



**MEDIATING ROLE OF UNEMPLOYMENT ANXIETY IN THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY AND JOB SEARCHING COMPETENCE LEVEL  
GENEL ÖZ YETERLİLİK VE İŞ ARAMA YETKİNLİK DÜZEYİ İLİŞKİSİNDE İŞSİZLİK  
KAYGISININ ARACILIK ROLÜ**

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### Abstract

The aim of the study is to measure the role of unemployment anxiety in the relationship between self-efficacy and job searching competence level of students who graduated from Necmettin Erbakan University, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Department of Finance and Banking between 2017 and 2020. The research population consists of 328 graduates and students who are in the process of graduation (who will take a single course exam) students. SPSS package software was used during the phase of data analysis. It was determined that those with work experience had lower overall unemployment anxiety and a higher level of job search competence. A moderate negative relationship was found between general self-efficacy and general unemployment anxiety; a weak negative relationship was found between general unemployment anxiety and job search competence level; and a positive moderate relationship was found between general self-efficacy and job search competence level. In the light of the results obtained, it was seen that general self-efficacy increases the level of job search competence. In addition, general self-efficacy relieves general unemployment anxiety. General unemployment anxiety also negatively reduces the level of job search competence. In addition, based on the results of the Bootstrap analysis, it was determined that the general unemployment concern had a partial mediating role in the relationship between general self-efficacy and job searching competence level.

**Keywords:** *Self-Efficacy, Job Searching Competence Level, Unemployment Concern.*

### Öz

Çalışmanın amacı, Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Uygulamalı Bilimler Fakültesi Finans ve Bankacılık Bölümü'nden 2017- 2020 yılları arasında mezun olmuş öğrencilerin sahip olduğu öz yeterlilik ve iş arama yetkinlik düzeyi ilişkisinde işsizlik kaygısının aracılık rolünü ölçmektir. Araştırmanın evreni, 328 mezun ve mezuniyet sürecinde (tek ders sınavına girecek olanlar) öğrencilerden oluşmaktadır. Verilerin analizi safhasında SPSS paket programından yararlanılmıştır. İş deneyimi olanların genel işsizlik kaygısının daha düşük olduğu ve iş arama yetkinlik düzeyinin ise daha yüksek olduğu belirlenmiştir. Genel öz yeterlilik ile genel işsizlik kaygısı arasında negatif yönlü orta düzeyde bir ilişki, genel işsizlik kaygısı ile iş arama yetkinlik düzeyi arasında negatif yönlü zayıf düzeyde bir ilişki, genel öz yeterlilik ile iş arama yetkinlik düzeyi arasında pozitif yönlü orta düzeyde bir ilişki tespit edilmiştir. Elde edilen sonuçlar ışığında genel öz yeterliliğin iş arama yetkinlik düzeyini yordadığı görülmüştür. Ayrıca genel öz yeterlilik genel işsizlik kaygısını da yordamaktadır. Genel işsizlik kaygısı da iş arama yetkinlik düzeyini negatif yönlü yordamaktadır. Ayrıca Bootstrap analizi sonuçlarından hareketle genel öz yeterlilik ve iş arama yetkinlik düzeyi arasındaki ilişkide genel işsizlik kaygısının kısmi aracılık rolünün olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Öz Yeterlilik, İş Arama Yetkinlik Düzeyi, İşsizlik Kaygısı.*

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

### Çalışmanın Amacı

Çalışmanın amacı, Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Uygulamalı Bilimler Fakültesi Finans ve Bankacılık Bölümü'nde 2017- 2020 yılları arasında eğitim almış mezun ve mezuniyet sürecinde olan (tek ders sınavına girecek olan) öğrencilerin sahip olduğu öz yeterlilik ve iş arama yetkinlik düzeyi ilişkisinde işsizlik kaygısının aracılık rolünü ölçmektir. Araştırmanın evreni, Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Uygulamalı Bilimler Fakültesi Finans ve Bankacılık bölümünde 2017- 2020 yılları arasında mezun olmuş 328 mezun öğrenciden oluşmaktadır.

### Araştırma Soruları

Genel öz yeterlilik ile genel işsizlik kaygısı arasında ilişki var mıdır? Genel işsizlik kaygısı ile iş arama yetkinlik düzeyi arasında ilişki var mıdır? Genel öz yeterlilik ile iş arama yetkinlik düzeyi arasında ilişki var mıdır? Genel öz yeterlilik iş arama yetkinlik düzeyini etkilemekte midir? Genel öz yeterliliğin iş arama yetkinlik düzeyine etkisinde genel işsizlik kaygısının aracı rolü var mıdır?

### Literatür Araştırması

Petruzzello vd. (2021)'nin bir İtalyan üniversitesinden mezun olan 177 kişiyle, genel öz yeterlik, iş arama öz yeterliği, dışa dönüklük ve iş arama başarısı arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırdıkları çalışmalarında, genel öz yeterliliğin, iş arama öz yeterliği aracılığıyla iş arama başarısı üzerinde dolaylı bir etkiye sahip olduğunu, ayrıca dışadönüklüğün, daha dışadönük iş arayanlar için iş arama öz yeterliği, iş arama başarısı ilişkisi üzerinde düzenleyici bir etkiye sahip olduğu sonucuna varmışlardır. Alhadabi ve Karpinski (2019)'nin 258 üniversite öğrencisinde azim, öz yeterlilik, başarı yönelimi hedefleri ve akademik performans arasındaki ilişkileri araştırdığı çalışmalarında azmin, öz-yeterlik ve başarı yönelimi hedefleri de dahil olmak üzere sıralı bir arabulucu yolu aracılığıyla akademik performansla olumlu bir şekilde ilişkili olduğunu; ustalık, yaklaşma hedefleri ve akademik performans arasındaki pozitif ilişkilerin yanı sıra kaçınma hedefleri ile akademik performans arasında negatif ilişkili; öz yeterliliğin sırasıyla öğrenme ve performans-yaklaşma hedeflerinin olumlu etkisini artırarak ve kaçınma hedeflerinin akademik performans üzerindeki olumsuz etkisini azaltarak destekleyici ve koruyucu roller oynayabileceğini ortaya koymuşlardır. Şahin Kutlu, Çetinbakış ve Kutlu (2019)'nun işsizlik kaygılarını tespit etmek amacıyla 205 4. sınıf öğrencisine uyguladığı anket sonuçlarından işsizlik kaygısının cinsiyete göre anlamlı farklılık göstermediği, not ortalamasına göre ise anlamlı farklılık gösterdiği, ayrıca not ortalamasının arttıkça kaygı düzeyinin arttığı sonucuna ulaşmışlardır. Deer, Gohn ve Kanaya (2018)'nin ABD'li 549 üniversite öğrencisi arasında öz-yeterlik ve iş arama niyetleri arasındaki ilişkide kaygının sıralı olarak aracılık eden bir rol oynayıp oynamadığını belirlemek amacıyla yapmış oldukları çalışmalarında, daha düşük kaygı düzeylerinin, önemli ölçüde daha yüksek öz-yeterlik düzeylerine ve önemli ölçüde daha yüksek iş arama niyetlerine yol açtığı ve kariyer öz-yeterliliğinin iş arama niyetleri üzerindeki aracı etkisinden yararlanmak için kaygının azaltılması gerekliliği sonucuna varmışlardır. Ünlü ve Erbaş (2018), akademik öz yeterlilik ve mesleki kaygı düzeyleri arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olup

olmadığını tespit etmek üzere 212 üniversite öğrencisiyle yaptıkları çalışmalarında, öğrencilerin akademik öz yeterlilikleri ile kaygılarının orta düzeyde; cinsiyet değişkeniyle öz yeterlilik düzeyleri arasında anlamlı bir fark olduğu, kaygıda ise anlamlı bir fark olmadığı görülmüştür. Çakır (2016), 390 üniversite öğrencisinin iş arama yetkinlik düzeylerinin demografik özelliklerine göre anlamlı olarak farklılaşıp farklılaşmadığını ortaya koyduğu çalışmasında elde ettiği bulgulara göre öğrencilerin medeni durumları, başarı durumları ve yaşları ile iş arama yetkinlik düzeyleri arasında fark olduğu; cinsiyet ve iş bulma imkanı değişkenleri arasında bir fark olmadığı ayrıca kızlarda yaşam tatmini ve öz yeterliliğin iş arama yetkinlik düzeyini yordadığı; erkeklerde ise not ortalamalarının öz yeterliliği yordadığı sonucu ortaya çıkmıştır. Lin ve Flores (2011), 86 Doğu Asyalı uluslararası lisansüstü öğrencinin, yeterlik kaynağı değişkenleri ile iş arama davranışları arasındaki ilişkide iş arama öz yeterliliğinin aracılık etkilerini test etmiştir. Sonuçlar hem performans başarılarının hem de sözlü iknanın iş arama öz yeterliliğinin önemli yordayıcıları olduğunu ve performans başarılarının iş arama öz yeterliliğinin sözlü iknadan daha güçlü bir yordayıcısı olduğunu, ayrıca, sözlü iknanın, iş arama öz-yeterliliği aracılığı ile iş arama davranışları üzerinde önemli bir dolaylı etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Ersoy-Kart ve Erdost (2008)'un örneklemini 287 üniversite öğrencisinin oluşturduğu çalışmalarında, öğrencilerin mezun olduktan sonra işsiz kalmalarına ilişkin kaygılarını ölçmüşler ve sonuç olarak öğrencilerin işsizlik kaygısının mezuniyete yaklaştıkça arttığı, işsizlik kaygısı arttığında öğrencilerin öz yeterliliklerinin azaldığı ve işsizlik kaygısının, babanın eğitim durumuna göre anlamlı bir farklılık gösterdiği ortaya çıkmıştır. Haycock, McCarthy ve Skay (1998), 141 üniversite öğrencisi için erteleme (davranıştan kaçınma türü), yeterlik beklentileri, kaygı, cinsiyet ve yaş arasındaki ilişkileri inceledikleri çalışmalarında katılımcılardan büyük bir proje hakkında düşünmeleri ve projeyi gerçekleştirmek için gereken becerilerle ilgili etkinliklerini derecelendirmeleri istenmiş, iki değişkenli korelasyonlar, yeterlilik beklentileri ve kaygının erteleme ile anlamlı, bireysel ilişkilere sahip olduğunu, kümülatif etkinlik gücünün ise ertelemenin anlamlı ve ters bir yordayıcısı olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, güçlü yeterlik beklentileri olan bireyler daha az erteleme eğilimindedirler.

## **Yöntem**

Verilerin analizi safhasında SPSS paket programından yararlanılmıştır. Öncelikle araştırmada kullanılan ölçeklerin iç tutarlılık güvenilirliği için Cronbach Alfa ( $\alpha$ ) katsayıları hesaplanmıştır. Daha sonra değişkenler arasındaki ilişkilerin belirlenmesinde korelasyon analizinden yararlanılmıştır. Değişkenler arasındaki yordayıcı ilişkilerin tespiti ve genel öz yeterlilik ve iş arama yetkinlik düzeyi arasındaki ilişkide genel işsizlik kaygısının aracı rolünün incelenmesi amacıyla yapısal eşitlik modeli ile analizler yapılmıştır.

## **Sonuç ve Değerlendirme**

Sonuç olarak, aldığı eğitim iyi olmasına rağmen kaygısı yüksek olanlar iş arama yetkinliği düşeceğinden var olan potansiyellerini ortaya koyma şansını kayırabilmektedir. Bunlara yönelik bireysel ve grup danışmanlıkları yapılarak destek sağlanması önem arz etmektedir. Maalesef bazen öz yeterlilik

hissi yeterli olmasına rağmen ülkelerin bulunduğu ekonomik olumsuz durumlar nedeniyle işsizlik kaygısı yüksek hissedilebilmektedir. İş arama yetkinliği iyi olanlar bu kaygıyı engelleyici olarak değil de farklı ülkelere yönelme davranışı şeklinde ortaya çıkarabilmektedir. Burada da alınan eğitimin, özellikle yabancı dil bilgisinin kişide öz yeterlilik hissettirebilecek düzeyde olması, ailenin ve kültürün global düşünebilme ve bu konuda teşvik edici olması yurtdışı iş arama davranışının olumlu destekleyicileri olmaktadır. Beyin ve iş gücü kaybına yol açan bu durumun yaşanmaması için üniversite mezunlarının istihdamı planlanarak bölümlere alınacak öğrenci sayısının belirlenmesi, gereksiz sayıda üniversite açılması gibi popülist politikadan vazgeçilmesi devletlere düşen görev olarak tanımlanabilir. Ayrıca, üniversitelerin fakülte/yüksekokul/meslek yüksekokulu bölümlerinin bugünün ve geleceğin ihtiyaçlarını karşılayacak şekilde yeniden gözden geçirilmesi, işlevini yitirmiş istihdam olanakları yok ya da çok kısıtlı duruma düşmüş bölümlerin kapatılarak yerine Endüstri 4.0 ve Toplum 5.0'ın gereklilikleri doğrultusunda yeni bölümlerin ihdas edilmesi, buna yönelik olarak eğitimcilerin eğitilmesi ve öğrenmeyi öğrenmenin bir yaşam biçimine dönüştüğü keşfedici bir yol haritası önerilebilir. İlave olarak araştırma sonucundan hareketle öğrencilere öğretim hayatı döneminde iş deneyimi yaşamalarının iş arama yetkinlik düzeylerini artırıcı, genel işsizlik kaygısını düşürücü yönü olduğu vurgulanarak, öğrencilere öğrenim hayatı ile birlikte iş deneyimi yaşamaları da önerilebilir.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which systematically addresses human needs, the satisfaction of needs depends primarily on the fact that man has an income-making job. This makes it imperative to address the relationship of general self-efficacy, job searching competence level and unemployment anxiety together. The unemployment problem remains a global issue. Education is known to be an advantageous factor in preventing unemployment. On the other hand, the unemployment rate of young and educated individuals in the workforce is increasing. In particular, the unplanned number of universities and accepted students in Türkiye creates an educated unemployment problem. The increase in the unemployment rate among higher education graduates and the graduation of students without obtaining the necessary conditions of the labor market are the main causes of unemployment anxiety of university students (Colakoglu et al., 2017).

In general, considering the unemployment figures, there is an unemployment problem among students graduating from higher education in Türkiye. Although it is easier to find a job for students graduating from the best universities, graduates from other universities face great difficulties in seeking a job. Higher education is a process that provides a profession for someone. However, unemployment is an obstacle to the implementation of professional skills, and the problem of unemployment leads to despair and a waste of qualified manpower among young people (Cakir & Tagay, 2015).

Career and Talent Management Association data shows that 42% of university graduates in Türkiye cannot find a job after graduation; 29% of these students have found a job within 6 months; 10% of them have found a job between 6-12 months; 14% of them have found a job without graduating; 31% of them have started on minimum wage; 42% of them received a payment between minimum wage and TRY 2,999; and 16% of them received salaries between TRY 3,000 and TRY 3,999 (Gazeteduvar, 2020). In this context, it can be estimated that these rates have worsened with the increased unemployment during the Covid-19 pandemic.

There are very few other decisions that have a profound impact on people's lives as a field of work or career choice. Most people not only spend much more time on work than any other work-related activity, but also the choice of profession significantly affects the lifestyle, and job regulation is closely related to mental health and even physical health (Hackett & Betz, 1995).

A person's belief in the capacity to deal with disturbing thoughts and retain control regulates the revival of distress, depression or anxiety in difficult situations. Unemployment is a difficult and threatening time in someone's life, due to the potential to magnify the symptoms of emotional disorders. Feeling inadequate in dealing with unemployment and finding a new job creates anxiety (Rusu et al., 2013).

University education prepares students to work in various sectors with a basic education. This period spent at university is the most important period in terms of determining the path a young person will take in the future in their life. Some of the factors that cause anxiety in students are the decisions they should make about their future after graduation, the choice of profession, the plans for the role they will take on, the friendships they form, the fear of unemployment and various responsibilities. At an objective level, as a feeling that affects social relationships, activities and education, anxiety protects the person from various dangers and, if high, drags the person towards failure and causes a loss of self-confidence (Tektas, 2014).

In the literature review, no studies were found in which the effects and interactions of the three concepts of self-efficacy, anxiety and job searching competence level were discussed together, and this perspective constitutes the original aspect of the study, and the study is expected to contribute to the literature.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy, defined as the individual's judgments on how well he or she can carry out the action plans he needs to deal with possible situations, represents the perception of individuals performing in various situations (Judge et al., 1998). Self-efficacy is a concept that increases after success feedback and decreases after failure assessments. More specifically, if a person successfully succeeds in finding a job, the level of confidence in his/her own capacity will increase, and if he/she have negative experiences in finding a job to the contrary, expectations of achieving these goals in the future are impaired (Rusu et al., 2013). Self-efficacy, generally defined as students' perceptions of their ability to perform given tasks, has a strong impact on academic behavior and performance (Bandura, 1997). Students' self-efficacy belief affects their attention, continuity and anxiety. Students with high self-sufficiency are more likely to be interested in school subjects. However, students with low self-efficacy may believe that they are not successful even when they succeed, and this situation may encourage stress, anxiety and depression (Yildirim, 2011). Self-efficacy, which is the key source of career decisions, expresses the belief in the capacity of an individual to achieve the desired results in his/her efforts. Since self-efficacy expresses individuals' abilities or confidence in carrying out their own activities, it is often seen as a variable that determines motivation, intensity of ability and commitment to performing tasks (Rusu et al., 2013). In the theory of social cognitive motivation, it is assumed that students' self-efficacy beliefs affect their achievements both directly and indirectly, affecting their interests and anxieties (Yildirim, 2011). Therefore, it can be stated that the self-efficacy beliefs in students are directly related to their postgraduate careers.

## **2.2. Job Searching Competence**

Considering that many people spend a lot of time at work, the choice of profession is closely related to mental health and physical well-being, as well as significantly affecting one's lifestyle (Hackett, 1995). The concept of job searching self-efficacy is a field-specific example of self-efficacy structure. As Bandura (1977) describes, self-efficacy refers to one's belief in the ability to perform a specific task or behavior to successfully achieve a desired goal. Perceived self-efficacy can be shaped by experience (for example, past job success or failure). In addition, perceived self-efficacy in managing events from someone's life also plays a central role in arousal of anxiety (Rusu et al., 2013). A preferred profession is one that offers the best positive characteristics at a certain time over time and appeals to a person. The choice of profession involves choosing a role from any number of professions and deciding to maintain this special area. If the individual is able to make effective decisions, this can lead to an increase in life satisfaction and help the individual to feel good, whereas inactive decisions can lead to difficulties in life and make the person feel bad (Tagay, 2015). Job searching self-efficacy discusses an individual's ability to perform all the actions necessary to achieve a desired job, from writing resumes to performance in interviews to finding work (Rusu et al., 2013). Unemployment is also closely associated with the most common psychological distress, such as depression and anxiety (Weich & Lewis, 1998). All these issues affect the level of job searching competence that begins before and after graduation to gain the economic freedom of the students, and the gains they make or fail during the study period bring with them the anxiety of finding better jobs or agreeing to merit.

## **2.3. Anxiety**

Anxiety is expressed as fears of unknown origin; it is a feeling that affects social relations, activities, learning of the individual, in short, daily experience and often unsettles the individual. This feeling affects the future vision of the individual positively or negatively while continuing their education or graduating. Decisions about future, job choices, friendships, fear of not being able to work and various responsibilities can be seen as some of the factors that constitute anxiety (Basmaci et al., 2017). The biggest concern for university seniors is the anxiety of the future and the resulting anxiety of not being able to find work, which causes despair among students. High unemployment rates lead to a further increase in this desperation (Dursun & Aytac, 2012). Anxiety is a long-term, complex feeling that occurs as a result of the individual's prediction that there may be an unpredictable and intrusive danger to an event or situation in the future (Yilmaz et al., 2014). The individual who does not feel sufficient in any field does not believe that he will succeed in that field, which can cause anxiety in the individual and as a result negatively affects academic success (Yildirim, 2011). In addition, the fact that the economy has increased the unemployment rate during periods of cyclical contraction, crises and the current Covid-19 pandemic have an increasing effect on anxiety. In this context, it can be considered

that unemployment anxiety may have an intermediary role in the relationship between general self-efficacy and job searching competence level of graduate students.

### **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Petruzzello et al. (2021) conducted a study with 177 graduates of an Italian university to analyze the relationship between overall self-efficacy, job searching self-efficacy, extroversion and job searching success. In this study, researchers concluded that overall self-efficacy had an indirect effect on job searching success through job searching self-efficacy; moreover, extroversion had a regulatory impact on the relationship between job searching self-efficacy and job searching success for more extroverted job seekers.

In a study by Alhadabi & Karpinski (2019) conducted with 258 university students to examine the relationships between perseverance, self-efficacy, achievement orientation goals and academic performance, it was revealed that perseverance was positively associated with academic performance through a sequential mediator, including self-efficacy and success orientation goals; in addition to positive relationship between perseverance and mastery, approach goals and academic performance, perseverance was negatively correlated with avoidance goals and academic performance; finally, that self-efficacy could play supportive and protective roles by increasing the positive impact of learning and performance-approach goals respectively and reducing the negative impact of avoidance goals on academic performance.

Sahin Kutlu, Cetinbakis & Kutlu (2019) surveyed 205 4th graders with a view to determine unemployment concerns and concluded that unemployment anxiety did not differ significantly by gender, differed significantly according to grade point average, and anxiety level increased as grade point average increased.

In their study conducted to determine whether anxiety played a sequential mediating role in the relationship between self-efficacy and job searching intentions among 549 U.S. college students, Deer, Gohn & Kanaya (2018) concluded that lower levels of anxiety led to significantly higher levels of self-efficacy and significantly higher job searching intentions, and it was necessary to reduce anxiety to make use of the mediating role of career self-efficacy on job searching intentions.

Unlu & Erbas (2018), in their study conducted with 212 university students to determine whether there was a meaningful relationship between academic self-efficacy and professional anxiety levels, found out that the students' academic self-efficacy and anxiety were moderate; there was a significant difference between gender variable and self-efficacy levels, and there was no significant difference in anxiety.

Cakir (2016) found that there was a difference between students' marital status, success status, age and their job searching competence levels according to the findings of the study, which examined

whether the job searching competency levels of 390 university students differed significantly according to their demographic characteristics; that there was no difference between gender and employment opportunities variables, and that life satisfaction and self-sufficiency in girls predicted the level of job searching competence; in boys, the grade averages predicted self-efficacy.

Lin & Flores (2011) tested the mediating effects of job searching self-efficacy in the relationship between efficacy resource variables and job searching behaviors among 86 East Asian international graduate students. The results of the study showed that both performance achievements and verbal persuasion were important predictors of job searching self-efficacy, and that performance achievements were a stronger predictor of job searching self-efficacy than verbal persuasion, and that verbal persuasion had a significant indirect effect on job searching behaviors through job searching self-efficacy.

In the study conducted by Ersoy-Kart & Erdost (2008) with a sample of 287 students, researchers measured students' anxiety about being unemployed after graduation and as a result, it was revealed that students' unemployment anxiety increased as they approached graduation, their self-efficacy decreased when unemployment anxiety increased, and unemployment anxiety differed significantly according to their fathers' educational status.

In a study conducted with 141 college students to examine the relationship between deferral (type of behavior avoidance), efficacy expectations, anxiety, gender and age; Haycock, McCarthy & Skay (1998) asked participants to think about a large project and scale their efficacy required for realizing the project; the results of this study revealed that two-variable correlations, efficacy expectations and anxiety had significant and personal relationship, however, cumulative activity power was a significant and reverse predictor of deferral. In addition, individuals with strong expectations of efficacy tend to postpone less.

In the literature review, no studies were found in which the effects and interactions of the three concepts of self-efficacy, anxiety and job searching competence level were discussed together, and this perspective constitutes the original aspect of the study, and the study is expected to contribute to the literature.

## **4. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH**

### **4.1. Purpose and Hypotheses of the Research**

The aim of the study is to measure the role of unemployment anxiety in the relationship between self-efficacy and job searching competence level of students who graduated from Necmettin Erbakan University, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Department of Finance and Banking between 2017 and 2020. As a result of the literature review for the relevant variables, the research model was established, and

hypotheses were formed in line with the established model. The hypotheses created after the literature review of the research are listed below:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between general self-efficacy and general unemployment anxiety.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between general unemployment anxiety and job searching competence level.

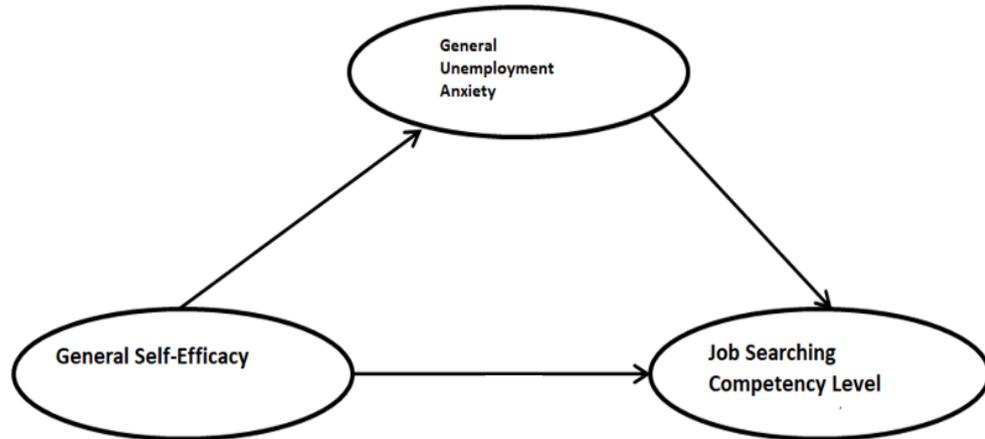
**H<sub>3</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between general self-efficacy and job searching competence level.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** General self-efficacy significant affects the level of job searching competence.

**H<sub>5</sub>:** General self-efficacy has an intermediary role in the impact of general unemployment anxiety on the level of job searching competence.

The conceptual model of the research created in this direction is as follows:

**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model of the Research



## 5. METHOD

### 5.1. Research Population and Sample

The population of the research consists of 328 graduates and students who are in the process of graduation (who will take a single course exam) and who studied at Necmettin Erbakan University Faculty of Applied Sciences, Finance and Banking Department between the years 2017 and 2020. The study has the approval of the ethics committee, and the decision was taken from the Board of Ethics of Scientific Studies, Social and Human Sciences at Necmettin Erbakan University. An online questionnaire was sent to all graduate students, but 256 of the students filled the questionnaire. In line with the examinations, it was determined that 6 of the surveys were filled out incorrectly or incompletely

and the questionnaire form answered by a total of 250 students was evaluated within the scope of the study.

## **5.2. Data Collection Tools**

A 12-question demographic information form, a 17-item general self-efficacy scale, a 25-item general unemployment anxiety scale and a 25-item job searching competence level scale were designed for use in the study.

### **5.2.1. General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES)**

In the study, the General Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Sherer et al. in 1982 and adapted to Turkish by Yildirim & İlhan in 2010 was used. In the scale, consisting of 17 questions and 3 sub-dimensions, 5-item Likert form was used in which answers ranging from “never” to “very good” were given to the question “How much does it define you?”.

### **5.2.2. General Unemployment Anxiety Scale (GUAS)**

In the study, the General Unemployment Anxiety Scale developed by Tekin Tayfun & Korkmaz (2016) and then adapted by Balkaya and used in the thesis study in 2017 was used. The 25-item scale consists of 4 sub-dimensions, and the 5-item Likert form (answers ranging from I Strongly Agree to I Strongly Disagree) was used in the scale.

### **5.2.3. Job Searching Efficacy Level Scale (JSELS)**

In the study, the Job Searching Efficacy Level Scale developed by Cakir & Tagay (2015) was used. The 25-item scale consists of 4 sub-dimensions, and the 5-item Likert form (answers ranging from I Strongly Agree to I Strongly Disagree) was used in the scale.

## **5.3. Analysis of Data**

SPSS and AMOS package software were used during the phase of data analysis. Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficients were calculated primarily for internal consistency reliability of the scales used in the research. Correlation analysis was then used to determine the relationships between the variables. Analysis was carried out with the structural equality model to determine the predictor relationships between the variables and to examine the mediating role of general unemployment anxiety in the relationship between general self-efficacy and job searching efficacy level.

## **6. FINDINGS**

The demographic information of the graduate students who participated in the study is summarized in the table below.

**Table 1.** Demographics of the Respondents

Variable (n:250)	Frequency	%	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	160	64
	Male	90	36
<b>Age</b>	20-22	96	38.4
	23-25	127	50.8
	26 and above	27	10.8
<b>Entering a Department Willingly</b>	Yes	147	58.8
	No	103	41.2
<b>Diploma Grade</b>	1.50-1.99	6	2.4
	2.00-2.49	47	18.8
	2.50-2.99	122	48.8
	3.00-3.49	62	24.8
	3.50 and above	13	5.2
<b>Order of Birth in the Family</b>	Firstborn	90	36
	Last-born	111	44.4
	Other	49	19.6
<b>Family's Business Situation</b>	Yes	90	36
	No	160	64
<b>Settlement Address</b>	Province	145	58
	District	68	27.2
	Village	37	14.8
<b>Work Experience</b>	Preesent	189	75.6
	None	61	24.4
<b>Work Experience Duration</b>	None	61	24.4
	0-3 months	54	21.6
	3-6 months	57	22.8
	6-9 months	53	21.2
	1 year and above	25	10
<b>Father's Education Status</b>	Elementary School	169	67.6
	High School	47	18.8
	University	32	12.8
	Postgraduate	2	.8
<b>Mother's Education Status</b>	Not Literate	17	6.8
	Elementary School	165	66
	High School	51	20.4
	University	17	6.8
<b>Family Monthly Income</b>	TRY 0-3000	172	68.8
	TRY 3001-6000	49	19.6
	TRY 6001 and above	29	11.6

When the Table 1 is examined, it can be seen that 64% of the participants are women; 50.8% of them are between the ages of 23-25; 58.8% of them enter their working department willingly; 48.8% of them have a diploma grade between 2.50-2.99; 44.4% of them are the last child of the family; 64% of their families do not engage in commerce; 58% of them reside in the province; 75.6% of them have work experience; 22.8% of them have work experience between 3-6 months; 67.6% of their fathers have an education of primary school level; 66% of their mothers have a primary education background; finally, 68.8% of participants have a monthly family income between TRY 0-3000.

The findings of internal consistency coefficients applied to test the level of reliability of the scales used in the study are summarized in the table below.

**Table 2.** Internal Consistency Coefficients for Scales Used in Research

Scales Used	Sub-Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha	General Coefficient
GSES	Starting	0.793	0.799
	Not to get frustrated	0.802	
	Insisting	0.852	
GUAS	Personal Pessimism and Lack of Self-Confidence	0.701	0.705
	Environmental and Social Pressure	0.714	
	Lack of Qualitative Knowledge-Skills	0.707	
	Employment Challenges in the Economy	0.793	
JSELS	Self-Cognition	0.772	0.762
	Job searching Skill	0.778	
	Stability in the Profession	0.756	
	Job Searching Sources	0.737	

Values for Cronbach's alpha coefficient are considered not reliable when  $0.00 < \alpha < 0.40$ ; considered having low reliability when  $0.41 < \alpha < 0.60$ ; considered quite reliable when  $0.61 < \alpha < 0.80$ ; considered highly reliable when  $0.81 < \alpha < 1.00$  (Özdamar, 2002). According to this information, it is seen that each of the scales used in the research has a very reliable internal coefficient of consistency in general.

Independent groups t-tested was applied to determine whether participants' overall self-efficacy perceptions, general unemployment concerns and job searching efficacy levels changed according to the demographic characteristics of the participants, and the findings of the test were summarized in the table below.

**Table 3.** General Self-Efficacy Perceptions, General Unemployment Concerns and Job Searching Efficacy Levels and Independent Groups t-Test Findings according to Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants

	Demographical Features	N	Avg.	S.S.	t	p
<b>Gender</b>						
General Self-Efficacy	Female	160	45.88	7.44	0.56	0.44
	Male	90	45.11	7.31		
General Unemployment Anxiety	Female	160	64.46	8.37	0.07	0.43
	Male	90	62.87	8.09		
Job Searching Efficacy Level	Female	160	65.02	8.48	0.15	0.73
	Male	90	64.88	8.42		
<b>Entering a Department Willingly</b>						
General Self-Efficacy	Yes	147	44.61	7.28	0.45	0.33
	No	103	43.14	7.03		
General Unemployment Anxiety	Yes	147	63.18	8.17	0.29	0.18
	No	103	62.19	8.06		
Job Searching Efficacy Level	Yes	147	64.49	8.40		

	No	103	63.77	8.29	0.34	0.22
<b>Family's Business Situation</b>						
General Self-Efficacy	Yes	90	46.23	7.52	0.65	0.37
	No	160	45.41	7.39		
General Unemployment Anxiety	Yes	90	64.66	8.41	0.13	0.19
	No	160	62.48	8.08		
Job Searching Efficacy Level	Yes	90	65.46	8.53	0.28	0.61
	No	160	64.88	8.49		
<b>Work Experience</b>						
General Self-Efficacy	Yes	189	45.28	7.35	0.42	0.16
	No	61	44.21	7.21		
General Unemployment Anxiety	Yes	189	62.48	8.08	2.13	0.04*
	No	61	64.66	8.41		
Job Searching Efficacy Level	Yes	189	65.46	8.53	2.88	0.03*
	No	61	64.71	8.44		
*p<.05						

When Table 3 is examined, it is observed that the participants' perceptions of general self-efficacy according to gender, willing entry into the department, family's business situation, general unemployment concerns and job searching competence levels are not significantly different in their total scores,  $p>.05$ . It is apparent that respondents have overall unemployment concerns based on the work experience variable and significant difference in their job searching competency scores in favor of those with work experience,  $p<.05$ . It was determined that those with work experience had lower overall unemployment anxiety and a higher level of job searching competence.

Descriptive statistics of the scales used in the study and the findings of the distribution of normality are summarized in the table below.

**Table 4.** Findings on Descriptive Statistics on Sub-Dimensions of Scales Used in Research

Sub-Dimensions	Avg.	S.S.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Starting	19.28	3.454	-0.661	0.391
Not to get frustrated	9.68	1.673	-0.333	-0.490
Insisting	11.38	1.989	-0.597	-0.225
Personal Pessimism and Lack of Self-Confidence	18.78	5.189	-0.986	-0.189
Environmental and Social Pressure	20.89	6.098	-0.114	-0.010
Lack of Qualitative Knowledge-Skills	22.75	6.367	-0.156	0.439
Employment Challenges in the Economy	10.72	2.890	-0.111	0.452
Self-Cognition	20.47	4.301	-0.760	0.212
Job searching Skill	17.82	3.885	-0.564	0.123
Stability in the Profession	20.67	4.428	-0.106	-0.598
Job Searching Sources	18.66	3.925	0.278	0.779

In the analysis of normality of the variables used in the research, the coefficients of distortion and pressure are used. Tabachnick & Fidell (2012) indicate that data has a normal distribution when the distortion and pressure values are between -1.5 and +1.5. Considering these coefficients of the variables in the study, it is possible to see that the data is suitable for normal distribution.

Correlation analysis was performed to reveal the relationship between the sub-dimensions of the scales used in the research and the results of the analysis are presented in the table below.

**Table 5.** Correlation Analysis Results on Sub-Dimensions of Scales Used in Research

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Starting	-										
2. Not Giving Up	.489	-									
3. Persistence	.382	.535*	-								
4. Per. Pess. Lack of Self-Conf.	-.389**	-.056	-.940	-							
5. Env. and Soc. Press.	-.229**	-.321	-.055	.274**	-						
6. Qua. Info Skills Lacking	-.328**	-.490	-.285	.479**	.463**	-					
7. Eco. Sta. Difficulty	-.389**	-.077	-.642	.590	.445**	.229	-				
8. Self-Cognition	.401	.464**	.445*	-.289	-.357	-.376	-.116	-			
9. Job Searching Skill	.146	.368*	.389**	-.122	-.273	-.110	-.164	.068	-		
10. Stability in the Profession	.479	.382**	.470*	-.269	-.738	-.541	-.447	.522**	.449**	-	
11. Job Search Anx.	.069	.385**	.427*	.364	.267	.665	.889	.435**	.489**	.397*	-

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01

As can be understood from Table 5, a moderate positive relationship was found between perseverance and not giving up sub-dimensions of general self-efficacy ( $r = .535$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Moderate negative relationship was found between general unemployment anxiety and lack of self-confidence, among the sub-dimensions of general self-efficacy ( $r = -.389$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and sub-dimensions of qualitative knowledge-skills ( $r = -.328$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and employment challenges in the economy ( $r = -.389$ ,  $p<.05$ ); however, weak negative relationship was found with environmental and social pressure ( $r = -.229$ ,  $p<.01$ ) sub-dimension.

A weak positive relationship was found between personal pessimism and lack of self-confidence from the sub-dimensions of general unemployment anxiety ( $r = .274$ ,  $p<.01$ ); and moderate positive relationship was found in qualitative knowledge-skills ( $r = .479$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Moderate positive relationship was determined between lack of qualitative knowledge skills, environmental-social pressure from sub-dimensions of general unemployment anxiety ( $r = .463$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and the sub-dimension of employment challenges in the economy ( $r = .445$   $p<.01$ ).

Moderate positive relationship was found between stability in the profession, self-cognition from the sub-dimensions of job searching competence level ( $r = .522, p < .01$ ) and job searching resources ( $r = .435, p < .01$ ) sub-dimensions. Moderate positive relationship was found between stability in the profession sub-dimension of job searching ability ( $r = .449, p < .01$ ) and job searching resources ( $r = .489, p < .01$ ). Moderate positive relationship was found between stability in the profession sub-dimension and job searching resources ( $r = .397, p < .05$ ). Correlation analysis results of the scales used in the research are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Correlation Analysis Results of Scales the Used in Research

	General Unemployment Concern	General Self-Efficacy	Job Seeking Level of Competence
General Unemployment Anxiety	-		
General Self-Efficacy	-.469**	-	
Job Searching Efficacy Level	-.366**	.562**	-

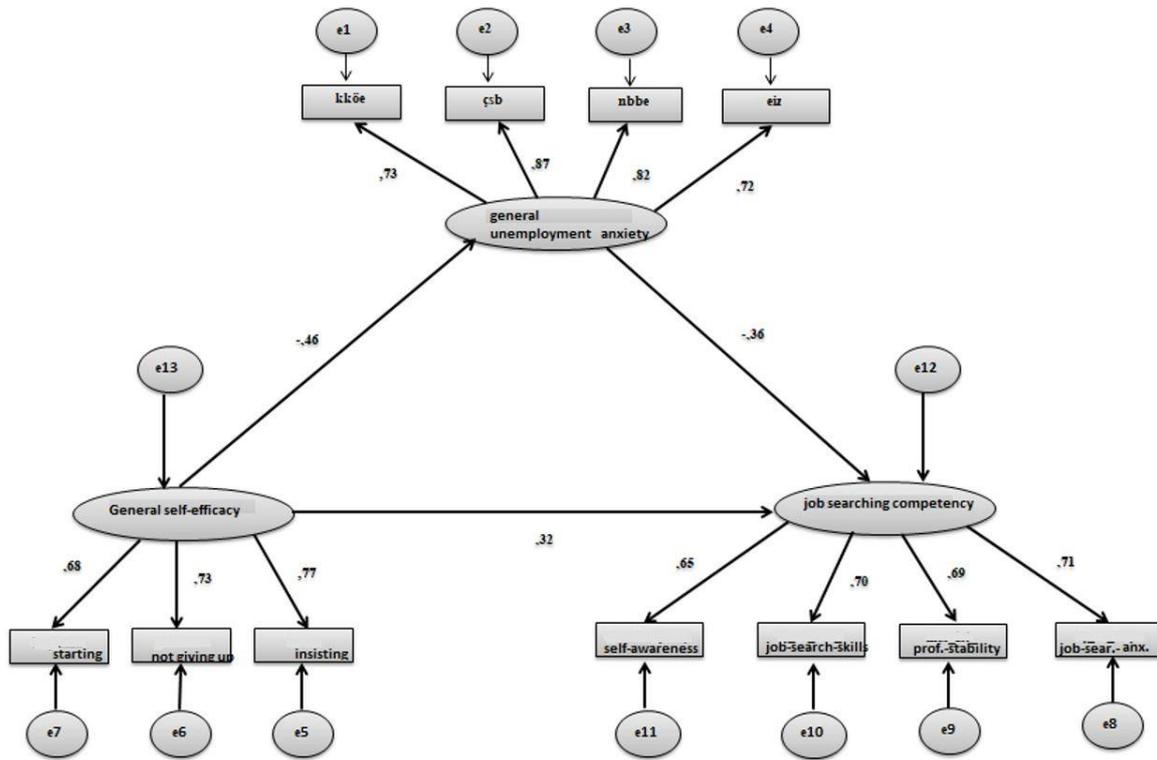
\*\*p<.01

As can be seen from the table, moderate negative relationship was found between general self-efficacy and general unemployment anxiety ( $r = -.469, p < .01$ ), and in this respect, hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> was accepted. Weak negative relationship was determined between general unemployment anxiety and job searching competence level ( $r = -.366, p < .01$ ), thus hypothesis H<sub>2</sub> was accepted. Moderate positive relationship was determined between general self-efficacy and job searching competence level ( $r = .562, p < .01$ ), hypothesis H<sub>3</sub> was accepted.

The research model created to test research hypotheses and evaluate the mediating effect of unemployment anxiety has been tested with a structural equality model. First, the structure was examined via data showing goodness of fit in CFA goodness of fit tests ( $\chi^2/sd = 2.33, RMSEA = 0.07, AGFI = 0.93, GFI = 0.95, NFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.93, CFI = 0.94, SRMR = 0.07$ ). RMSEA, NFI, TLI, CFI and SRMR values were found within acceptable limits according to model goodness of fit values.  $\chi^2/sd, AGFI, GFI$  values were also within good fit limits. In light of this data, it can be said that the model offers fitness with the data.

The structural equality model developed in accordance with the purpose of the research is presented in Figure 2, and the regression weights of the model are presented in Table 7.

**Figure 2.** Structural Equality Model of Research



**Table 7.** Regression Weights of Structural Equality Model

Dependent Variable	Predictor Variable	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	S.H.	t
Job Searching Efficacy Level	General Self-Efficacy	.56	.32	.24	.05	3.22***
General Unemployment Anxiety	General Self-Efficacy	-.46	-.46	.0	.06	-5.66***
Job Searching Efficacy Level	General Unemployment Anxiety	-.36	-.36	.0	.05	-3.66***

\*\*\*p<.001

In the light of the results obtained, it was seen that general self-efficacy increases the level of job searching competence ( $\beta = .32$ ,  $t = 3.22$   $p < .001$ ). In addition, general self-efficacy relieves general unemployment anxiety ( $\beta = -.46$ ,  $t = -5.66$   $p < .001$ ). General unemployment anxiety also negatively reduces the level of job searching competence ( $\beta = -.36$ ,  $t = -3.66$   $p < .001$ ). Indirect effect of general self-sufficiency was observed on job searching competence level over general unemployment concern ( $\beta = .24$   $p < .001$ ). In addition, based on the results of the Bootstrapp analysis, it was determined that the general unemployment concern had a partial mediating role in the relationship between general self-efficacy and job searching competence level (95% GA [.08, .33]). With reference to the information, hypotheses  $H_4$  and  $H_5$  were accepted.

## 7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Anxiety is one of the basic emotions and directs a person to protective behaviors such as taking precautions when it is suitable in time and intensity with the stimulus. If human beings interpret their

own resources as inadequate and the outside world more dangerous, they may have a disproportionate and dysfunctional anxiety. Dysfunctional anxiety can bring aimless, strenuous avoidance behaviors or inaction similar to total freezing.

As with our dysfunctional concerns in different areas, individual and environmental factors are decisive in the severity of unemployment anxiety. Considering the results of our research; it has been observed that unemployment anxiety increases as the perception of self-efficacy decreases, and low self-efficacy negatively affects the ability to look for work. As a result of relational analysis; it has been observed that general self-sufficiency has an indirect effect on the level of job searching competence realized through general unemployment anxiety, and that general unemployment anxiety plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between general self-efficacy and job searching competence level. Additionally, it has been seen that respondents had overall unemployment concerns based on the work experience variable and significant difference in their job searching competency scores in favor of those with work experience. It has also been observed that those with work experience had lower overall unemployment anxiety and a higher level of job searching competence.

Reviewing the literature, study conducted by Deer et al. to evaluate similar variables has revealed that low anxiety levels led to high self-efficacy levels and high job searching intentions. In fact, researchers argued that by reducing anxiety within these concepts that had a two-way relationship with each other, the positive effect of people's career self-efficacy on their job searching intentions could be revealed (Deer, Gohn & Kanaya, 2018). Unemployment anxiety, which is also shown as an intermediary in our study, should be evaluated taking into account the effect of individual characteristics as well as the level of socioeconomic development in which the country is located. Although the perceived individual coping ability is high in countries where unemployment rates are high and where there are no correlations between the available employment areas and the departments of universities or vocational schools, unemployment anxiety will still be felt. This causes brain drain in many countries as well as in Türkiye.

In a limited study conducted in Türkiye, it was defined that gender in general does not affect unemployment anxiety, anxiety increases as the perception of academic self-sufficiency decreases, and job searching competence is negatively affected (Sahin Kutlu, Cetinbakis & Kutlu, 2019; Cakir, 2016; Unlu & Erbas, 2018; Ersoy- Kart & Erdost, 2008). It can be said that these results, which are generally in line with this study's results, show the importance of examining the relationship of unemployment anxiety, self-sufficiency and job searching competence in order to ensure that young people can be hopeful for the future. It is seen that the content of university education should provide professional skills that will increase the individual's sense of self-sufficiency and make them feel competent in looking for a job. The fact that people can see their own equipment adequately actually ensures that their anxiety is at a rational level and does not hinder their purposeful behavior, even if the outside world

involves risks. In other words, if students have a good education, even if the job opportunities are small due to the reasons arising from the country, their self-efficacy is developing and they can make applications for their purpose by feeling the competence to look for a job. However, if it does not feel this, the level of anxiety is high and it can develop dysfunctional avoidance attitudes. Although the training they receive with individual characteristics (such as perceiving danger more than it is) is good, those with high anxiety may miss the chance to demonstrate their existing potential as their job searching competence will decrease. It is important to provide support by providing individual and group consultancies for these students. Unfortunately, sometimes unemployment anxiety can be felt high due to the economic negative situations in which countries are located, although the feeling of self-sufficiency is sufficient. Those with good job searching competence can present this anxiety not as a hindrance but in the form of behavior towards different countries. The education received here, especially the level of foreign language knowledge that can make the person feel self-efficient, the global thinking of the family and culture and the encouragement in this regard are positive supporters of the behavior of looking for work abroad. To avoid this situation, which leads to the loss of brain and labor, it can be defined as the duty of the states to abandon the populist policy such as determining the number of students to be admitted to the departments by planning the employment of university graduates and opening an unnecessary number of universities.

In addition, a review of the faculty/college/vocational school departments of universities to meet the needs of today and the future, the closure of employment opportunities that have lost their function or become very limited, and the introduction of new departments in accordance with the requirements of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0, and the training of educators and learning to learn can be proposed. In addition, based on the research result, students can be advised to experience work together with their education life by emphasizing that having work experience during the academic life period is an aspect that increases their job searching competence levels and lowers general unemployment anxiety.

As a limitation of the research (for reasons such as time, cost, accessibility, etc.), this study was carried out only by survey method on students graduates and students who are in the process of graduation (who will take a single course exam) from Necmettin Erbakan University Faculty of Applied Sciences Department of Finance and Banking between 2017 and 2020. Researchers interested in the subject may be advised to carry out the research with different universities, different faculties/departments and more student participation in the same method. In addition, it may be recommended that participants research from a different perspective by allowing them to present their thoughts more comprehensively with open-ended questions, incorporating the business world into the research and expanding the subject and context with qualitative data analysis in an inclusive way.

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