

## Investigation of the Motivational Persistence Levels of the Students Studying at the Faculty of Sport Sciences According to Some Demographic Characteristics

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### Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate the motivational persistence levels of students who received sports education and examine in terms of some demographic variables. In the study, the “Motivational Persistence Scale” consisting of long-term purposes pursuing, current purposes pursuing, recurrence of unattained purposes sub-dimensions was used to measure motivational permanence of the students. The research group consisted of 347 students who voluntarily participated from Faculty of Sport Sciences of Mugla Sitki Kocman University. The data were analyzed through the statistical package program SPSS 22.0. The demographic information of the students was determined with descriptive statistics. Independent T-test was used to compare the subscale scores by gender, and One Way ANOVA analysis was used to compare the age groups and overall academic grade averages. The results of the analyzes showed that the motivational persistence levels of the students of the faculty of sport sciences are medium and close to high. In addition, there was no significant difference in terms of the age variable, but it was found that students aged 25 and over were more motivated. Further, it has been observed that the students whose academic grade average was 1.00 to 1.99 were higher than the students whose grade average was between 3.00–4.00.

**Keywords:** Motivational persistence, Students, Faculty of sport sciences.

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### Contribution of this paper to the literature

Today, the concept of motivation has become increasingly important, both in the business world and in the field of education. There are many studies in the literature on motivation, which is known as the effort of the individual with respect to its purpose. However, it is thought that the number of studies is limited with the determination and continuity of this motivation or commitment to the goal. Therefore, it is thought that this type of research is important since the importance of motivation is parallel to its determination and continuity.

## 1. Introduction

Motivational persistence has recently been a topic of greater interest for researchers. This is because motivational persistence plays an important role in individuals' achievements. Individuals need more personal resources such as intrinsic motivation in developing behavior for success (Yıldız & Tüfekçioğlu, 2008). During this flow action, people interact with others and acquire knowledge, skills, strategies, beliefs, and attitudes. It is known that motivation is effective in the social environment in the process of learning and self-regulation skills as functions that play a role (Schunk & Usher, 2019). The term motivation was used as "movere" in Latin. Motivation, which means move and activates (Terzi, Mahmut, & Gürbüz, 2012) is expressed as the processes that motivate and sustain the person towards the target. These processes are known as personal intrinsic effects that lead to results such as selection, effort, persistence, success, and environmental factors (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). In other words, motivation is stated as a force that pushes the individual to act decisively and purposefully in order to achieve the targeted result (Bahar & Özbozkurt, 2020).

The motivation concept is a theoretically researched and frequently discussed topic in the educational psychology field. The concept of motivational persistence, which is considered necessary for learning, is considered as the key to success (Saricam, 2015). Motivational persistence is determined by the intensity of the individual's emotional and physiological needs (Onen & Tüzün, 2005). This concept is associated with success and is equivalent to the determination to achieve targets. In other words, this concept states the motivational attitude required to achieve the desired goals. More specifically, it is defined as the tendency of the individual to carry out activities related to his/her goals despite the difficulties, obstacles, exhaustion, long-term disappointment, or low self-perception (Akdag, 2020; Constantin, Holman, & Hojbotă, 2011). Motivational persistence is expressed as an individual's endeavor to reach the specified goal and tendency to find the necessary personal resources such as intrinsic motivation to overcome the obstacles that he/she will encounter after making a motivational decision and to continue his/her motivation, and it is also expressed as the individual's resistance to distracting negative situations (Constantin, 2013; Man, 2016). Motivational persistence is among the important factors that will affect their performance in coping with possible problems that individuals may encounter in their life, equipped with necessary targets in accordance with the information era and reach their goals (Argon, İsmetoğlu, Celik Yılmaz, & Erbaş, 2015). In other words, the motivational persistence means that the individual strives to reach the target as a feature of the cognitive system and continues to find personal resources in order to overcome the problems encountered in this process (Bostan, 2015). Students experience intense exam pace, peer competition, and job anxiety in order to achieve superior academic success in the university life process, and because this process coincides with the youth period, they are exposed to negative situations such as stress, anxiety, and burnout. The ability of students to overcome these situations is associated with their motivation levels and this situation is thought to be directly related to their motivational persistence (Demir & Peker, 2017). In addition, students' motivational persistence and learning motivations are stated to be the most critical determinant of learning quality and success (Broussard & Garrison, 2004; Mitchell, 1992). When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are various studies on motivational persistence (see, (Akdag, 2020; Bostan, Constantin, & Aiftincăi Andreea, 2014; Bostan., 2015; Cenberci & Beyhan, 2016; Chirila & Constantin, 2016; Constantin et al., 2011; Demir & Peker, 2017; Saricam, Akın, Akın, & İlbay, 2014; Saricam., 2015)).

In order to contribute to the literature, this study aimed to the determination of the motivational persistence levels of university students who received sports education in an academic context, and to examine them in terms of some demographic variables. In this context, the following research questions were tried to be answered:

RQ 1. What is the level of motivational persistence of the students of the faculty of sport sciences?

RQ 2. Is there a significant difference between the ages and motivational persistence of the students of the faculty of sport sciences?

RQ 3. Is there a significant difference between the gender and motivational persistence of the students of the faculty of sport sciences?

RQ 4. Is there a significant difference between the academic overall grade averages and motivational persistence of the students of the faculty of sport sciences?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research Goal

In this study, which was carried out to determine the motivational persistence levels of the students of the faculty of sport sciences and to examine them in terms of some demographic variables, the simple random sampling method was used from the accessible universe based on the survey model. The accessible universe is the concrete universe with the real choice that the researcher can reach. Simple random sampling, on the other hand, is the most straightforward form of random probability sampling (Buyukozturk, Cakmak, Akgun, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2017).

### 2.2. Sample and Data Collection

To determine the motivational persistence levels of the students, the "Motivational Persistence Scale" developed by Constantin et al. (2011) and adapted to Turkish by Saricam et al. (2014) was used. This scale consists of three dimensions ("long-term purposes pursuing", "current purposes pursuing", and "recurrence of unattained purposes") and 13 items. Sample size; the universe of the study was made up of students of Faculty of Sport

Sciences of Mugla Sitki Kocman University. As a sample, 347 students (188 female and 159 male) voluntarily participated in the study.

### 2.3. Analyzing of Data

The analysis of the data was made in SPSS 22.0 Windows program. The demographic properties of the students participating in the study were determined with descriptive statistics. Cronbach alpha coefficient was used in the internal consistency calculation of the scale ( $\alpha=0.712$  for long-term purposes pursuing;  $\alpha=0.785$  for current purposes pursuing;  $\alpha=0.745$  for recurrence of unattained purposes). Independent T-test was used to compare subscale scores by gender, and One Way ANOVA analysis was used to compare age groups and overall academic grade point average.

## 3. Findings / Results

### 3.1. Demographic Properties

Table 1 shows that the majority of the participants are between the ages of 20–22 (36.6%). The rate of female (54.2%) participating in the study is higher than that of male. 2.00–2.99 academic grade (42.1%) constitutes the highest grade range.

**Table-1.** Frequency and percentage distributions for participants' demographic properties.

Variables	Categories	f	%
Age	20 – 22 years	127	36.6
	23 – 24 years	125	36.0
	25 and over	95	27.4
Gender	Female	188	54.2
	Male	159	45.8
Academic grade average	1.00 – 1.99	106	30.5
	2.00 – 2.99	146	42.1
	3.00 – 4.00	95	27.4

### 3.2. Motivational Persistence Levels

Table 2 indicates that the “long-term purposes pursuing”, “current purposes pursuing”, and “recurrence of unattained purposes” levels of students are above the mid-level and very close to the high.

**Table-2.** Descriptive statistics on participants' motivational persistence levels.

Scale	N	X	Sd
Long-term purposes pursuing	347	3.88	.606
Current purposes pursuing	347	4.00	.663
Recurrence of unattained purposes	347	3.89	.535

Note: \* $p<0.05$ .

### 3.3. Comparison of Motivational Persistence Levels in Terms of Academic Age Group

Table 3 shows that there is no statistically significant difference between age groups and levels of “long-term purposes pursuing”, “current purposes pursuing”, and “recurrence of unattained purposes” ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Table-3.** Comparison of participants' motivational persistence levels in terms of academic age group variable.

Scale	Age Groups	N	X	SS	F	P
Long-term purposes pursuing	20 – 22 years	127	3.84	.631	.630	.533
	23 – 24 years	125	3.89	.601		
	25 and over	95	3.94	.581		
Current purposes pursuing	20 – 22 years	127	3.90	.708	2.387	.093
	23 – 24 years	125	4.04	.648		
	25 and over	95	4.08	.608		
Recurrence of unattained purposes	20 – 22 years	127	3.86	.581	.796	.452
	23 – 24 years	125	3.87	.501		
	25 and over	95	3.95	.512		

Note: \* $p<0.05$ .

### 3.4. Comparison of Motivational Persistence Levels in Terms of Gender

Table 4 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between gender and levels of “long-term purposes pursuing”, “current purposes pursuing”, and “recurrence of unattained purposes” ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Table-4.** Comparison of participants' motivational persistence levels in terms of gender variable.

Scale	Gender	N	X	Sd	t	P
Long-term purposes pursuing	Female	188	3.85	.613	-1.081	.281
	Male	159	3.92	.597		
Current purposes pursuing	Female	188	4.05	.633	1.461	.145
	Male	159	3.94	.695		
Recurrence of unattained purposes	Female	188	3.90	.542	.652	.515
	Male	159	3.87	.526		

### 3.5. Comparison of Motivational Persistence Levels in Terms of Academic Overall Grade Averages

Table 5 shows that there is no statistically significant difference between academic overall grade averages and levels of “long-term purposes pursuing” and “recurrence of unattained purposes” ( $p > 0.05$ ). But, there is a significant difference between academic overall grade averages and levels of “current purposes pursuing” ( $p < 0.05$ ). According to the Post-Hoc Tukey test results, it is seen that the students whose academic grade point averages are 1.00–1.99 is significantly higher than those whose academic grade point average is 3.00–4.00.

**Table-5.** Comparison of participants' motivational persistence levels in terms of academic overall grade averages.

Scale	Grade Averages	N	X	Sd	F	P
Long-term purposes pursuing	1.00 – 1.99	106	3.91	.481	1.375	.254
	2.00 – 2.99	146	3.92	.619		
	3.00 – 4.00	95	3.80	.702		
Current purposes pursuing	1.00 – 1.99	106	4.13	.603	3.301	.038*
	2.00 – 2.99	146	3.96	.646		
	3.00 – 4.00	95	3.91	.734		
Recurrence of unattained purposes	1.00 – 1.99	106	3.87	.476	1.923	.148
	2.00 – 2.99	146	3.95	.498		
	3.00 – 4.00	95	3.81	.636		

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ .

## 4. Discussion

Motivation is stated as a force that motivates the individual, and the motivational persistence concept is expressed as the continuation of this power. This study purposed to the determination of the motivational persistence levels of university students who received sports education in an academic context, and to examine them in terms of some demographic variables.

Our research findings showed that the arithmetic means of the students' motivational persistence levels were above the mid-level and close to the high: ( $X = 3.88$  for long-term purposes pursuing,  $X = 4.00$  for current purposes pursuing, and  $X = 3.89$  for recurrence of unattained purposes). In the study by [Cenberci and Beyhan \(2016\)](#) on university students, the arithmetic mean of the answers given for motivational persistence was found to be above the mid-level ( $X = 3.40 - 4.19$ ), and these values coincide with the findings of our research. In a study conducted by [Celik and Saricam \(2018\)](#) on 4th-grade university students, it was determined that the students' motivational persistence score averages were statistically significantly lower. This finding is not in line with the results of our study. The reason why the two study findings are not similar is that the participants are only in the 4th grade and the students of education faculty have exam anxiety. On the other hand, [Celik and Saricam \(2018\)](#) suggested that this result may be due to students' interview concerns. Unlike these results, [Argon et al. \(2015\)](#) found that the students' motivational persistence had a mid-level of arithmetic average ( $X = 3.32$ ). However, they also concluded that the mean score ( $X = 3.65$ ) of the “current purposes pursuing” subscale was slightly above the mid-level.

According to the findings of the difference between the ages and motivational persistence of the students in our study, there was no statistically significant difference between age groups and levels of “long-term purposes pursuing”, “current purposes pursuing”, and “recurrence of unattained purposes” ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, it was observed that the mean score of “current purposes pursuing” ( $X = 4.04$  for 23–24 age and  $X = 4.08$  for 25 and over) was lower than the other age groups. Considering the age of the students, the reason for the high scores may be due to the more experienced students in the age group of 25 and over. [Cenberci and Beyhan \(2016\)](#) in their research, found that the participants who were over 25 years old had a high score in the “current purposes pursuing” sub-scale. The findings of the researchers support the results of our study. Accordingly, it can be said that the motivational persistence of the students depending on their age progress (without any significant difference) continues above the mid-level.

According to the findings of the difference between the gender and motivational persistence of the students in our study, there was no statistically significant difference between gender and levels of “long-term purposes pursuing”, “current purposes pursuing”, and “recurrence of unattained purposes” ( $p > 0.05$ ). Similar results are found in the literature on motivational persistence in terms of gender variable ([Duckworth & Quinn, 2009](#); [Ekinci, Yilmaz, & Hamarta, 2018](#)). Today, especially in sports enterprises, the competitive environment continues without discrimination of women and men. In every field of sports, men and women find the opportunity to work a lot in the context of the sports market. Therefore, the lack of a significant difference between motivational persistence and gender in the context of the student in our research can be attributed to the high number of job opportunities in the market.

According to the findings of the difference between the academic overall grade averages and motivational persistence of the students in our study, there was no statistically significant difference between academic overall grade averages and levels of “long-term purposes pursuing” and “recurrence of unattained purposes” ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, a significant difference was found between the academic overall grade averages and “current purposes pursuing” ( $p = .038$ ). Accordingly, it was observed that students whose academic overall grade average was between 1.00 and 1.99 had higher levels of “current purposes pursuing” than those whose academic overall grade average was between 3.00 and 4.00 ( $p > 0.05$ ). According to this result, the motivational persistence of students, especially those with a grade point average of 3.00 and above, is considered to be in the negative direction compared to those with a lower grade point average (1.00–1.99). However, it should also be taken into consideration that the subscale of “current purposes pursuing” is significantly higher. [Madhlangobe, Chikasha, Mafa, and Kurasha \(2014\)](#) in their study, found a positive relationship between student achievement and motivational persistence. Further, there are studies in the literature that motivational persistence is associated with academic success and school life ([Aypay & Eryilmaz, 2011](#); [Demir & Peker, 2017](#); [Lavigne, Vallerand, & Miquelon, 2007](#); [Saricam, 2015](#)). According to these findings, considering the fact that students with a high-grade point average have reached their goals, it is possible that students with a lower grade point average may have a motivational persistence to increase their academic

success. Therefore, in the context of academic grade, it is thought that the reason that only “current purposes pursuing” is observed high in students with low level depends on what was mentioned earlier.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, as a result of our study, it was observed that the motivational persistence levels of the students of the faculty of sports sciences were close to the middle and high levels. In addition, there was no significant difference between gender variable and motivational persistence. Although there was no significant difference in terms of age variable, the motivational persistence of the students 25 and older was higher. Another result of our study is that the academic grade point average of students between 1.00 and 1.99 is higher than other students.

### 5.1. Suggestions

- Increasing the sample size and using different variables in similar studies to be planned in the future will contribute to obtaining more comprehensive results. Along with motivational persistence, making comparative studies with the variables that may be specifically related to the students' goal commitment, academic achievements, and life satisfaction will contribute to the literature.
- Studies on motivational persistence to be done on secondary school students apart from university students will be important in determining the motivational persistence of the next generation.
- Designing an education system that will keep students' motivation at a high level and ensure their persistence should be considered.
- Considering that learning and education continue throughout life, motivational approaches should be offered to students to achieve their goals and students should be directed to have perseverance.
- For university students who will form the next generation, along with persistence, it will be useful to develop various motivational tools that will enable them to set goals, follow long-term goals, and repeat unattainable goals.
- Positive psychology-oriented education should be applied in order to inform students about motivational persistence, to convince them that it will benefit, and to ensure continuity.

## 6. Limitations

We think that not being able to determine detailed personal characteristics is one of the limitations of this study. Besides, different demographic features to be used can be added to the personal information form in order to determine the differences between the findings. Working with larger sample groups, comparing multiple branches, regions, and universities will also contribute to the literature.

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