denied. In this context, university education not only provides individuals with personal development and professional skills, but also offers them job and employment opportunities. There are a number of problems experienced by students during and after university education, which has a significant impact on individuals' lives. In a study conducted by Dursun and Aytac (2009), it is stated that the

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most important issues affecting students' anxiety and hopelessness after university graduation are employment and future anxiety.

Most university students spend their student years away from real-life work experiences. This causes them to experience anxiety during their transition from student to labor market (Belle et al., 2021). This anxiety experienced by students is defined as employability anxiety (Belle et al., 2021). Employment anxiety refers to university students' concerns about finding a job after graduation (Cho, 2008). University students' concerns about finding a job are related to economic conditions and unemployment rates. It is stated that individuals will experience employment anxiety more frequently with events that deeply affect socio-economic life such as economic crises and epidemics on a global scale (Shin, 2019). Since students may have fewer job opportunities during periods of economic recession, their anxiety about finding a job may increase. When the literature is examined, it is observed that in addition to economic conditions, factors such as education level, past work experiences, department of study, own professional goals, and the professional status of their families increase university students' anxiety about finding a job. Despite the prevalence and seriousness of employment anxiety among university students, empirical research on this issue is quite limited (Shin, 2019). This study aims to bring a different perspective to the concept of employment anxiety by adding new empirical findings to the concept of employment anxiety.

Employability can be expressed as a psycho-social structure that includes a number of individual characteristics that facilitate adaptive behaviors by maintaining ongoing employment in a rapidly developing and changing labor market (Fugate et al., 2004). From this point of view, individuals who experience anxiety about being employed may experience various cognitive, emotional and behavioral negativities. Some of these include feeling restless, difficulty concentrating, confidence problems, sleep disorders, and harming oneself and one's environment (Cho, 2008). In addition, it is stated that individuals with employment anxiety have neurotic complaints such as depression, insomnia, concentration disorders and anxiety (Choi et al., 2014). In this context, it can be said that employment anxiety is a factor in which the individual experiences emotional and behavioral reactions in cognition. Employment anxiety may occur in individuals for various reasons. It is thought that the risks of extending students' education periods due to some factors (such as pandemic), the country's economic conditions and unemployment rates, students' job fields and education level, students' past work experiences, students' individual skills and abilities, students' professional goals, students' families' educational status and family expectations are effective in the formation of employment anxiety in students. In addition to these, it has been stated that the factors affecting employment anxiety are employment insufficiency, helplessness, discrimination, inexperience and personal competence (Demir, 2016).

When the literature is examined, it is seen that the concept of employment is approached from perspectives such as employability, employment opportunities, labor market employment balance. More specifically, when the studies on employment anxiety are examined, it is observed that they are related to unemployment anxiety rather than the anxiety of individuals to be employed with their own interests and skills. It is also observed that employment anxiety is treated as state anxiety (Shin, 2018). Some studies on employment anxiety focus on the stress of being unemployed and state that the source of this stress is country conditions, problems arising from the individual and environmental factors (Eş & Durak, 2018; Demir, 2016; Tekin-Tayfun & Korkmaz, 2016; Lim et al., 2018). In addition to these factors that affect individuals' employment anxiety under normal conditions, the recent Covid-19 Pandemic, which is expressed as the "pandemic of the century", poses some problems as it directly affects the labor market and education of university students. During the pandemic period, the education received by university students through distance education has created deficiencies and imbalances in their learning. These deficiencies cause university students to fall behind in their school studies and reduce their competitiveness in the labor market. In this context, the present study aims to add to the literature by offering a different perspective to the employment anxiety experienced by senior university students regarding their own interests and skills, and by investigating employability and learning losses and how students develop coping methods to cope with this situation.

It is thought that if university students receive complete education and reinforce their professional skills with practices, their level of employment anxiety will be low. High and sustainable quality of education can secure the future of the country and at the same time reduce the unemployment problem by providing qualified labor force to the labor market. Adequate and qualified education is of great importance in terms of ensuring the employment of individuals and sustaining the socio-economic welfare of countries (ILO, 2016).

As a matter of fact, with the recent Covid-19 Pandemic, also referred to as the pandemic of the century, public health restrictions and employment-related factors have created a large number of anxiety factors (Wikens et al., 2021; Karagöz & Rüzgar, 2021). It was stated that distance education, which was switched to with the pandemic, did not yield sufficient efficiency compared to face-to-face education (Robson & Mills, 2022). The deficiencies caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in education cause students to experience learning losses (Baz, 2021). Lessons that are not taught effectively and efficiently, as well as inexperience in areas that require practice due to closures, can lead to learning losses. Learning losses caused by incomplete learning may weaken students' professional knowledge that they will realize in the future and cause them to experience employment anxiety. For this reason, the current research; what are the factors that cause university students' employment anxiety in the context of incomplete learning during the pandemic period and what are the factors that cause students'

METHOD

In this study, qualitative research method was used to explore the employment anxiety experienced by university students in the context of their incomplete learning during the pandemic period and to determine which coping strategies the students developed. Because qualitative research investigates the problems related to daily life with unique techniques and methods.

Working Group

This study was conducted with 4th grade students studying in different departments in developed and developing cities of Turkey in the academic year 2022. In this study, maximum diversity sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used. Maximum diversity in the study was achieved with different departments, different universities, different socio-economic levels and genders. Thus, with this sampling method chosen, it was aimed that the participants in the study would be as different as possible in terms of characteristics. Therefore, different views and perspectives of the participants were tried to be revealed (Patton, 2018). In accordance with the purpose of the study, the participants were selected as students who received their education online during the pandemic period and were in their final year of university. All students participating in the study were informed that the researcher would take video and audio recordings and that the data collected would be limited to the research, and in this direction, voluntary consent for participation was obtained from all participants.

Table 1. Participants' gender and departmental information

Focus Group interviews	Participants	Gender	Department
	K1	Female	Preschool Teacher Education
	E1	Female	Mathematics Teacher Education
	E2	Male	Business School
	E3	Male	History
	K2	Female	English Language Teaching
	E4	Male	Mechanical Engineering
	K3	Female	Classroom Teaching
	E5	Male	Mathematics Teacher Education
	K4	Female	Nursing
Semi-structured Interview	Participant	Gender	Department
	K5	Female	Psychological Counseling and Guidance
	K6	Female	Law
	K7	Female	Business School
	K8	Female	Psychological Counseling and Guidance
	E6	Male	Turkish Language Teaching
	E7	Male	Pharmacy
	K9	Female	Sociology

Data Collection Method

Focus group interviews: Defined as a discussion conducted in an environment where the individuals participating in the research freely express their opinions, focus group interviews allow the participants to openly express their opinions and allow different opinions to develop in a discussion environment (Çokluk, Yılmaz, & Oğuz, 2011). Therefore, this method was chosen to benefit from the interaction between the participants.

Sample focus group interview questions; Do you have a plan after graduation, what do you think about finding a job?, How do you think your individual learning and abilities have changed with online education during the pandemic period? What are your positive and negative judgments about finding a job in the future about the education you received during the pandemic period? questions were selected in accordance with the purpose of the research and the researchers tried to clarify the problem situation by asking in-depth questions in focus group interviews.

Semi-structured Interview: On the other hand, the participants were interviewed with the semi-structured interview technique regarding which coping methods university students use regarding the anxiety of finding a job due to incomplete learning during the pandemic period, with reference to the situation determination made with the focus group interview. The reason why the semi-structured interview method was used in the research (Karataş, 2012), apart from collecting data with the focus group method, is that it is the most ideal method to get answers to "How" and "Why" questions from the participants about a subject. In addition, the semi-structured interview method provides the researcher with in-depth information about a specific subject (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). Thus, in order to determine which coping methods university students developed regarding their anxiety about finding a job due to incomplete learning during the pandemic period, the questions belonging to the semi-structured interview technique Sample questions for one-on-one interviews: What ways did you use to reduce learning losses in the education you received during the pandemic period?, What did you do to prevent the education you received during the pandemic period from negatively affecting your finding a job?, How did you develop coping methods to reduce your anxiety about finding a job? With questions in the form of questions, it was tried to determine which coping methods the participants developed regarding employment anxiety.

Process

In this study, in accordance with the purpose of the research, data were collected primarily by focus group method. The reason for choosing the focus group method is to ensure that the participants can freely express their own ideas in an impartial environment without any pressure and to create a discussion environment and to enable the participants to express their ideas clearly. The students who would participate in the focus group interviews were selected on a voluntary basis by obtaining a consent form through Google Form. In the focus group interviews, a total of 6 questions were asked to the students and in parallel to the answers given to these questions, the answers given by the responsible researcher with questions such as "Why?, Why?, How?" were tried to be analyzed in-depth content analysis. Focus group interviews were conducted via GoogleMeet program. The collected data will be stored in the Google Drive account of the principal investigator for five years. Focus group interviews were conducted in June 2022. The ethical appropriateness of this study was ethically approved by the decision of Kahramanmaraş İstiklal University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board with the decision of the meeting dated 27/06/2022 and numbered 2020/2. Within the scope of the study, the focus group interview lasted 76 minutes in total. The interview was recorded with video and audio recordings. The recordings were then transcribed. In the focus group interview, the opinions of university students about the effect of the education they received during the pandemic period on their employment anxiety were obtained. One-on-one interviews, the second data collection method of the study, were conducted to explore the coping strategies developed by individuals experiencing employment anxiety in the context of incomplete learning during the pandemic. One-on-one interviews; one interview lasted an average of 30 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded and the recordings were then transcribed. The collected data will be kept for five years with the consent of the participants. Then, categories were determined by coding in the light of all the data and the problem situation was tried to be discovered in accordance with the research purpose.

Data Analysis

As a result of both focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews collected in order to explore employment anxiety and ways of coping with it in the context of incomplete learning, the data were coded and categories were created with the Maxqda 2022 program. First, 32 codes and 8 categories were created by the researchers. Then, in-depth analysis was conducted and the codes and categories were finalized by taking expert opinions. In line with the expert opinions and the analysis of the researchers, 5 categories and 15 codes were created. The use of expert opinion in qualitative research ensures that the stages in the data collection and data analysis process are valid and consistent (Creswell, 2021). In this context, the research data were analyzed by receiving various feedback and suggestions from three different experts during the data analysis and interpretation processes.

Validity and Reliability

Triangulation method was used to ensure the validity and reliability of this study. Triangulation method is a method used in qualitative research to create evidence supporting multiple and different sources and methods (Creswell, 2021). In addition, this method includes evidence supporting a theme or perspective from different sources (Patton, 2018). In this context, since the research data are collected with two different methods and to document a code or theme, information is triangulated and the findings are thus validated (Creswell, 2021). On the other hand, a member check was conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the data. The purpose of member checking is to solicit participants' views on the credibility of the findings and interpretations (Creswell, 2021). This technique is considered as an important method to ensure the credibility of research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking reveals the accuracy of the research findings by collecting, analyzing and interpreting data in the research and sending the results back to the participants (Creswell, 2021).

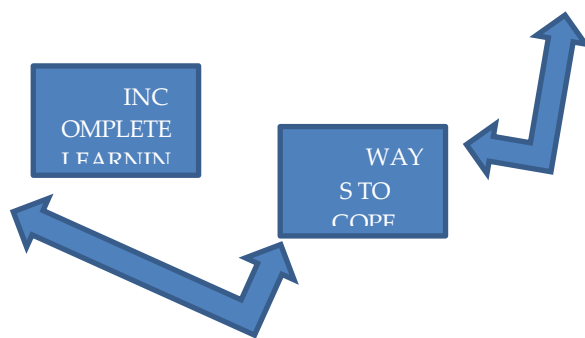


Figure 1. Framework

Findings

The categories and codes related to employment anxiety experienced by students in the context of incomplete learning during the pandemic period are emotional experiences (self-confidence problems), future anxiety (contraction in the labor market, expectation of working under inappropriate conditions, hopelessness), incomplete learning (lack of knowledge, anxiety due to inadequate education, facility/infrastructure problems, self-confidence problem). On the other hand, as a result of the analysis, the categories and codes related to ways of coping are behavioral coping (increasing learning resources, diversifying the field of expertise, developing online learning skills, gaining experience), professional support, social support (peer communication, social media interaction, communication with the expert).

Table 3. Employment Anxiety and Ways of Coping of University Students during the Pandemic Period Codes and Frequencies

Categories and Codes	f
Emotional Experiences	14
• Self-confidence problem	3
Future Anxiety	3
• Contraction in the Labor Market	5
• Expectation of Working in Unfavorable Conditions	4
• Despair	3
Incomplete Learning	19
• Lack of Information	3
• Anxiety Due to Inadequate Education	10
• Facility / Infrastructure Problems	3
• Ways of Coping	29
Behavioral Coping Öğrenme Kaynaklarını Artırmak	14
• Diversifying Specialization	3
• Developing Online Learning Skills	2
• Gaining Experience	5
• Professional Support	6
Social Support	9
• Peer Communication	2
• Social Media Interaction	4
• Contact with Expert	3

Emotional Experiences

One of the subcategories formed in line with the opinions of university students regarding the employment concerns of the pandemic period is the self-confidence problem. Participants stated that they could not fully learn in online education that started with the pandemic period, that they could not fully learn the theoretical lessons, that they were deprived of practical lessons, and that they had self-confidence problems due to this. According to the feedback received from the participants, a response is as follows:

"If it were not for the pandemic period, at least I thought that I would graduate better equipped in terms of education, I thought that the state institution would always do the job I would do somehow, even if it was private, but since both the theoretical and practical courses were not very productive, I realized my inexperience in the profession more. Even in any job we do internship, I have a lot of anxiety, I have self-confidence problems such as whether I can do it or not." (K2, Female, English Language Teaching).

Future Anxiety

One of the categories formed according to the responses of the participants on the effects of the training received during the pandemic on their employment concerns is future anxiety. In the context of the feedback received from the participants, it is observed that the subcategories that constitute future anxiety are the contraction in the labor market, the expectation of working under unsuitable conditions and hopelessness. Participants feel anxiety about the future from different perspectives. For example, one participant stated that there was a contraction in the labor market and expressed his concern as follows:

"With the pandemic, I saw the market shrinking in every sense, from teacher recruitment to public appointments, this situation caused me anxiety, wondering if I would be appointed. The fact that the cost of living accompanied the contraction in the labor market made me look at the future more hopeless." (E1, Male, Mathematics Teacher).

According to the feedback received from the participants, future anxiety comes to the fore in line with the opinions of university students regarding the employment concerns of the pandemic period, and this situation puts some of the participants in the expectation of working under inappropriate conditions. The fact that there are distance education and applications during the pandemic period creates the perception that the participants will work in inappropriate conditions due to the contraction in the job market after graduation and the large number of candidates. Thus, a response from the participants is as follows:

"Due to the inadequacy of the education I received during the pandemic period and the inadequacy of the practices, I think that the salary I will receive in the future will be low, for example, as an intern today, I will start for 2000 TL, while as a graduate of the pandemic period, I encountered funny figures such as 1000-1300 TL." (E3, Male, History).

Some participants expressed that they felt hopelessness. Participants stated that they experienced hopelessness due to the pandemic period, both due to disruptions in education and changes in economic and social structures at national and global level. Accordingly, a response from the participants is as follows:

"Some of the professors at the university could not adapt to the online education system, so this situation prevented us from learning and rising, that is, the teacher could not transfer something to us, we could not learn something. This situation may not be something that I cannot overcome that will affect my life in the future, but I think I will have professional difficulties. Therefore, I have hopelessness for the future." (P3, Female, Classroom Teaching).

Incomplete Learning

One of the categories formed according to the answers of the participants in the context of the employment concerns of the education received during the pandemic period is incomplete learning. In line with the feedback of the participants, the missing learning category consists of the subcategories of Lack of Knowledge, Anxiety Due to Inadequate Education, Facility / Infrastructure Problems and Self-Confidence Problem.

In this direction, according to the feedback received from the participants, it was stated that the curriculum taught at universities during the pandemic period did not provide educational gains to the students and also that professors in different branches who were not experts in the course entered the lessons. In this context, the answers from the participants are as follows:

"When I first came to the department, I came to the department with love, but in the following periods, especially with the pandemic, I realized that the department was not for me because when the education is insufficient, the equipment is insufficient, when these come together, I cannot look to the future with hope." (E5, Male, Mathematics Teacher Education).

"I think that the education I received during the pandemic period was particularly inadequate, so I think this will affect many things in my future life and profession. I also had friends who studied at big universities, such as BOĞAZIÇI METU, for example, I don't think they had any loss, on the contrary, they took their education further, and I and many of my friends like me had problems in terms of learning due to both the lack of infrastructure and the lack of teachers, that is, the lack of teachers is as follows: the branch teacher did

not attend the branch course, that is, teachers from different branches attended different courses in the online process, so we had problems in terms of learning." (E4, Male, Mechanical Engineering)

Participants stated that they could not provide effective training and practice in the context of employment concerns during the pandemic period. In this direction, one of the participants stated that he was behind in both theoretical and practical courses and that this situation worried him about the future. Thus, a response from the participants is as follows:

"I don't think we have learned much at universities anyway. On top of that, when the education process continued with limited opportunities in the pandemic, we naturally fell behind in both theoretical and practical lessons, we could not learn, we think we have learned, but we have not learned them. Therefore, it will necessarily affect my finding a job in the future, that is, they will start with low wages, or rather than wages, maybe when I start my profession, my enthusiasm will be broken, my internship period will last longer, maybe my quality of life will decrease. This situation frankly worries me, I cannot take firm steps towards the future, I cannot predict the future, I cannot foresee the future. The more I see people around me who quit their jobs, the unemployed and the unemployment rates in Turkey on the news, the more this situation worries me." (P4, Female, Nursing)

According to the feedback received from the participants, one of the subcategories formed in line with the opinions of university students regarding their concerns about finding a job during the pandemic period is the anxiety caused by inadequate education. Participants stated that school lessons were superficial, applications could not be made, and the lessons related to the branch were not efficient. According to the feedback received from the participants, a response is as follows:

"I do not think that online education is efficient in every aspect, both in practice and theory. Especially after the pandemic period, students who graduate from their schools have problems with self-confidence, communication, etc. when they enter business life. I worked as an intern in a private education course during and after the pandemic period. The view I saw there was not very different, even if someone lacks knowledge about the teaching branch, they should train themselves pedagogically. I saw that those who started working in the institution for the first time failed in both theoretical and practical courses, and I am among them, and this situation increases my concern." (E3, Male, History)

According to the feedback received from the participants, one of the subcategories formed in line with the opinions of university students regarding their concerns about finding a job during the pandemic period is facility/infrastructure problems. Participants stated that sometimes they could not find a computer to access school courses, sometimes they did not have internet access, sometimes they attended classes in noisy environments, and sometimes the infrastructure of the education at the university was insufficient. According to the feedback received from the participants, one response is as follows:

"I think online education is actually not so bad, but since we entered online education unprepared, with the pandemic, first of all, I could not find internet in the village. Therefore, I did not have a computer and I tried to enter the lessons from my phone, I could not learn much, I somehow passed the lessons, but I lacked a lot of knowledge. In order to take the exams, I was going to internet cafes in the district, where there was a lot of noise, I didn't understand much, and I somehow passed the lessons. This reduces my self-confidence." (E5, Male, Mathematics Teacher Education).

Ways of Coping

In this study, which deals with exploring university students' employment concerns and ways of coping in the context of incomplete learning, categories and codes were created in line with the feedback received from the participants: behavioral coping (increasing learning resources, diversifying the field of expertise, developing online learning skills, gaining experience), professional support, social support (peer communication, social media interaction, expert communication).

Behavioral Coping

One of the categories formed according to the feedback from the participants about the ways of coping with the education received during the pandemic period in the context of employment concerns is behavioral coping. In the behavioral coping category, subcategories such as Increasing Learning Resources, Diversifying

Specialization, Developing Online Learning Skills and Gaining Experience were determined in line with the feedback of the participants. In this direction, in order to reduce learning losses during the pandemic period related to the individual efforts of the participants and to reduce the employment anxiety experienced, they stated that they individually developed different study strategies, worked more than usual, and avoided whatever prevented them from studying. In this context, the answer from one of the participants is as follows:

"The education we received during the pandemic prevented us from social learning. The decrease in state quotas in my department encouraged us to turn to the private sector, so we need to develop ourselves as much as possible both in terms of our school courses and other specialties. Especially in terms of practice, we could not do activities such as extra trainings, school applications, psychological counseling with individuals. This negatively affected our work experience. I did a lot of reading by taking online trainings from associations, courses and institutes that organize free trainings. I thought that at least I would apply what I learned after the pandemic period. I had the problem of not being able to socialize, and I tried to develop social relationships in online environments to overcome this. But we could not fully establish social relationships." (P5, Female, Psychological Counseling and Guidance)

Some of the participants developed self-developed methods and personal intervention methods in the context of the employment anxiety of pandemic education. They also stated that since the pandemic period coincided with a period when theoretical courses were predominant, both exam preparation and school lessons were in a healthy learning environment. In this sense, the opinion of one participant is as follows;

"I am one of those who spent the pandemic period efficiently, that is, I was halfway through the second grade when the pandemic started. I started studying for KPSS. With the introduction of the pandemic, my courses turned online and we took educational sciences courses online rather than field courses. Since my previous education was face-to-face, I learned my field courses very well, and I think I somehow managed the education courses together with the KPSS preparation..." (P1, Female, Preschool Teaching)

According to the feedback received from the participants, one of the subcategories formed in line with their views on university students' job finding concerns and coping strategies with learning losses during the pandemic period is to diversify their field of specialization. Participants stated that they double majored in different departments and received training in other fields parallel to their own fields in order to tolerate the learning losses caused by online education and to determine a new direction for themselves in the contraction in the labor market. According to the feedback received from the participants, one answer is as follows:

"In this period, I am doing a double major in a new department both because my department has too many graduates and because of the conditions of the country. I did this both to improve myself and to have a different branch." (P8, Female, Psychological Counseling and Guidance)

According to the feedback received from the participants, one of the subcategories formed in line with their views on university students' strategies to cope with employment concerns and learning losses during the pandemic period is to improve their online learning skills. Participants stated that they used various learning materials, read from different platforms, and read to specialize in their fields with the support and guidance of their lecturers in order to reduce the disruptions in their education and to reduce their anxiety about finding a job in the future with the pandemic period. According to the feedback received from the participants, one answer is as follows:

"I gave myself a chance in the private sector. In order to improve my experience, I studied in daytime courses, evenings and weekends during the pandemic. I also found a few private lesson students myself and taught them. I also formed a group with my friends and we constantly exchanged materials with them, sharing source books, articles, slides, etc. Thus, I tried to reduce the loss of learning to a small extent. In addition to these, in order to increase my success, I obtained the recommended books in consultation with my teachers, read them all and took notes." (P5, Female, Psychological Counseling and Guidance)

According to the feedback received from the participants, one of the sub-categories formed in line with their views on university students' employment concerns and coping strategies with learning losses during the pandemic period is gaining experience. Participants stated that they worked in various business lines related to their professions in order to gain the necessary skills related to their professions and the learning losses in

the application courses with the pandemic period. According to the feedback received from the participants, a response is as follows:

"The biggest problem I experienced during the pandemic period was that the practice lessons could not be fully realized. We received teaching practices in an online classroom environment via EBA. This first of all lowered our self-confidence. I did voluntary internship in private education courses for this situation. This improved my teaching experience a little bit. Also, during the pandemic period, I was in constant contact with my teachers at school. My teachers constantly supported me. In addition to my school lessons, I also supported my personal development with my own reading." (E6, Male, Turkish Language Teaching).

Professional Support

One of the categories formed according to the answers of the participants about which coping methods they used in the effects of the education received during the pandemic period on their employment concerns is professional support. In the professional support category, it was determined that the participants received support from a psychological counselor and collaborative follow-up with their peers in line with their feedback. In this direction, the participants stated that they could not fight on their own in order to reduce learning losses and reduce employment anxiety during the pandemic period related to receiving support from a psychological counselor, so they received professional support. In this context, the answer from one of the participants is as follows:

"My self-control is a bit weak, so I received psychological counseling support. My counselor helped me with various activities and strict program follow-up to increase my self-control. She especially contributed to me on studying. I could not work without school and homework, especially I could not get up from my seat, the counseling with my counselee helped me to do this. We determined what prevented me from studying on a daily basis, I distanced myself from social media, and we read in line with my interests." (P9, Female, Sociology)

On the other hand, in line with the feedback from the participants, it was determined that the participants tried to reduce the disadvantages of online learning by increasing their self-motivation through peer interaction with each other in peer environments. According to the feedback received from the participants, one answer is as follows:

"I was in constant communication with my professors and friends at school. We made a study program together and worked together. I provided the books recommended by our professors and studied them. I personally struggled a lot to increase online learning, to increase efficiency." (P7, Business Administration, Female)

Social Support

One of the categories formed according to the answers of the participants about which coping methods they used in the context of the employment concerns of the education received during the pandemic period is social support. In the social support category, subcategories were determined as Peer Communication, Social Media Interaction and Communication with Experts in line with the feedback of the participants. In this direction, in order to reduce learning losses during the pandemic period related to the individual efforts of the participants and to reduce the employment anxiety experienced, they stated that they individually engaged in peer interaction, establishing new relationships through social media channels, and collaborative learning in coordination with the course instructor. In this context, some of the responses from the participants are as follows:

"My department is law, so the pandemic did not make much difference since our lessons were always taught through books when we were in normal education. I increased my work as much as possible. I was in contact with my professors at school a lot. I think this contributed to my learning." (P6, Female, Law)

"I received support from my friends who were in higher grades than me at school, they helped me understand what I should do, how I should study and what kind of effort I should put into which courses. I followed online learning both from them and through my own research. I went to various personal development courses. Many of my friends took upper level courses in order to finish school as soon as possible, but I did not, because I wanted to learn my lessons slowly." (E6, Male, Turkish Language Teaching)

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

Discussion

In the current study, the disruptions in education during the pandemic period as a trigger and the factors that cause employment anxiety in this context and the coping methods developed individually by students were examined. In this study, the employment anxiety of university students was taken into the center of the research because the importance of employment anxiety increases when students reach their final year of university (Cüceloğlu, 2005). When the literature on employment anxiety is examined, it is observed that there is concept confusion. This is because employability is simply defined as finding/staying in a job and also working in a job with skills developed as an output of learning performances (Zheng, 2002). This study aims to present a different perspective on the concept of employability. Because the employability of an individual is perceived as working in any job regardless of the profession in which the individual specializes. From this point of view, the concept of employment anxiety examined in this study is not the anxiety experienced by individuals to find a job, but the anxiety of not being employed in their field of specialization. Therefore, it is thought that the current study will lead future studies by making additions to the concept of employment anxiety.

When the research findings are examined, it is observed that learning losses that develop with incomplete education are one of the reasons for individuals' employment anxiety related to their field of specialization. There are sources in the literature that may provide evidence for this idea. In a study conducted by Duffy et al. (2022), it was stated that, contrary to incomplete education, a well-educated individual will not experience any negativity in employment, on the contrary, he/she will not experience any difficulties in career goals and career processes, and his/her job motivation will increase and his/her expertise in a profession will reach the level of decent work. On the other hand, in a study conducted by Öztürk (2005), it was stated that the employability of young people with good education is easier. In this context, employment anxiety can be added to the literature as the anxiety experienced by the individual in finding a job related to his/her own profession.

In this study, in line with the data received from the participants, two categories, namely emotional experiences and incomplete education, were created regarding the employment anxiety of university students in relation to the pandemic period. According to this study, the codes of employment anxiety experienced by students in the emotional experiences category were determined as future anxiety, contraction in the labor market, expectation of working under inappropriate conditions and hopelessness. Some of the students participating in the research stated that their future anxiety levels increased with the effect of the pandemic. In this context, it is thought that both the economic uncertainty of the country and the high unemployment rates may cause employment anxiety in university students. There are also sources in the literature to support this idea. In a study conducted by Qaisy and Thawabich (2017), it was stated that future anxiety in university students was at a moderate level and this was related to employment anxiety. On the other hand, contraction in the labor market, one of the codes created as a result of the feedback from the participants in the research, is one of the factors related to students' future anxiety and thus constitutes employment anxiety.

In a study conducted by Dursun and Aytaç (2009), it was stated that due to the increase in the number of universities and the rapid increase in the number of graduates, the labor market does not meet the expectations of young people to be employed and therefore students experience unemployment anxiety. On the other hand, it is thought that the code of expectation of working under inappropriate conditions, one of the factors that constitute the employment anxiety of university students, is important in terms of adding to the existing literature. Because with this study, it is aimed to draw attention to the fact that university students' employment concerns are not only about finding a job, but also about having employment concerns related to their fields of specialization. This situation is also intended to be stated with the current study. According to the findings obtained from the research, university students experience hopelessness about being employed. This increases the level of employment anxiety of students. In a study conducted by Aslan (2015), it was stated that there was a significant negative relationship between university students' academic achievement levels and their hopelessness. This can be said to be among the factors that create employment anxiety in the context of incomplete learning.

Among the categories created in this research, the category of incomplete education includes the codes of lack of information, anxiety caused by inadequate education, facility/infrastructure problems and self-

confidence problems. With the pandemic period, students experienced learning losses as they faced various restrictions away from their educational environments (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020). The students participating in the study stated that they experienced employment anxiety due to lack of information and inability to access information in educational environments during the pandemic period.

It is thought that discovering the coping methods that students developed individually with the employment anxiety they experienced during the pandemic period constitutes an important part of the research. Coping methods are generally the way individuals manage stress sources (Kreitner & Kinicki, 1989). In this context, behavioral coping, professional support and social support categories were created in the light of the data collected from the participants. In behavioral coping, individuals positively engage in active problem solving, while negatively avoidance and passive coping are observed (Deniz & Yılmaz, 2006). In this study, behavioral coping was positively identified as increasing learning resources, diversifying the field of expertise, developing online learning skills and gaining experience. From this point of view, it can be said that the participants in the study developed coping strategies that increase employment and improve their knowledge/skills in order to reduce their employment anxiety levels.

On the other hand, the coping strategy created in the current study was determined as social support. Social support is an element that helps individuals to cope with anxiety by establishing social relationships (Kreitner & Kinicki, 1989). From this point of view, it can be said that establishing social relationships will have positive reflections on their anxiety levels related to employment. In the light of the data from the participants, peer communication, social media interaction and communication with the expert were determined as social support coping methods within the scope of this study. In this way, it can be said that individuals attribute an important mission to communication in order not to be affected by the restrictions that come with the closures, especially during the pandemic period.

Limitations

Since this study is based on a qualitative paradigm, it is limited to the sample. Since culture is a determining factor in certain international criteria, this study is limited to the country where the data was collected. On the other hand, the research is limited to the sample. While forming the sample, students studying in different departments in different universities and whose employment period is considered to be later than other professions were selected. In the selected sample, it was tried to equalize quantitatively according to gender.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was basically designed to explore the factors that create employment anxiety and how university students who experience employment anxiety use coping methods in the context of the pandemic period. First of all, the researchers wanted to expand the scope of the concept of employment anxiety because employment is defined as an individual's access to a job both in terms of its definition and the way it is handled in research. Since the country where the research was conducted is a developing country, individuals do not face unemployment for very long periods of time, but they have problems in accessing jobs in their field of specialization. Thus, it is desired to add to the literature that employment anxiety is not only the individual's finding a job but also his/her concerns about the job in his/her desired field of specialization. With the current study, it was determined that the factors that constitute employment anxiety are emotional experiences and lack of education, and coping methods are behavioral coping, social and professional support.

This research can be recommended as a source for measurement tools to be developed about the concept of employment anxiety. It can also be suggested that it will create awareness for university career centers to reduce students' employment anxiety. The research can be conducted with more participants. Employment anxiety can be investigated comparatively with different developing countries.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflicts of interest were disclosed by the author(s) with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Ethics Approval

Official ethical approval was granted by the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Kahramanmaraş İstiklal University. The study was conducted in accordance with the 1975 Declaration of Helsinki. Erbakan University. We conducted the study in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration in 1975.

Funding

No specific grant was given to this research by funding organizations in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

The study was approved by the research team's university ethics committee of the Kahramanmaraş Istiklal University (Approval Number/ID: 2020/02). Hereby, we as the authors consciously assure that for the manuscript "University Students' Employment Anxiety and Ways of Coping in the Context of Incomplete Learning During the Pandemic Period: A Qualitative Research" the following is fulfilled:

- This material is the authors' own original work, which has not been previously published elsewhere.
- The paper reflects the authors' own research and analysis in a truthful and complete manner.
- The results are appropriately placed in the context of prior and existing research.
- All sources used are properly disclosed.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

The authors provide equal contribution to this work.

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