Student Perceptions on War Topics and War Anxiety in History Classes

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Abstract: The consequences of wars are not affecting only the humanity that existed in the period of war, but also the generations that lived afterward. These results are passed on to the students through history classes. Determining the change in students' anxiety levels based on this is the main purpose of the research. The scale developed in the context of this goal is applied to 365 university students. The topics of war and war anxiety in history classes have been evaluated regarding gender, age, origin, the success of history lesson, family members participated in the war, and the idea of "war can come out any time". While there is a significant difference between variables; gender, the success of history lesson, and the idea of "war can come out anytime," there is no significant difference in variables; age, origin, and having family members participated in the war.

Keywords: *History education; war topics; war anxiety; anxiety;*

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Introduction

Anxiety is defined as an individual's sadness, worry, thought, uneasiness that individuals feel a strong desire within society, unsettling emotions that appear when they seem unable to reach for the purpose of a strong desire (Cabı and Yalçınalp, 2013). Studies about the measurement of anxiety started about 50 years ago. In 1951, the psychologist of learning, Taylor, experimented with the conditioning of eye movements. The aim was to measure the anxiety of the individual. As a result of this experiment, Taylor developed 'Taylor Open Anxiety Scale' (Bindak, 2005). Anxiety is a normalized condition that exists in the individual's life from birth. According to Uzdu (2016), the usual level of anxiety helps to improve one's self-development, motivation level and work efficiently.

According to Tokgöz (2017), anxiety is a negative and threatening feeling in general; however, it is a situation that encourages and motivates the human being. Persistent anxiety at a high level gives people an uneasiness, and people feel that something bad is going to happen. Anxiety is the uneasiness that arises in the form of reflection of the fear of any danger (Tezer & Bozkurt, 2015). According to Freud, anxiety, in psychology, refers to a mental state in which people live, and the concept of anxiety is defined as the function of the ego. In the face of a new situation, it is an important factor in the structure and development of personality. Anxiety with enthusiasm can lead to the perception of physiological symptoms (Manav, 2011).

Anxiety, in general, is that the individual felt inadequate and incapacitated in the face of a difficult situation to deal with it. It is a natural feeling experienced in any stressful situation and a natural part of life. As long as the individual continues to be anxious, he will experience a state of uncertain fear and distress and focus on his feelings of inadequacy and helplessness. Our aim is not to eliminate the anxiety, but not to be defeated in anxiety and to use it for our benefit by keeping the anxiety experienced at a certain level.

The causes of anxiety according to the definitions of it made in various years are the feeling of the individual himself as inadequate in the threatened environment, the state of uneasiness caused by the internal affliction, fear or delusions, and the reactions shown to the possible threats (Özyürek & Demiray, 2011). Among the conditions that may cause anxiety include physiological symptoms such as restlessness, tremor, dizziness,

nausea and vomiting; Social symptoms such as speech difficulty and avoidance of activities can also be seen (Doğan & Çoban, 2009).

Two types of anxiety are noteworthy. The first one is constant anxiety, and the other is continuing anxiety. People experience anxiety that their intensity is fluctuating, without the continuity of the situation they are in when they are anxious about the situation; when living with constant anxiety, it can be mentioned that the anxiety situations that exist in people become more threatening as they become permanent (Kurtoğlu, 2017). Therefore, a variety of reactions arises in individuals who are anxious. According to Metin (2017), people who are constantly anxious have uneasiness and worried face expression. Such people are watchful of every moment; act as if there is something wrong, and exhibit aggressive behavior.

Many types of research emphasize that the most basic anxiety is death anxiety. In some of the studies on death anxiety, the relationship between war and death is questioned, and the relationship between fear of war or anxiety of war on death anxiety is examined. As a result of the literature review, no scale development study about war anxiety was found. However, as already pointed out, some parts of the scale development studies, which include death anxiety, are devoted to war. In his comparative study on anxiety among deaths between Turkish and Jordanian students, Ayten (2009) posed questions about fear of war and war anxiety among students and found that students' anxiety level of war was at a minimum. On the other hand, Gashi (2011) conducted a study on the anxiety of death of Turkish and Kosovan students and stated that the fear of "third world war" was the highest common fear.

The wars have very severe consequences, and these consequences can be political, geopolitical and economic as well as social, cultural, societal, psychological and biological. Moreover, the results of the war are not only influencing the period they are in, but also affecting the subsequent generations. When we look at the social and psychological effects, especially the trauma of death and substantial loss instigated by the war causes the anxiety disorder, severe stress, and depression in the individuals. For example, post-traumatic stress disorder has been identified in civilians that have been explored in Kosovo for six years after the 1998-99 war (Eytan et al., 2011). Another example is the impact of the civil war on children living in Sierra Leona. The analysis of the data emphasizes that children are affected both psychologically and physically and that the consequences will last for many years (Denov, 2010). Another striking example; A survey of Germany's over 60-year-old population found that the effects of the Second World War were still present and that people were suffering from insomnia,

nightmares, and worries about reviving bad memories (Glaesmer et al., 2010). The way in which human beings transmit their traumas after wars also vary. For example, Greek Cypriots outlawed traumatic disturbances in Cyprus as a result of the 1974 coup d'etat with an opera game (Papaeti, 2010). Bearing in mind the mentioned examples, it is thought that postwar traumas are experienced in the regions where war is taking place and that these traumas result in stress, anxiety, and depression. When it is considered that these results can be passed on to other generations over the years, it is necessary to determine how the effects of these results are revived.

Hence, this research has a proposition that war topics in history classes, which are thought to be influential in the revival of tragedies, will fill a gap in this area while aiming to determine the effects of students' anxiety levels. Given similar studies in the literature, the anxiety level of warfare of female students can be higher than that of male students. It is important how the anxiety situations of young students living in countries with recent wars in their lands. One of the reasons why this work is being done is the fact that anyone of the family members has waged war or that anyone has been lost in the war is also a cause of war anxiety.

The main aim of this study is to develop a Likert-type scale to be able to determine how the battle topics in history classes affect the war anxiety of prospective teacher candidates in the education faculties. For this purpose, the validity and reliability of the anxiety scale for the war topics studied in history classes were examined. It is also analyzed whether there is a meaningful difference between the students' anxieties about war topics and the variables: gender, age, the success in history classes, having a family member participated in the war and/or killed in the war and had the idea of "war can come out anytime."

Research Method

The research is a quantitative research with data collection and analysis aspects. Also, survey model was used in this study. The survey model aims to describe the topic as it was in the past or as it exists. (Karasar, 2012).

Participants

The participants of the research are the students of education faculty in a private university in Northern Cyprus. The participants of the study are 365 students chosen among the freshmen. The distribution of these freshmen is as listed: 123 (33.7%) students from the Guidance and

Psychological Counseling Department of the University, 9 (2.5%) from the Classroom Teaching Department, 118 (32.3%) from the Preschool Teaching Department and 13 (3.6%) from the History Teaching Department, 8 (2.2%) from the Department of Child Development and 3 (0.8%) from the department of art teaching. The reason for the selection of first-year students in the study is that the mentioned students are taking a history lesson during the fall and spring semesters of 2016-2017 and the war topics are being processed in the classes. The participants consisted of 212 (58.1%) female and 153 (41.9%) male students. The age range of students participating in the study varies between 18 and 30. The participants consisted of 207 (56.7%) students aged 18-20 years and 158 (43.3%) students aged 20-30 years.

Data Collection Tools

In order to collect the data, a personal information form was created with the aim of obtaining the demographic structures of the students. To be able to determine how the war topics in history classes affect the anxiety levels of the students, Anxiety Scale of War Topics in History Classes was developed.

Personal Information Form

Before the scale, to be described in sub-scales, a personal information form was given to them to describe the students' demographic structures. In this form, students were asked questions about their gender, age, division, background, successes in history classes, whether their family members involved in the war, whether or not they have family members killed if they participated in a war and any worries about war.

Studies on the Creation of the Factors of Anxiety Scale

To be able to identify data for the purpose of the study, a scale appropriate to the content of the research was developed. In this context, firstly an open-ended question asked to some of the students about how war topics in history classes affected their level of anxiety of war and students were invited to examine this issue in a few paragraphs. Some items were created in response to the answers given. State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, translated into Turkish by Öner and Le Comte (1983), and anxiety scale for research developed by Büyüköztürk (1997), were taken as samples for the other items. The 30 developed items were presented to 6 experts, and as a result of their comments, the scale was reduced to 20 items. This improved

preliminary scale was applied to 60 students, and the validity and reliability of the scale were examined in the direction of the results. The values obtained in this context are; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value = 0.893, Cronbach Alpha value = 0.881 and $p = <, 001$. When these values are taken into consideration, it can be said that the scale is valid and reliable. The Likert-type scale was used on the scale. In this context, options are provided for each item as "I absolutely do not agree, I do not agree, I am undecided, I agree and I strongly agree." Scoring of options varies between 5-1.

The Reliability and validity of the Scale

Factor analysis has been conducted to test the validity of the Anxiety Scale of War Topics in History Classes. Rennie (1997) defines factor analysis as a "variable restriction technique" that integrates and simplifies the creation of smaller groups of variables, called the "factor." Factor analysis has a significant meaning in the scale development. Büyüköztürk (2002) states that this analysis can be repeated over and over again according to the situation of the factors, and as a result of this analysis, talks about the value of factors in the evaluation of "structural validity." Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett Sphericity tests were applied to determine the suitability of the factor analysis based on the data and the sample size. Kaiser (1974) recommends the KMO values greater than 0,5 as barely acceptable. Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999) state that values between 0.5 and 0.7 are mediocre, values between 0.7 and 0.8 are good, values between 0.8 and 0.9 are great, and values above 0.9 are superb. As mentioned before, the calculated KMO coefficient of this study is 0.89. The study also carried out the Bartlett Sphericity test and reached the value of 3104.7. Hair et al. (1998) emphasized that the null hypothesis should be rejected so that factor analysis can continue in a healthy way and that the result of the Bartlett Sphericity test should be high enough to prove it. The mentioned data are shown in Table 1:

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,893
Approx. Chi-Square		3104,707
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	190
	Sig.	,000

Three factors were found for this scale, which aimed to measure students' anxiety levels of War Topics in History Classes. The study can be summarized by three factors according to the analysis results. Factor contents are taken into consideration primarily to determine these factors. These three factors are called "History classes topics and war anxiety" (9 items), "War anxiety" (7 items) and "Occupation and anxiety in history" (4 items).

Table 2. Total variances explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared			Rotation Sums of Squared		
				Loadings			Loadings		
	Total	% of	Cumulative	Total	% of	Cumulative	Total	% of	Cumulative
	Variance		%	Variance		%	Variance		%
1	6.522	32.608	32.608	6.522	32.608	32.608	4.441	22.203	22.203
2	2.889	14.444	47.052	2.889	14.444	47.052	3.327	16.634	38.837
3	1.292	6.459	53.511	1.292	6.459	53.511	2.935	14.674	53.511
4	1.121	5.605	59.116						
5	.999	4.996	64.112						
6	.831	4.156	68.268						
7	.735	3.675	71.943						
8	.653	3.266	75.209						
9	.602	3.008	78.217						
10	.578	2.888	81.105						
11	.528	2.641	83.747						
12	.492	2.462	86.209						
13	.471	2.354	88.563						
14	.401	2.006	90.569						
15	.375	1.875	92.445						
16	.363	1.817	94.262						
17	.343	1.717	95.979						
18	.303	1.514	97.493						
19	.263	1.317	98.810						
20	.238	1.190	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Pearson correlation was calculated to see the relevance of the scale factors to each other as a result of the factor analysis. The data of correlation analysis given in Table 2 below, shows that the factors measure the characteristics that the scale is aimed to measure.

The Cronbach Alpha test was employed to measure the reliability of the scales. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency value for all the scales was 0.884. As a result of the analyses, it is observed that the total correlation values of the items change between 0.348 and 0.639.

Table 3. Mean, factor and reliability results.

Items and Factors	Mean(M)	SD	Item Total	Component analysis
<i>Factor 1: History classes topics and war anxiety</i>				
1. When I'm studying the war-related issues of history class, I feel like shrinking myself.	2.25	1.345	.599	.476
4. I feel under nervous pressure while working on the war stories in history classes.	2.45	1.312	.639	.568
5. I'm usually tired of listening to war stories in history classes.	2.63	1.370	.399	.434
6. My heart hits, and I am trembling while I watch the war topics in history classes.	2.22	1.277	.528	.400
7. I feel nervous while reading war topics in history classes.	2.48	1.378	.636	.679
8. While I am listening to the wars in a history class, I feel awkward.	2.46	1.383	.593	.659
9. I feel terrible before I go into history classes.	2.40	1.378	.558	.603
11. I enjoy having a conversation about war topics in history class	2.92	1.315	.017	.285
17. I do not want to listen to the war issues in history classes unless I have to.	2.57	1.410	.538	.478
<i>Factor 2: War Anxiety</i>				
2. Even the word "war" is enough to make me uncomfortable.	2.78	1.385	.627	.512
3. The idea of "war can come out any time" makes me worried.	2.91	1.383	.572	.465
10. I feel under nervous pressure while studying war topics in history classes.	2.50	1.338	.525	.393
12. I feel sorrowful when talking about	2.89	1.345	.457	.570

war issues.

13. The idea of war makes me worried.	2.85	1.390	.562	.657
14. I avoid discussing war topics because the war is troubling.	2.67	1.355	.568	.435
16. The war stories make me sad.	2.83	1.337	.377	.319

Factor 3: Occupation in History and Anxiety

20. In the history, the fighting of a nation to destroy the other nation worries me.	3.05	1.318	.459	.546
21. The occupation of a country by Imperials in the history worries me.	3.08	1.367	.348	.742
22. The occupation of a country by another country for the sake of economic advantage worries me.	3.14	1.349	.403	.752
23. The occupation of a country by another country for the sake of political advantage worries me.	3.10	1.443	.373	.730

Data Collection and Analysis

The scale, which was prepared in accordance with the previously mentioned goal of the work, was applied to the freshmen of the Near East University, Atatürk Faculty of Education in January 2015. The survey was conducted by the researchers of this study. As the number of freshmen in the faculty is 378, the scale has been multiplied and conducted. During the data entering process, the surveys with missing or inaccurate data are excluded. Hence, 365-sample size is reached. SPSS 20 statistical program is used to analyze the data. The t-test is conducted to evaluate the mean differences based on gender, age and family members participated in the war or killed in the war. The variables of department, origin, the success of history class and the idea of "war can come out any time" are analyzed by one-way ANOVA tests.

Findings and Comments

War topics in the History Classes, War Anxiety, and Gender

Independent samples t-test was applied to determine whether there is a significant difference between female and male students in the Anxiety Scale of War Topics in History Classes. The results are shown in the table-4.

Table 4. Independent samples t-test

	Gender					
	Male		Female		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S</i>		
<i>War topics in the history classes and anxiety</i>	2.41	0.94	2.58	0.88	1.74	0.08
<i>War anxiety</i>	2.58	0.92	2.91	0.90	3.48	0.00
<i>Occupation in the history and anxiety</i>	3.07	1.13	3.11	1.15	0.29	0.77

As in the table above, there is no significant difference between the male students and female students mean scores of “War topics in the history classes,” and “occupation in the history and anxiety” subscales. However, there is a statistically significant difference regarding “war anxiety” subscale ($p < 0.05$). The mean value for “war anxiety” for females is 2.91 which is between 2.60 and 3.40. This average value for females indicates that female students chose the “undecided” option for these questions. This result supports the hypothesis of this study. There are other studies in the literature that have shown that female students are more worried about war than male students are (Ayten, 2009; Gashi, 2011).

War topics in the History Classes, War Anxiety, and Age

Independent samples t-test is conducted to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the anxiety of war topics in the history classes regarding age categories. The results are presented in table-5.

Table 5. Independent samples t-test

	Age				<i>t</i>	P
	18-20		20+			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>War topics in the history classes and anxiety</i>	2.51	0.87	2.49	0.96	0.29	0.234
<i>War anxiety</i>	2.87	0.87	2.66	0.98	2.22	0.050
<i>Occupation in the history and anxiety</i>	3.08	1.12	3.11	1.16	0.24	0.494

As shown in the table above, there is no significant difference between the two age groups mean scores of “War topics in the history classes,” “war anxiety” and “occupation in the history and anxiety” subscales. In the “War Anxiety” sub-scale, students from the two age groups are also determined to be “undecided,” but when examined in detail, it is important to note that

war anxiety level decreases while the age increases. This relationship can be attributed to the fact that as the age of the students' progress so does their maturity and experience gained; as a result, they become aware of the low possibility of war.

War topics in the History Classes, War Anxiety, and Origin

One-way ANOVA analysis is conducted to determine the mean differences of anxiety scale of war topics based on origin categories. The results indicate that there is no statistical significance among the origin groups of the participant students in terms of their mean scores of "War topics in the history classes and anxiety," "War anxiety" and "Occupation in the history and anxiety" subscales. The results are thought to be due to the fact that Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot students are all in a state of war in the near future.

War topics in the History Classes, War Anxiety and Success Status in History Classes

One-way ANOVA and Tukey test have been conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference in the anxiety scale of war topics in history classes according to the success status of the students in the history classes.

The results indicated that there are statistically significant difference in the mean scores of "War topics in the history classes" among the students whose success status in the history class is "good" and the students whose success status is "bad" and the students whose success status is "medium" and "bad" ($F=18.67$, $p<0.05$).

Examining the second factor, namely the "War Anxiety," it is possible to talk about the difference between students who mark success status as "good" and students who mark success status as "bad" ($F=3.47$, $p<0.05$). There are no statistically significant differences among the student's success status in history classes regarding their "occupation in history and anxiety" subscale. In the first two cases mentioned by meaningful difference, the anxiety levels of students who described success as "good" are higher than the students who described success as "bad." The results lead to the belief that students who are more interested in the lesson empathize with the topics of the lesson. A hypothesis can be presented that this empathy also increases the anxiety levels of the students.

War topics in the History Classes, War Anxiety and the relationship of the family with war

The independent samples t-test has been conducted to understand whether the means of anxiety scale of war topics in history classes of students differ based on having family members participated in the war and/or killed in the war or not. The results of the t-test indicate that there are no mean differences of the subscales “war topics in the history classes,” “war anxiety” and “occupation in the history and anxiety” among the students who have family members participated in a war and/or killed in the war or not. The results can be interpreted as the fact that it is very unlikely for students to empathize with family members who participated in the war while in a peaceful environment.

War topics in the History Classes, War Anxiety and the idea of “war can come at any time.”

One Way ANOVA and Tukey test were conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference according to the answers given by the students to the idea of "war can happen at any time" on the anxiety scale for the war topics in history classes.

As a result of the analysis to measure how the war topics in history classes affect students War anxiety based on their status of “agree”, “undecided” and “disagree”, there is a significant mean differences between students who are “agree” with the idea of “war topics in the history classes and anxiety” and students who are “disagree” with the same idea (F: 9.71, $p < 0.05$).

There is also significant mean differences between students who are “agree” and “disagree” with the idea of “war anxiety” subscale and students who are “undecided” and “agree” with the same idea (F: 43.63, $p < 0.05$).

In the third subscale "Occupation in History and Anxiety," there is a significant difference between the students who mark the “I agree” and those who mark the “I Disagree” options (F: 11.93, $p < 0.05$). It is expected, considering these results, that students who do not have the idea of "war can come out any time" are more anxious than students who do not host it. It is thought that the students who hold such a thought consider the war topics in history classes with a different perspective.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The scale developed in this study aimed at measuring the effects of war topics in history classes on the anxiety of students were applied to 365

students in Near East University, Faculty of Education, during the education year of 2014-2015. When the general situation arises as a result of the study is assessed, it is reached that students are "undecided" on this subject.

From a gender perspective, there is a difference between female and male students. As mentioned in the literature, it was determined that female students have a higher level of war anxiety than male students average.

The second stage, which was assessed regarding demographic structure after the gender variable, was age. As a result of the fact that students are classified as between the ages of 18 and 20 and over 20, there is no significant difference in war topics and war anxiety in history classes depending on the age groups of the students.

It is expected that the students will be able to identify one of the Turkish, Kurdish, Turkish-Cypriot, and Other options in the demographic structure of the studied origin. It has been determined that students not make a meaningful difference in their war-related topics and war anxiety levels based on their origins.

Following the origin, the relationship between the success of the sample in the history classes and the war topics and the war anxiety was examined. In this respect, there is a significant difference between students who say themselves as "good" and those who say "bad" in history classes. It is possible to say that the students who are more interested in history classes are more adept at the lessons and are more influenced by the war topics by empathizing.

Another topic that has been analyzed was related whether students have family members participated in the war and/or killed in the war. Accordingly, the students were asked whether any of the family members participated in the war and whether any family members were killed in the war. As a result of the analyses made, no meaningful difference was reached regarding the effect of the answers given to these questions on war anxiety.

Finally, students' thoughts about the idea of "war can come out at any time" have been identified, and the relationship between history lesson and war anxiety and this thinking has been tried to be analyzed. There is a significant difference in this case. There is a significant difference between students who say "I agree" and "I do not agree" with this idea. The results mean that believers in this thought differ in their view of the war topics in history classes and war anxiety compared to others. It is also an expected result that the students with this belief have more anxiety of war.

As a suggestion, war topics in history classes and war anxiety are thought to have different consequences for students of different ages. Therefore this study should be repeated to students in middle school and

high school. Also, the study only covers the students in the faculty of education. The participants can be increased to the students in other faculties so that the number of origins can be multiplied and different results can be obtained. Another suggestion is to analyze students' attitudes towards issues such as peace, treaties and the like in history classes. Thus, it is possible to determine the expectations of the students from the history lesson.

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