

Attitudes Toward Peace: The Role of Personality Traits, Perspective Taking and Gender

Barışa Yönelik Tutumlar: Kişilik Özelliklerinin, Perspektif Almanın ve Cinsiyetin Rolü

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relations between university students' attitudes toward peace, and their level of perspective taking, gender, and personality traits. It also aimed to determine to what extent these variables predict attitudes toward peace. The research was conducted in predictive correlational research model from quantitative methods. 326 students participated in the study and data were collected in December 2018. Instruments included Demographical Information Form, Big Five Personality Test, Interpersonal Reactivity Index, and Attitudes Toward War and Peace Scale. Results showed that peace attitudes were significantly and positively correlated with perspective taking. Attitudes toward peace have differentiated significantly in terms of gender resulting in females having more positive attitudes than males. In addition, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness were significantly and positively correlated with attitudes toward peace. Future studies should consider examining peace attitudes toward specific ethnic groups in conflict and non-conflict settings. Promoting perspective taking strategies also seems to be a promising direction for peace psychology research.

Keywords: Attitudes toward peace, Perspective taking, Gender, Big five, Personality traits.

Öz

Bu çalışma üniversite öğrencilerinin barışa yönelik tutumları ile cinsiyetleri, kişilik özellikleri ve perspektif alma düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiyi ve bu değişkenlerin barışa yönelik tutumları ne düzeyde yordadığını araştırmaktadır. Araştırma, nicel yöntemlerden biri olan yordayıcı ilişkisel araştırma modeline göre yürütülmüştür. Araştırmaya 326 üniversite öğrencisi katılmış ve veriler Aralık 2018'de toplanmıştır. Ölçme araçları Demografik Bilgi Formu, Beş Faktör Kişilik Testi, Kişilerarası Reaktivite İndeksi ve Savaşa ve Barışa Yönelik Tutumlar Ölçeğinden oluşmaktadır. Sonuçlar, barışa yönelik tutumların perspektif alma düzeyi ile anlamlı derecede, pozitif yönde ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Barışa yönelik tutumların cinsiyete göre anlamlı şekilde farklılaştığı, kadınların barışa yönelik tutumlarının erkeklerden daha olumlu olduğu saptanmıştır. Ek olarak, yumuşak başlılık, deneyime açıklık ve özdenetim ile barışa yönelik tutumlar arasında anlamlı bir ilişkili olduğu görülmüştür. Gelecekteki çalışmalar, çatışma ortamlarında ve çatışma dışı ortamlarda etnik gruplara dayalı barış tutumlarını incelemeyi göz önünde bulundurmalıdır. Perspektif alma stratejilerini desteklemek, barış psikolojisi araştırmaları için umut verici bir alan olarak görünmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Barışa yönelik tutumlar, Perspektif alma, Cinsiyet, Beş faktör, Kişilik özellikleri.

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Introduction

Even though the number of war deaths has been globally declining since World War II, wars and conflicts continue in the 21st century and affect millions of people. The Center for Preventive Action (2022) reveals that there are 27 ongoing conflicts in the world today such as terrorism, regional conflicts/internal wars (e.g., Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan) and international wars (e.g., recently Russia-Ukrainian war). While regions such as the Middle East, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa bear the heaviest burden, Europe, too, has recently witnessed a military operation between Russia and Ukraine. These conflicts across the world have caused millions of people to lose their families, homes and jobs, experience forced displacement resulting in a serious humanitarian crisis and deprivation of basic human rights (UNHCR, 2021). The United Nations' latest report (2021) draws attention to the fact that the number of forcibly displaced people due to war, violence, persecution, and human rights violations has increased by 8 percent compared to the previous year and reached 89.3 million. This figure, which was 41 million in 2010, has more than doubled in ten years.

Lack of peace causes inequality in health and education in societies, and these inequalities have negative consequences for the welfare of the citizens (see for a review Murthy & Lakshminarayana, 2006). In today's world where violence and conflicts remain widespread, developing peace negotiation strategies and promoting peace related attitudes becomes a crucial component in the achievement of welfare and social cohesion in societies. In this sense, understanding the dynamics of peace-related attitudes can contribute to peacebuilding through eliminating inequalities and realizing human potentials for all members of a society (Christie, 2001: 277). Thus, by focusing particularly on the personality dimension, perspective taking and gender, this study aims to explore variables that can have a role in peace attitudes of university students in Turkey on intrapersonal level.

1. Conceptualization of Peace

Peace is a concept that includes forgiveness, cooperation, and respect and it refers to the reduction, or end of violence (Harris, 2004). Galtung (1969), who is one of the important scholars in this field, defines peace as the existence of a positive social situation and the absence of structural and direct violence. He points out the importance of the definition of violence and suggests that peace would be two-sided as opposed to the two-dimensional nature of violence (personal and structural). Accordingly, personal violence is defined as any action that harms the body. Structural violence, on the other hand, is defined as violence perpetrated by social organizations. In line with this, negative peace is conceptualized as the absence of war and violent conflicts, while positive peace is considered as the integration of societies, cooperation, and harmony between groups, and nations (Galtung, 1964; Wagner, 1988).

The research interest of peace psychology developed into various issues such as prevention and reduction of violence, peace-making, and peace-building strategies following the end of Cold War period (Christie, Tint, Wagner, & Winter, 2008; Suffla, Van Niekerk, & Duncan, 2004). As war and peace are directly related to psychology due to them not only affecting on one's well-being but also welfare of societies, peace psychology is concerned with developing theories and practices to prevent or reduce direct and structural violence (Christie, Tint, Wagner, & Winter, 2008). Many researchers today (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 2010; Opatow, Gerson & Woodside, 2005; Perkins, 2002) consider peace not only as prevention of violence; but also, harmony, building bridges, forgiveness, respect, cooperation, being tolerant to others' beliefs, skin colours, ethnic and national identities, justice, and equality. This enriched definition of peace includes the social and political structures that promote a "culture of peace" through a more holistic understanding and awareness.

2. Variables Affecting Attitudes Toward Peace

Despite studies emphasizing the importance of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, research that contributes to building empirical evidence to understand the dynamics of attitudes toward peace is still insufficient. Research in the psychology of peace have generally tended to explore the associations among several antecedent factors, including values, ideological orientations, and personality. Studies examining the relationship between value orientations and attitudes toward peace and war show that these attitudes are associated with conservatism (Tibon & Blumberg, 1999), social dominance orientation (Heaven, Organ, Supavadeeprasit, & Leeson, 2006; Okumusoglu, 2017) and openness (Zeigler-Hill, Besser & Marcus, 2017). In one study, it was shown that social dominance orientation significantly affected attitudes toward the war in Iraq (Heaven, Organ, Supavadeeprasit, & Leeson, 2006). In another study, attitudes of Israeli respondents regarding peace with Palestinians were more positive when Palestinians were seen as less threatening, and when participants had higher levels of openness and lower level of psychopathy (Zeigler-Hill, Besser & Marcus, 2017). Research also showed that authoritarianism was negatively correlated with peace support. In a study of Jewish Israeli students' attitudes toward the peace process in Middle East, it was found that the pacifist individuals were generally less authoritarian-conformist and less aggressive (Tibon & Blumberg, 1999).

With the peace process on Turkey's agenda in recent years, the interest on peace studies have been increased and researchers started to investigate the variables that can affect or predict people's attitudes toward peace. Studies such as peace education perception (Deveci, Yılmaz, & Karadağ, 2008), investigation of peace attitudes with respect to self-esteem and gender (Eryılmaz, 2009), peace-building skills with children (Demir, 2011), university students' attitudes toward peace (Eryılmaz, 2014), attitudes toward peace and terror management theory (Güler, 2014), subjective well-being as a predictor of peace attitudes of adolescents (Sarı & Kerman, 2015), relationship between certain socio-psychological variables and peace attitudes (Karasu et al., 2016), and relationship of peace attitudes with war attitudes and social dominance orientation (Okumuşoğlu, 2017) have recently been carried out. Sarı and Kerman (2015) found there was a moderate relation between attitudes toward peace and self-esteem among adolescents. In another study, Karasu et al. (2016) reveal that conservatism, normative-humanistic attitudes, system justification are significantly associated with attitudes toward peace. Okumuşoğlu (2017) found peace attitudes were positively correlated with war attitudes and social dominance orientation.

Eryılmaz's (2014) study found that peace attitudes were positively and significantly related to both agreeableness and conscientiousness in adolescents on moderate level. Even though personality traits are related to intergroup attitudes and conflict (Duckitt & Sibley 2010), there are not many studies about the possible association between these traits and peace attitudes. Until recently, personality was suspected to play an important role to understand and predict political attitudes and behaviours of individuals. Although personality might seem as an important intrapersonal variable, it was basically supposed to serve as a distant determinant. Thus, its influence was overshadowed by more direct demographic and social psychological factors (Ha, 2013). Apart from personality, peace attitudes can be affected differently by intrapersonal characteristics such as being emphatic (Davis, 1983). As one of the dimensions of empathy is perspective taking, peace psychologists work on to bring people from different backgrounds and cultures together to interact because this way they can have more positive attitudes toward peace, learn to take perspectives, trust, and forgive (Cairns & Darby, 1998). In this respect, current study aims to explore the role of perspective taking as a variable that can impact people's attitudes toward peace. In addition to personality and perspective taking, there is an academic debate on gender differences in terms of peace and war related attitudes and it includes a broad range of theoretical arguments. Fundamental views about women having more constructive and peaceful attitudes than men are explained by evolutionary psychology (Lueptow & Garovich, 1995), socialization process, and gender roles (Blakomore & Centers, 2005). However, while the theoretical discussion of the gender differences is broad and rich, there are controversial results with respect to gender (Eryılmaz, 2014; Okumuşoğlu, 2017; Sarı & Kerman, 2015). Therefore, this study also aims to discover the gender differences in peace attitudes of university students in Turkey. The relevance of these variables with attitudes toward peace are discussed as follows.

2.1. Personality Traits and Peace Attitudes

As research and theory in personality traits has come to consensus over the past decades, Five Factor Personality Model (Goldberg, 1990), also called Big Five Model, have increasingly been used to identify the most significant aspects of the personality. The Big Five Model of Personality is composed of traits such as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. The sub-dimension of extraversion refers the extent to which a person is energetic, friendly, and assertive. The neuroticism sub-dimension includes traits such as being nervous, anxious, experiencing frequent emotional instability, anxiety, and impatience. Openness to experience refers traits such as being open to innovations, independence, creativity, and being open to change. Agreeableness includes characteristics such as being gentle, tolerant, respectful, and flexible. Conscientiousness includes how well organized, conscientious, and diligent an individual is (Bacanlı, İlhan, & Aslan, 2009; Goldberg, 1990).

Researchers suggest that personality traits can be measured to investigate people's approach to conflict situations (Rubin & Brown, 1975). These traits capture people's emotional, motivational, and experiential characteristics and they can possibly predict behavioral intentions of individuals in situations of conflict (McCare & Costa, 1989). In this respect, the attitudes and approaches of individuals in conflicts can also inform researchers to understand their attitudes toward peace.

Past studies support the idea that individuals with high extraversion trait prefer a more integrative style when dealing with conflicting situations (Mills, Robey, & Smith, 1985). In the literature, extraversion was also shown as a factor that increased inter-group friendship and positively influenced inter-group relationships (Turner et al., 2014). Studies have also shown that agreeable people are more motivated to sustain peaceful relationships with others and more constructive when dealing with conflicts (Graziano & Tobin, 2009). People with high openness trait adapt to new ideas and situations more easily and prefer an integrated style while managing conflicts (Rahaman, Mollah, & Uddin, 2010). On the light of these findings, this study expects that agreeableness, openness, and extraversion are significantly and positively related to attitudes toward peace.

2.2. Peace Attitudes and Perspective Taking

Perspective taking refers to the active evaluation of another person's point of view and the situation that person goes through. The ability to maintain someone else's perspective has been recognized as a critical component for appropriate social functioning (Todd & Galinsky, 2014). Past studies have shown many benefits of perspective taking such as reducing stereotypes and prejudice (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Vescio, Sechrist, & Paolucci, 2003). Perspective taking was also shown to have a positive effect on interaction satisfaction (Galinsky et al., 2008) and behavioral coordination (Galinsky, Wang, & Ku, 2008). Hodges, Myers, and Clark (2011) argue that "people behave better – more acceptably, more admirably, more prosocial – after perspective taking" as it results in one to have more empathic concern for others (p. 194). According to Van Der Linden and colleagues (2011), attitudes toward peace are primarily related to having empathic concerns about others. In this context, perspective taking is expected to have a high significance with peace attitudes and this study hypothesizes that individuals who have high scores in perspective taking would have more positive attitudes toward peace because of their potential to develop positive relations with others and their tendency to be more tolerant to others.

2.3. Peace Attitudes and Gender

Eryılmaz (2014) finds a difference in attitudes toward peace based on gender, in which women have more compromising attitudes than men. On the other hand, Sarı and Kerman 's (2015) work with adolescents' attitudes toward peace shows no significant relationship in terms of gender. In addition, Tessler and his colleagues' study on the Palestine-Israel conflict even demonstrate that compared to men, women had more negative attitudes of peace building in terms of trust and coexistence (Tessler, Nachtwey, & Grant, 1999). These findings show that there are other factors such as age and war, or non-war settings that might be influential when evaluating individuals' attitudes toward peace. The impact of gender remains as a controversial topic and more work regarding its impact on peace attitudes will provide valuable information in terms of understanding the role of gender. Therefore, another aim of this study is to explore if there are any differences in attitudes toward peace between male and female university students in Turkey.

3. Aim and Hypothesis

Investigation of peace attitudes can contribute to societies and individuals at the same time. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the associations between university students' attitudes toward peace and their level of perspective taking, gender and personality traits. It also aims to determine to what extent personality traits, perspective taking level and gender predict attitudes toward peace. In line with this aim, research question and hypotheses to be tested in the study are identified as follows:

H1: A significant and positive relationship is expected between agreeableness and attitudes toward peace.

H2: A significant and positive relationship is expected between extraversion and attitudes toward peace.

H3: A significant and positive relationship is expected between openness and attitudes toward peace.

H4: A significant and positive relationship is expected between perspective taking and attitudes toward peace.

H5: Female students are expected to have significantly higher scores on attitudes toward peace than male students.

Q1: To what extent do university students' level of perspective taking, personality traits and gender predict their attitude toward peace?

4. Research Methodology

The research was conducted in predictive correlational research model from quantitative methods. 326 university students participated in the study and data were collected in December 2018.

4.1. Procedure and Participants

After the approval of Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University Ethics Committee, the data were collected in December 2018. The sample of the study was selected with convenience sampling as a type of non-probabilistic sampling. Participation to the study was voluntary and the forms, and scales were applied to the students in the classroom setting. The study, which lasted approximately 10-15 minutes, did not require any identifiable information from the participants. A total of 326 university students from the Faculty of Education in a state university in Turkey was polled, 161 (49.4 %) of whom are female and 165 (50.6 %) of whom are male. 99 of these students are studying in the guidance and psychological counseling department, 174 in the mathematics teaching department, 21 in the social studies education department, 11 in

the fine arts education department and 21 in the Turkish teaching department. Students ranged in age from 18 to 29 years ($M= 21,72$, $SD= 2,40$).

4.2. Material

To find out the personal information and determine personality traits, the level of perspective taking and attitudes toward peace, the following forms were used respectively: Demographic Information Form, Big Five Personality Test, Interpersonal Reactivity Index and The Attitudes toward Peace and War Scale.

4.2.1. Demographic information form

The personal information form was prepared by the researcher to obtain sociodemographic information about the students as well as the information regarding their department.

4.2.2. The attitudes toward peace and war scale

The Attitudes Toward Peace and War Scale developed by Bizumic et al. (2013), which is 9-point Likert type, consists of 16 items. The Turkish adaptation version of the scale was carried by Güler (2014) and Cronbach Alpha for peace attitudes sub-scale was calculated as .79, Cronbach Alpha for the who scale was calculated as .88. Internal consistency of peace attitudes sub-scale in this study was found .81 while it was found .85 for the whole scale. High scores on the attitudes toward peace sub-scale indicate positive attitudes.

4.2.3. Big five personality test

The Five Factor Personality Scale was developed by Rammstedt and John (2007). The scale is 5-point Likert type (1-Strongly disagree; 5-Strongly agree) and aims to determine the personality traits of the participants through expressions that individuals use to describe their personality. The short form of the scale consists of 10 questions and 5 sub-scales. The adaptation of the scale to the Turkish culture was performed by Horzum, Ayas and Padır (2017). The internal consistency values for the five personality constructs of the scale were .88 for extraversion; .81 for agreeableness; .90 conscientiousness; .85 for neuroticism and .84 for openness to experience. Cronbach Alpha of these sub-scales in the current study was found .75 for extraversion; .70 for agreeableness; .65 for conscientiousness; .68 neuroticism, and .73 for openness.

4.2.4. The interpersonal reactivity index

The Interpersonal Reactivity Index developed by Davis (1983) measures cognitive and emotional empathy. It is a 5-point Likert type scale consisting of 28 items. The scale consists of 4 sub-scales with 7 items each. Perspective taking, empathic thinking, personal discomfort, and fantasy sub-scales allow a multidimensional study of empathy. Perspective taking determines the degree of acceptance of the perspectives of others. The adaptation of the scale to the Turkish culture was performed by Engeler and Yargıç (2007) and internal consistency of perspective taking sub-scale was found .78.

4.3. Analysis

The data were analyzed by SPSS 25 Program. The relationship between the main variables of the study was evaluated by Pearson Correlation method. Gender differences were evaluated through t-test for independent samples. To evaluate to what extent personality traits, the level of perspective taking, and gender predict attitudes toward peace, hierarchical regression analysis was performed.

5. Results

Standard deviation and mean scores of the main variables of the study can be seen in Table 1. Agreeableness ($M=7.97$, $SD= 1.40$) and conscientiousness ($M=7.44$, $SD= 1.57$) were the highest scores and neuroticism was the lowest score among personality sub-scales. Openness ($M = 6.81$, $SD = 1.65$) and extraversion ($M = 6.91$, $SD = 1.86$) level of the participants were on moderate level. Scores on the peace attitudes sub-scale were higher for women ($M = 50.57$, $SD = 8.58$) than for men ($M = 45.05$, $SD = 11.71$). Measures of skewness and kurtosis showed that the data were normally distributed.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

	N	M	Sd	95 % CI	Skewness
Peace Attitudes	326	47.78	10.638	[46,62, 48,94]	-.80
Perspective Taking	326	25.11	4.018	[24,67, 25,55]	-.31
Conscientiousness	326	7.44	1.577	[7,27, 7,62]	-.55
Openness	326	6.81	1.658	[6,63, 6,99]	-.06
Neuroticism	326	5.92	1.711	[5,73, 6,10]	.07
Agreeableness	326	7.94	1.404	[7,79, 8,09]	-.48
Extraversion	326	6.95	1.869	[6,75, 7,15]	-.16

To evaluate the relationship of peace attitudes with extraversion, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and perspective taking, Pearson’s correlation analysis was performed. As can be seen in Table 2, attitudes toward peace are positively correlated with agreeableness ($r=.19$ $p<.01$) and openness ($r=-.17$, $p<.01$). Peace attitudes are significantly correlated with conscientiousness on a low level ($r=.14$, $p<.05$). There was no correlation between extraversion and attitudes toward peace. No relation was also found between neuroticism and attitudes toward peace.

As Table 2 indicates, attitudes toward peace are positively correlated with perspective taking ($r=.31$, $p<.01$), which points out that an increase in the level of perspective taking is related with increased positive attitudes toward peace.

Table 2. Correlation Between Research Variables and Attitudes Towards Peace

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Peace Attitudes	1	0.14*	0.17**	0.00	0.19**	-0.22	0.31**
2. Conscientiousness		1	0.22**	-0.87	0.11*	0.34**	0.17**
3. Openness			1	-0.06	0.85	0.28**	0.23**
4. Neuroticism				1	-0.17**	-0.16**	-0.12*
5. Agreeableness					1	0.29	0.20*
6. Extraversion						1	0.45
7. Perspective Taking							1
* $p<0.05$ two-tailed ** $p<0.01$ two-tailed							

Differences based on gender was explored through t-test for independent samples. A significant difference was found between female and male students in terms of attitudes toward peace as Table 3 shows. Females ($M=50.57$) had more positive attitudes toward peace than males ($M=45.05$) ($t=4.84$; $p=0.01$).

Table 3. Gender Differences Related to Attitudes Toward Peace

Variables	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Female	161	50.57	8.587	4.84	.000
Male	165	45.05	11.712		

*p<0.01					
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Table 4 illustrates three model of hierarchical regression analysis. At the first step of the analysis, perspective taking was included as the independent variable. It is shown that perspective taking significantly predicted attitudes towards peace ($R^2=0.098$; $F=35.267$; $p<0.001$). It explained 10% of the variance in the attitudes. Second step included perspective taking and personality dimensions as independent variables ($R^2=0.14$; $F=2.997$; $p<0.001$). Model 2 shows that, when taken together as a group, perspective taking, and personality traits significantly predicted attitudes toward peace. These variables explained 14% of the variance in peace attitudes.

Table 4. Hierarchical Regression Analysis' Results

	Variables	R ²	R ² change	F	p	β	t	p<
Model 1		0.098	0.098	35.267				.000
	Perspective Taking				.000	.314	5.939	
Model 2		0.14	0.041	2.997				.000
	Perspective Taking				.000	.312	4.597	
	Agreeableness				.013	.135	2.489	
	Openness				.065	.105	1.854	
	Extraversion				.127	.089	1.531	
	Neuroticism				.264	.060	1.118	
	Conscientiousness				.118	.089	1.567	
Model 3		0.18	0.043	16.531				.000
	Perspective Taking				.000	.233	4.269	
	Agreeableness				.034	.113	2.126	
	Openness				.033	.119	2.143	
	Extraversion				.197	.073	1.292	
	Neuroticism				.623	.026	.491	
	Conscientiousness				.241	.066	1.175	
	Gender				.000	-.214	-4.066	

At the third step, perspective taking, gender, and personality traits were included as the independent variables ($R^2=0.18$; $F=16.531$; $p<0.001$). Model 3 shows that when taken together as a group, perspective taking, personality dimensions and gender significantly predicted attitudes toward peace by explaining 18% of the variance in attitudes.

6. Discussion

The current research investigated university students' peace attitudes with respect to personality traits, perspective taking and gender. Results show that peace attitudes are positively correlated with perspective taking. Attitudes toward peace have differentiated significantly in terms of gender, and female participants had more positive attitudes than male participants had. In addition, agreeableness and openness were found to have the strongest association with attitudes toward peace among personality traits. Conscientiousness was also significantly related with attitudes toward peace on a low level.

Theoretical arguments can be found in literature regarding the gender differences with respect to peace attitudes. This difference can be explained from the point of view of evolutionary psychology (Lueptow, 1984; Lueptow & Garovich, 1995), which states that women are evolving as caregivers and so man as warriors. From this perspective, attitudes or behaviors that are considered masculine (e.g., evolving as warriors) or feminine (e.g., evolving as caregivers) have biological underpinnings (Lippa, 2005; Wharton, 2005). Other explanations might be the socialization process in which girls and boys are raised in different parenting attitudes (Blakomore & Centers, 2005) or gender roles that teach men to be dominant and women to be harmonious and tolerant. According to Anthropologist Hall (1984), role differences between man and woman are culturally determined and they are the product of communication. What determines children's gender behavior is not biology (their sex), but their life experiences, a process that begins labelling of the baby by the community. Newborn baby does not have a sex. Thus, by expressing, "this is a girl/boy!", sociocultural form of gender training begins. Communication, in fact, is the process that teaches individuals to be men or women, and it refers to acting according to gender. Beginning from childhood, individuals acquire various practices of language that are culturally related to gender behavior. This means, from a very early stages of life, communication involves gender practices, as a result masculinity and femininity are communicatively formed (Hall, 1984).

Gender roles of women and men develop differently because they are exposed to different childcare practices in Turkish society. Girls are asked to be more attached to traditional mother roles and they are also expected to be more obedient and dependent. Parents show more protective attitudes toward girls, on the other hand men are encouraged to be more free, less dependent, and more aggressive (Eryılmaz & Atak, 2007). Gender roles and childcare practices therefore should be considered while interpreting the attitudes toward peace.

The gender differences observed in attitudes toward peace of the current research is consistent with Eryılmaz's (2014) and Güler's (2014) findings however inconsistent with the research results of Sarı and Kerman (2015) and Okumuşoğlu (2017) which found no differences in attitudes toward peace between woman and man. The reason of these conflicting results can be the use of different scales or different sample sizes. In addition, when examining the concept of peace in relation to attitudes, one should always keep in mind the time related changes in the country that can impact differences.

This research indicates that agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness are positively related with peace attitudes. The relationship between agreeableness and peace attitudes are consistent with the literature (Somer, 1998). Agreeableness, as a characteristic related to interpersonal relationships, means the degree of involvement of the individuals in cooperation. Because agreeable people are defined as social, friendly to other people, cooperative and trustworthy (Glass, Prichard, Lafortune & Schwb, 2013), having these traits might have increased participants' positive attitudes toward peace. Openness represents the tendency to be open to new feelings and thoughts. It is related to flexibility and non-traditional attitudes. Those who have a high level of openness are likely to be non-conservative and often prefer diversity (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2007). They also engage in more integrating styles in conflict situations (Rahaman, Mollah, & Uddin, 2010). As attitudes toward peace are negatively correlated with conservatism, it is understandable that students who have a high degree of openness have higher scores on positive peace attitudes.

The current research found a significant but low correlation between peace attitudes and conscientiousness. According to Eryılmaz (2014) this can be interpreted on the light of cultural psychology. Cultural psychology evaluates societies both from individualistic and collectivistic perspectives. In this view, cooperation with members of society and group coherence is essential. In addition, living in harmony with other people requires living in peace, not fighting. Thus, collectivistic characteristics of participants might have led to positive relations between conscientiousness and attitudes toward peace.

Individuals high in extraversion tend to maintain positive relationships with others in society, because good relations give them opportunities in which they can be recognized (Turner et al., 2014). This recognition can be accepted as a reward for extraverted individuals, resulting in them having more positive attitudes toward peace. Despite the similarities with the literature, there is also inconsistency in terms of the personality traits. Unlike the results of Eryılmaz's (2014) work, no significant relation was found between extraversion and peace attitudes in this study. The reason why peace attitudes were not found correlated with extraversion could be the mean scores of extraversion trait of the participants in the study were already on moderate level ($M= 6.95$).

Although past studies have shown many benefits of perspective taking in terms of reducing intergroup conflict and prejudice, there is no study undertaken in the literature regarding the relation of perspective taking with attitudes toward peace. This study assumed a significant relationship between these two variables and the results proved this. It is shown that perspective-taking can be related to prosocial behaviors (Van de Pieterman, 2015). People tend to experience feelings of empathy more, when they place themselves in the position of others and understand thoughts and perspective of those people much better (Davis, 1983). Because peace attitudes are primarily related to having empathic concerns about others, people who have high level of perspective taking (that is a component of empathy) are more likely to avoid marginalization, increase cooperation and altruistic behavior (Szuster, 2016).

Conclusion

The present study extended the current understanding of peace attitudes by showing the associations between peace attitudes, perspective taking and personality traits. However, in this study, attitudes toward peace are considered as attitudes toward general peace. As attitudes are context dependent, the examination of attitudes toward peace based on ethnic groups in Turkey can lead to more detailed knowledge in subsequent studies. Comparisons of peace related attitudes in conflict and non-conflict settings can also be useful. In addition, qualitative research can provide a path to thoroughly examine the underlying factors of positive and negative attitudes toward peace.

Promoting perspective taking strategies continues to be a promising direction for peace psychology research. Future research should determine under what conditions and for what groups the benefits of spontaneous perspective taking will likely emerge. It is important that leaders or policy makers, as important actors in peacemaking practices, should ensure that schools provide students activities that encourage prosocial behavior and peace education. As perspective taking, an ability developed in early stages of life, peace education at schools should include perspective taking strategies to ensure that children identify the emotions, thoughts, and perspectives of others.

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Extended Abstract

Purpose

In this study, it is aimed to investigate the relationship between attitudes toward peace and perspective taking, gender and personality traits among university students in Turkey. It is also aimed to discover to what extent these variables would predict attitudes toward peace.

Methodology

The research was conducted in predictive correlational research model from quantitative methods and the data was collected in December 2018. The sample of the study was selected with convenience sampling as a type of non-probabilistic sampling. A total of 326 university students in a state university in Turkey was polled, 161 (49.4 %) of whom are women and 165 (50.6 %) of whom are man. Students ranged in age from 18 to 29 years ($M= 21,72$, $SD= 2,40$). Instruments included Demographical Information Form, Big Five Personality Test, Interpersonal Reactivity Index, and Attitudes Toward War and Peace Scale. The forms, and scales were applied to the students in the classroom setting. Participation to the study was voluntary. The study, which lasted approximately 10-15 minutes, did not require any identifiable information from the participants. The data were analyzed by SPSS 25 Program. The relationship between the main variables of the study was evaluated by Pearson Correlation method. Gender differences were evaluated through t-test for independent samples. To evaluate to what extent personality traits, the level of perspective taking, and gender predict attitudes toward peace, hierarchical regression analysis was carried out.

Findings

Results showed that peace attitudes were positively correlated with perspective taking. Attitudes toward peace have differentiated significantly in terms of gender resulting in females having more positive attitudes than males. In addition, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness were significantly found to correlate with attitudes toward peace. Model shows that when taken together as a group, perspective taking, personality dimensions and gender significantly predict attitudes toward peace by explaining 18% of the variance in attitudes.

Conclusion and Discussion

The present study extended the current understanding of peace attitudes by showing the relations between peace attitudes, perspective taking and personality traits.

Some theoretical arguments can be found in literature regarding the gender differences with respect to peace attitudes. This difference can be explained from the point of view of evolutionary psychology (Lueptow, 1984; Lueptow & Garovich, 1995), which states that women are evolving as caregivers and so man as warriors. From this perspective, behaviors considered masculine or feminine have biological roots (Lippa, 2005; Wharton, 2005). Other explanations might be the socialization process in which girls and boys are raised in different parenting attitudes (Blakomore & Centers, 2005) or gender roles that teach men to be dominant and women to be harmonious and tolerant.

This research indicates that agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness are positively related with peace attitudes. The relationship between agreeableness and peace attitudes are consistent with the literature (Somer, 1998). Agreeableness, as a characteristic more related to interpersonal relationships, refers to the degree of involvement of the individuals in cooperation. Because agreeable people can be defined as social, friendly to other individuals, cooperative and trustworthy (Glass et al., 2013), acquiring these traits might have increased participants' positive attitudes toward peace. Openness represents the tendency to be open to new feelings and thoughts. It is related to intellectual interest, imagination, flexibility, and non-traditional attitudes. Those who have a high level of openness are likely to be non-conservative and often prefer diversity (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2007). They also engage in more integrating styles in conflict situations. As attitudes toward peace are negatively correlated with conservatism, it is understandable that students who have a high degree of openness have higher scores on positive peace attitudes. There is a significant but low correlation between peace attitudes and conscientiousness. According to Eryılmaz (2014) this can be interpreted on the light of cultural psychology. Cultural psychology evaluates societies as individualistic and collectivistic. In this view, cooperation with members of society and group coherence is essential. In addition, living in harmony with other people requires living in peace, not fighting. Thus, collectivistic characteristics of participants might have led to positive relations between conscientiousness and attitudes toward peace

Promoting perspective taking strategies continues to be a promising direction for peace psychology research. Future research should determine under what conditions and for what groups the benefits of spontaneous perspective taking will likely emerge. It is important that leaders or policy makers, as important actors in peacemaking practices, should ensure that schools provide students activities that encourage prosocial behavior and peace education. As perspective taking, an ability developed in early stages of life, peace education at schools should include perspective taking strategies to ensure that children identify the emotions, thoughts, and perspectives of others.