

University students' interest, attitudes and awareness levels in history course, the Turkish example

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Abstract

This study aimed to assess university students' interest, attitude, and awareness concerning the Atatürk's Principles and History of the Turkish Revolution course. A descriptive and correlational research design was employed, with a sample of 360 voluntary students from the Faculty of Education. Findings revealed that the majority of participants were female (58.9%) and enrolled in the Social Studies Education program (45%). Students who studied regularly and dedicated 3–4 or more hours per day to their studies showed significantly higher levels of interest, positive attitudes, and awareness regarding the course. The lowest attitude scores were observed among Classroom Teaching students ($M = 55.50$, $SD = 15.09$), while the highest were seen in History Teaching students ($M = 68.21$, $SD = 9.36$). Science Teaching students had the lowest interest levels ($M = 47.67$, $SD = 15.05$), and male students demonstrated greater interest than female students. The average score of university students from the Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History Course Awareness Scale was determined as 112.33 ± 22.43 . According to the scale scored between 27-135, it can be said that the students' awareness levels regarding the Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History Course are quite high. In conclusion, students exhibited high levels of awareness about the course's objectives and content, with generally above-average interest and attitudes. However, personal characteristics such as gender, department, and study habits significantly influenced these factors.

Keywords: Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History Course, Attitude, Awareness, Interest.

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Contribution of this paper to the literature

The main contribution of the article can be summarized as follows: The results obtained from this study, along with the revised educational plans based on these results, will enhance students' historical awareness and, consequently, that of future educators. This increased awareness will foster generations that understand the importance of national unity and solidarity, learn from the past, and move forward confidently. Therefore, the findings of this study will make a significant contribution to social life in general.

1. Introduction

The Atatürk's Principles and History of the Turkish Revolution course is a compulsory subject offered in all faculties and colleges within Turkish higher education institutions. This course aims to help university students understand the structure of Turkish society, the dynamics of the contemporary world, and how these conditions emerged and function. Moreover, it introduces Türkiye's role in international affairs and the challenges it faces in addressing national and global issues (Akbaba, 2007).

Courses on Atatürk's Principles and the Turkish Revolution play a key role in fostering historical awareness among young people. However, research indicates that many students fail to grasp the significance and purpose of history education (Özbaran, 1997, 2003). Student interest is a critical factor in academic success, particularly in the classroom setting (Weber, Martin, & Patterson, 2001). Interest directly influences learning motivation and drives engagement with the course, participation, and student-teacher interaction (Acar & Yaman, 2011; Akın, Uğur, & Akın, 2015; Krapp, 2002).

Wang, Heartel, and Wolberg (1994) emphasized that students' learning is most affected by their attitudes and cognitive awareness skills, which are integral to motivation and self-regulation. Understanding academic material is closely tied to such cognitive and motivational components. Therefore, it is not sufficient for students to achieve only high academic performance; fostering a positive attitude is equally essential for sustainable success. In this context, "cognitive awareness skills" are a critical contributor to long-term achievement and engagement.

Studies have indicated that various problems are encountered during the implementation of the Atatürk Principles and Revolutionary History course (Akbaba, 2008; Safran, 2006). These problems can have various causes. They can lead to a lack of interest in the course, a failure to develop a positive attitude towards it, a low level of awareness about the course, and, in turn, a vicious cycle of escalating educational problems and ineffectiveness related to the course.

Achieving the desired objectives in the Atatürk Principles and Revolutionary History course, which was established and developed with very important aims and objectives, is of utmost importance for both the instructor and the students taking the course, and consequently for social awareness. To achieve the intended objectives of the course, existing problems should be evaluated from various perspectives and solutions should be found. Continuous improvement of educational programs for understanding and making sense of the world is crucial for providing better opportunities for future generations and ensuring that students are raised as informed citizens. In this regard, cultivating individuals with sensitivity and historical awareness is among the fundamental objectives of the Atatürk Principles and Revolutionary History course curriculum (Ezer, Ulukaya, & Kaçar, 2016). The higher the interest, attitude, and awareness level of university students in the course, the easier it will be to achieve the course objectives. Analyzing interest, attitude, and awareness, along with assessing the situation, will guide educational plans. We believe that student analysis from various perspectives will be effective in resolving these issues. Studies that analyze interest, attitude, and awareness towards history lessons as a whole are not very common in the literature.

This study aims to determine university students' interest in, attitudes toward, and awareness of the Atatürk's Principles and History of the Turkish Revolution course. It also seeks to analyze these factors in relation to various demographic and academic variables, contribute to future course planning, and support the development of more effective history education programs.

The study was conducted to answer the following research questions.

1. What is the interest level of university students in the Atatürk Principles and History of Turkish Revolution course?
2. What are the attitudes of university students toward the Atatürk Principles and History of Turkish Revolution course?
3. What is the awareness level of university students regarding the Atatürk Principles and History of Turkish Revolution course?
4. Is there a relationship between the interest, attitude, and awareness levels of university students toward the Atatürk Principles and History of Turkish Revolution course?
5. Is there a difference in the interest, attitude, and awareness levels of university students toward the Atatürk Principles and History of Turkish Revolution course based on gender?
6. Is there a difference in the interest, attitude, and awareness levels of university students toward the Atatürk Principles and History of Turkish Revolution course based on their department of study?
7. Is there a difference in the interest, attitude, and awareness levels of university students toward the Atatürk Principles and History of Turkish Revolution course based on their daily study time?
8. Is there a difference in university students' interest, attitude, and awareness levels toward the Atatürk Principles and Revolutionary History course based on their study patterns and departments?
9. Is there a difference in university students' interest, attitude, and awareness levels toward the Atatürk Principles and Revolutionary History course based on their perceived level of economic income?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This research employed a descriptive and correlational design. Descriptive studies aim to present a given situation as thoroughly and accurately as possible. Correlational studies explore the relationships between variables, helping researchers better understand underlying patterns and make informed predictions (Buyukozturk, Aygun, Kilic Cakmak, & Karadeniz, 2016).

2.2. Research Setting and Duration

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Education of a public university (Gazi University) between April and June 2018.

2.3. Research Group

The sample consisted of 360 students enrolled in the Faculty of Education. Participants were selected to ensure an adequate sample size for scale development and validation. Of the participants, 212 were female and 148 were male.

2.4. Data Collection Tools

In order to collect data in the research, the following instruments were used: the "Personal Information Form," the "Course Interest Scale," the "Atatürk's Principles and Revolutionary History Course Attitude Scale," and the "Atatürk's Principles and Revolutionary History Course Awareness Scale."

Personal Information Form: It will be created to collect personal information from the participants in the study. This form will include the participants' age and gender, the department and faculty they are studying in, the grade they are in, the time they spend studying daily, and questions about their study habits and perceived income level.

The Interest in Course Scale was developed to assess the relationship between student interest and variables such as learning motivation, effective learning, and course participation level (Mazer, 2013). It is a 5-point Likert-type measurement tool consisting of 16 items and two sub-dimensions: affective and cognitive interest. The response options range from "1" (Strongly disagree) to "5" (Strongly agree). There are no reverse-coded items in the scale. The highest and lowest scores obtainable are 45 and 9 for the affective interest sub-dimension, and 35 and 7 for the cognitive interest sub-dimension, respectively. The adaptation of the scale to Turkish, along with its validity and reliability studies, was conducted by Akin et al. (2015).

Atatürk's Principles and History of Revolution Course Attitude Scale: Since a scale was not found in the literature review that directly measures the attitude level related to the Atatürk's Principles and History of Revolution Course in higher education, it was decided to develop this scale considering that the attitude level of university students has an effect on the success and effectiveness of the course. As a result of the validity and reliability study, a one-dimensional and 17-item scale was obtained. The characteristics of the developed scale; items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17 are normally scored and items 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 are reverse scored. In the 5-point Likert scale; scoring is as follows: 1 "I completely disagree", 2 "I disagree", 3 "I am undecided", 4 "I agree", 5 "I completely agree". The score obtained from the scale ranges from 17 to 85. An increase in the score indicates that students have developed a positive attitude towards the Atatürk Principles and Revolution History Course. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the Attitude Scale for the Atatürk Principles and History of Revolution Course was found to be 0.879 (Özcanlı, 2018).

Atatürk's Principles and History of Revolution Course Awareness Scale: As a result of the literature review, since no scale was found measuring the awareness level about Atatürk's Principles and History of Revolution Course, it was decided to develop this scale considering that the awareness level of university students has an impact on course success, course effectiveness, and national identity formation. As a result of the validity and reliability study; a one-dimensional and 27-item scale was obtained. Properties of the developed scale; all items in the scale are scored normally. Scoring is done on a 5-point Likert type scale as 1 "strongly disagree", 2 "disagree", 3 "undecided", 4 "agree", 5 "strongly agree". The score obtained from the scale ranges from 27 to 135. An increase in the score shows that the students' awareness of the purpose, objective, and content of the Atatürk's Principles and History of Revolution Course has increased. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the Atatürk Principles and History of Revolution Course Awareness Scale was found to be 0.943 (Özcanlı, 2018).

2.5. Data Collection and Analysis

After obtaining necessary institutional permissions and ethics committee approval, data were collected through face-to-face interviews. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained. Each session lasted approximately 15–20 minutes.

Data were analyzed using SPSS 21.0. Data entry was conducted by independent personnel to ensure accuracy and minimize bias. Analyses included descriptive statistics (percentages, means), one-way ANOVA, independent samples t-tests, Pearson correlation analysis, and Tukey's post-hoc test.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to universal ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw. Ethics committee permission was obtained from Gazi University ethics committee (11.05.2018/E-75641) and the Gazi University administration (28.06.2018/E-95910). Written consent was obtained from the participants. All data was anonymized to protect participants' confidentiality.

3. Results

Data on personal characteristics of university students are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Personal information of university students' distribution according to variables (n=360).

Variables	n	%
Gender		
Women	212	58.9
Male	148	41.1
Department of education		
History teaching	57	15.8
Science teaching	67	18.6
Social studies teaching	162	45
Classroom teaching	74	20.6
Perceived income level		

Variables	n	%
High	36	10
Middle	285	79.2
Low	39	10.8
Daily study time		
1 hour and under	196	54.4
1-2 hours	103	28.6
3 hours	41	11.4
4 hours and above	20	5.6
Study habits		
Everyday regularly	58	16.1
Only exam time	149	41.4
Intermediate break during the term	153	42.5
Age (Average) (Min-Max)	21.26±2.73 (18-34)	

Continuous variables are presented as mean ± standard deviation, and categorical variables are presented as numbers (percentages).

The demographic characteristics of the 360 university students in the study sample are summarized in Table 1. Of the participants, 58.9% were female, and 45% were enrolled in the Department of Social Studies Education. The average age of participants was 21.26 (SD = 2.73, range = 18–34).

In our study, university students participated. The average score of the Attitude Scale for the Atatürk Principles and History of Revolution Course was found to be 62.83 ±14.16. The average score of the students on the Awareness Scale for the Atatürk Principles and History of Revolution Course was found to be 112.33 ±22.43. When the average scores of the Scale of Interest in the Course were examined, it was seen that the general scale average score was 53.17 ±13.31, the Affective Interest Level sub-dimension average score was 28.01 ±8.77, and the Cognitive Interest Level sub-dimension average score was 25.15 ±5.77 (Table 2).

Table 2. Mean scores of the scales.

Avg ±SD Min-Max		
Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History Course Awareness Scale	112.33 ±22.43	27-135
Attitude scale for Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History course	62.83 ±14.16	17-85
Interest in the course scale	53.17 ±13.31	16-80
Affective interest level	28.01 ±8.77	9-45
Cognitive interest level	25.15 ±5.77	7-35

According to these results, it can be said that the awareness of university students about the purpose, goal, and content of the Atatürk Principles and Revolution History Course is quite good, and their interest in the course and their positive attitude towards it are at a level above average.

There was a statistically significant positive correlation between students' levels of interest, attitude, and awareness (p < 0.01), suggesting that increased awareness is associated with a more positive attitude and greater interest in the course (Table 3).

Table 3. Relationship between the level of interest in the Atatürk Principles and Revolution History course and the levels of attitude and awareness.

	APRHCAS	APRHCATS	DIS	AIL	CIL
APRHCAS		0.665*	0.260*	0.225*	0.259*
APRHCATS			0.506*	0.374*	0.368*
DIS				0.945*	0.869*
AIL					0.660*

Note: * p<0.01
APRHCAS: Atatürk's principles and revolution history course awareness scale, APRHCATS: Atatürk's principles and revolution history course attitude scale, DIS: Course interest scale, AIL: Affective interest level, CIL: Cognitive interest level.

According to these results, it was determined that there is a high level of relationship between the level of interest of university students in the Atatürk Principles and History of Revolution Course and their positive attitudes. The increase in the level of awareness about the course is highly related to showing a positive attitude. Although it is not as strong as the relationship between awareness and positive attitude levels, there is also a high level of relationship between the level of awareness and interest in the course.

When gender differences were examined, male students demonstrated significantly higher interest levels in the course compared to female students (p < 0.01), although no statistically significant difference was observed in terms of attitude and awareness levels (Table 4).

Table 4. Interest, attitude and awareness levels of students in Atatürk's principles and revolution history course by gender.

	Female (n=212)	Male (n=148)	t	p
Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History Course Awareness Scale	112.57 ±19.05	111.97 ±26.60	0.248	0.805
Attitude scale for Atatürk's principles and revolution history course	62.21 ±14.39	63.72 ±13.81	1,001	0.318
Interest in the course scale	51.36 ±13.84	55.77 ±12.10	9,753	0.002
Affective interest level	27.17 ±8.76	29.22 ±8.68	4,828	0.029
Cognitive interest level	24.19 ±6.33	26.54 ±4.53	14,950	0,000

According to these results, in general, university student males exhibit higher levels of interest, positive attitude, and awareness towards the Atatürk Principles and Revolution History Course than female students.

When the mean scores of the scales were examined according to the department of education, it was found that the mean scores of the Atatürk Principles and History of Revolution Course Attitude Scale and the Interest in the Course Scale showed statistically significant differences according to the departments ($p<0.01$).

Table 5. Interest, attitude, and awareness levels of students in Atatürk’s Principles and Revolution History course according to the Department of Education.

	Social information (n=162)	History (n=57)	Classroom (n=74)	Science knowledge of (n=67)	F	p
Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History Course Awareness Scale	112.77 ±23.72	114.96 ±13.9	110.40 ±24.04	111.13 ±23.41	0.526	0.664
Attitude scale for Atatürk’s principles and revolution history course	64.70 ±14.30	68.21 ±9.36	55.50 ±15.09	61.22 ±13.38	10,799	0.000
Interest scale for the course	54.53 ±12.72	54.52 ±15.36	54.16 ±9.75	47.67 ±15.05	4,855	0.003
Affective interest level	28.68 ±8.65	27.89 ±9.99	28.91 ±6.69	25.52 ±9.69	2,408	0.067
Cognitive interest level	25.84 ±5.40	26.63 ±6.28	25.24 ±4.55	22.14 ±6.43	8,578	0.000

In the Tukey analysis conducted to determine the origin of the differences, it was observed that the differences stemmed from the scores between students receiving education in science teaching and those in history and social studies teaching. The lowest attitude scores were observed among students in the classroom teaching department ($M = 55.50$, $SD = 15.09$), while the highest scores were among history teaching students ($M = 68.21$, $SD = 9.36$). Interest levels were lowest among science teaching students ($M = 47.67$, $SD = 15.05$). The analysis of departmental differences indicated that students enrolled in science teaching had the lowest levels of interest and attitude, whereas history and social studies students had the highest (Table 5).

When evaluating the effect of students' daily study hours on the scale parameters, it was determined that the average scores of the Atatürk Principles and Revolution History Course Awareness Scale and the Course Interest Scale showed a statistically significant difference according to the study hours ($p<0.01$) (Table 6).

Table 6. Students' interest, attitude, and awareness levels in Atatürk’s Principles and Revolution History course according to daily study time.

	1 hour≥ (n=196)	1-2 hours (n=103)	3 hours (n=41)	4 hours≤ (n=20)	F	p
Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History Course Awareness Scale	110.72 ±20.83	114.20 ±19.13	123.14 ±18.40	96.20 ±42.45	7,592	0.000
Attitude scale for Atatürk’s principles and revolution history course	61.81 ±14.04	62.56 ±14.16	67.36 ±9.38	64.95 ±20.98	1,913	0.127
Interest in the course scale	51.04 ±12.98	54.14 ±12.34	55.56 ±14.73	64.25 ±12.33	7,269	0.000
Affective interest level	26.63 ±8.85	28.83 ±8.12	29.56 ±8.81	34.25 ±7.96	5,942	0.001
Level of cognitive interest	24.40 ±5.56	25.31 ±5.57	26.00 ±6.52	30.00 ±4.93	6,374	0.000

Students who studied regularly and those who spent 3 to 4 or more hours daily on coursework had significantly higher scores in interest, attitude, and awareness regarding the Atatürk’s Principles and History of the Turkish Revolution course. Daily study duration also affected interest and awareness scores, with the highest scores recorded among students studying three hours daily. Interestingly, those who studied four or more hours exhibited the lowest awareness scores, possibly due to the small sample size in this group.

When the effects of the study schedule on the mean scores of the scales were examined, it was found that only the mean scores of the Interest in the Course Scale showed a statistically significant difference according to the study schedule ($p<0.01$) (Table 7).

Table 7. Students' interest, attitude, and awareness levels in Atatürk’s Principles and Revolution History course according to study pattern.

	Organized (n=58)	Exam time (n=149)	Occasionally (n=153)	F	p
Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History Course Awareness Scale	110.98 ±29.01	109.83 ±20.87	114.67 ±20.94	1,493	0.226
Attitude scale for Atatürk’s Principles and Revolution History course	66.06 ±16.04	61.67 ±14.15	62.73 ±13.29	2,025	0.134
Interest in the course scale	58.34 ±14.93	50.63 ±12.79	53.69 ±12.61	7,446	0.001
Affective interest level	31.39 ±9.49	26.47 ±8.87	28.24 ±8.05	6,859	0.001
Cognitive interest level	26.94 ±6.27	24.16 ±5.67	25.45 ±5.51	5,327	0.005

Study habits influenced interest levels but not awareness or attitudes. Students who studied regularly showed significantly higher levels of interest.

The mean scores obtained from the scales according to the perceived economic income level of the students are shown in Table 8. When the mean scale scores were examined according to the perception of economic income, it was determined that the mean scale scores did not show a statistically significant difference between the groups ($p>0.05$) (Table 8).

Table 8. Interest, attitude, and awareness levels of students in Atatürk’s Principles and Revolution History course according to economic income perception level.

	High	Middle	Low	F	p
Ataturk's principles and revolution history course awareness scale	119.55 ±23.03	111.98 ±20.81	108.17 ±30.96	2,591	0.076
Attitude scale for Atatürk’s principles and revolution history course	67.25 ±11.47	62.47 ±14.07	61.43 ±16.43	2,046	0.131
Interest in the course scale	54.91 ±16.82	53.07 ±12.80	52.35 ±13.67	0.388	0.678
Affective interest level	28.75 ±10.28	27.94 ±8.47	27.92 ±9.66	0.138	0.871
Cognitive interest level	26.16 ±7.61	25.12 ±5.59	24.43 ±5.11	0.856	0.426

Perceived economic status did not significantly affect any of the three measured variables, although students who reported low-income levels tended to have slightly lower interest, attitude, and awareness.

4. Discussion

4.1. Investigation of the Attitude Levels of University Students Towards the Atatürk Principles and Revolution History Course

The findings of this study revealed that university students exhibited generally positive attitudes, high levels of interest, and strong awareness concerning the Atatürk’s Principles and History of the Turkish Revolution course. With an average attitude score of 62.83 (out of a possible 85), students demonstrated an overall positive stance towards the course. The highest attitude scores were observed among history teaching students, while classroom teaching students had the lowest.

These findings align with previous studies. In the study conducted by Akbaba (2008), “The problems encountered in teaching the Atatürk Principles and History of Revolution course (Gazi University example),” it was shown that the majority of the students (60.5%) believed in the necessity of the Atatürk Principles and History of Revolution course. In the same study, the number of students who agreed with the statement regarding the Atatürk Principles and History of Revolution course being taught for exams exceeded 50% of the sample. In the study conducted by Erol Şahin (2014), it was found that the students developed a positive attitude towards the history course after analogy-based activities. In the study conducted by Baştuğ (1996), the subject of “Evaluation of Student Attitudes Towards History Course in High Schools and Equivalent Schools in Kırıkkale City Center” was examined, and it was determined that the students’ attitudes towards the history course were positive. In the study conducted by Bal (2011); “Comparison of Teacher Candidates’ and Teachers’ Views on the Problems and Solutions of History Teaching in Turkey” was examined and it was concluded that the attitude of teacher candidates towards the course, teaching the course with new methods and techniques, and taking into account the level of comprehension of the student were important. In the study conducted by Öner and Öner (2014) “Attitudes of 8th Grade Secondary School Students Regarding the Level of Comprehension of Atatürk’s Principles and Revolutions” was examined, and it was stated that, in order for the course to achieve its purpose, the subjects in the curriculum should be restructured by taking into account the level of comprehension of the students. Seminars should be given to parents so that the importance of the course is understood correctly by the students, and the use of materials should be included in the course. In the study conducted by Uçar (2008), experimental control groups were created. Vocational high school students were given project assignments related to their departments in the History of Turkish Revolution and Kemalism course. As a result, a positive increase was observed in the attitude scores of both the control and experimental groups measured before and after the application. In a study conducted in the United States on students’ attitudes towards history, it was observed that students considered history to be the least interesting and unimportant course in the curriculum Loewen (1993). Safran (2006) found in his study that the attitude of secondary school 3rd grade students towards the history course was close to the "undecided" level.

In the study, it was determined that the attitude level towards the Atatürk Principles and Revolution History Course was not affected by gender differences.

Studies conducted on the effect of gender on attitudes towards history courses have yielded different results. Although some studies have found higher attitudes of female students towards history courses (İskender, 2007; Kont, 2008), some studies have found higher positive attitudes of male students (Bolton, 1937). In the study of Ezer et al. (2016), similar to our study, no significant relationship was found in terms of gender regarding attitudes towards the History of Revolution and Kemalism course. In the study of Elban (2015), it was found that the attitudes of secondary school students participating in the application towards the history course were highly positive. In terms of gender, it was observed that male students’ attitudes towards the history course were significantly more positive than those of female students. The study conducted by Safran and Şimşek (2009)

It was found that male students had higher positive attitudes than female students. According to Simsek (2010), the fact that males have a more positive attitude towards history can be attributed to the content of history education (wars, male heroes, victories, etc.), stemming from a more “male-dominated” structure. In his research on the attitudes of female students towards history lessons, Mann (2008) observed that the attitudes of female students remained positive throughout the project-based study planned for six lessons, and that the needs of female students were significantly different from those of male students. There are studies supporting our study, as well as studies showing the effect of gender differences in the literature. The effect of other factors such as curriculum differences, classroom atmosphere, socio-economic characteristics of students, and teaching methods can be considered as reasons for the differences in these findings.

When the studies conducted on the effect of the type of field students study in on their attitudes towards history courses are examined, it is stated that the type of field students study in, such as social sciences, sciences, etc., does not affect their attitudes towards history courses positively or negatively (İskender, 2007; Kont, 2008). In the study of Arslan (2005), Atatürk's Principles and the History of the Revolution are seen as a formal course, especially for students in science, technical, and health fields. In the study of Elban (2015), it is stated that the attitudes of students towards the history course do not differ according to the type of field they study. In the study conducted by Şam (2007), it was observed that the attitudes of Social Studies Teaching teacher candidates were not

high. These results can be interpreted as related to the fact that students studying in the social field perceive the history course as a specific field course compared to students studying in other field types.

4.2. Examining the Awareness Levels of University Students Regarding the Atatürk Principles and Revolution History Course

The average score of university students on the Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History Course Awareness Scale was determined as 112.33 ± 22.43 . According to the scale, which ranges from 27 to 135, it can be said that the students' awareness levels regarding Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History Course are quite high.

Wang et al. (1994) stated that the most important factor affecting students' learning is students' attitudes and cognitive awareness skills, which these attitudes include. In the study of Akbaba (2008), there is no clear difference between the students' level of agreement with the statement that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's thoughts cannot be conveyed. In line with our study, in the study conducted by Akbaba (2007), it was determined that university students correctly perceived the purposes of the existence of the Atatürk Principles and Revolution History course and the basic features of its content. In the study conducted by Tangülü and Aydın (2014), the opinions of 8th-grade Social Studies teachers regarding the value acquisition of the course were obtained, and the results indicated that the highest value among the criteria that a responsible student should have is that the student gives the necessary importance to his/her lessons, with 16%. In the same study, it was determined that it is very important for students to express how important a Turkish elder is when his/her name is mentioned, to read to get to know Turkish elders, to embrace the values adopted by Turkish elders (13.6%), to read books about the War of Independence and the Battle of Çanakkale, to be interested in them, to be curious about them, to respectfully remember Turkish elders, and to embrace and develop the works left by Turkish elders (9%). In their study, Ezer et al. (2016) determined that a significant portion of the students can correctly perceive the purpose and content of the History of Revolution and Kemalism course. In the study of Yilmaz (2005), "The level of comprehension of Atatürk's Principles and Revolutions among 8th-grade primary school students was examined, and it was determined that students in Ankara province could not comprehend some subjects within the scope of Atatürk's Principles and Revolutions.

When we look at the results of this study and other studies, the awareness levels of students regarding the Atatürk Principles and Revolution History Course or other courses with similar aims, objectives, and content vary. Many factors, such as the socio-cultural characteristics of the students, the teaching staff, and educational tools and equipment, may influence these results.

4.3. Examining the Interest Levels of University Students in Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History Course

According to our study results, when the average scores of the Interest in the Course Scale were examined, it was observed that the overall scale score average was 53.17 ± 13.31 . It was determined that the students' interest levels in the Atatürk Principles and Revolution History Course were well above average. The interest level of men in the course was found to be higher. It was also found that the interest level in the course was the lowest among students studying science teaching (47.67 ± 15.05), and those who study regularly had a higher interest level score average.

The communication of a science that is completely different from the field of interest of the youth in higher education, who are on the path to specialization, brings various communication difficulties, from terminology to comprehension. The faculty members who will teach the course should take into consideration the specialization characteristics of the students they are addressing and direct their methods according to these facts (Akgün, 1990). Students cannot understand the importance of the field of social sciences and see this field as less necessary compared to science and mathematics. The main reasons for this are that students cannot understand the purposes of social sciences education and do not expect any benefit from these courses for their future lives (Paykoç, 1991).

In the study conducted by Akbaba (2008) it was determined that the students' views on the problems encountered in the Atatürk Principles and History of Revolution course differed according to the faculties in which the individuals participating in the study studied, and it was stated that this difference was due to the differences in the views of individuals studying in the vocational education faculty and those studying in the law faculty. If the student can establish a connection with his/her own department in the Atatürk Principles and Revolution course and feel that this course is a need, his/her motivation for the course will increase and he/she will not remain disinterested. Interest will also bring knowledge. In other words, in order for the student to have knowledge about a subject, he/she must first associate the subject with his/her own situation and thus feel close to the subject and be interested in it (Uçar, 2008).

In their study, Saray and Tosun (2005) determined that the Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course was not liked and valued much by the students, and therefore, the course was not successful enough in achieving its goals. According to Safran (2006), the reason for the lack of interest in the students was the repetition of the same information given since primary school. In the study of Akbaba (2008), the students' opinions on the problems encountered in the Atatürk Principles and Revolution History course were examined, and it was determined that the individuals participating in the study did not differ according to their gender.

The results of this study are expected to impact classroom teaching practices. Utilizing appropriate educational practices such as e-learning, distance learning, short-term workshops, and summer camps to further increase interest, attitudes, and awareness in the Atatürk Principles and Revolutionary History course, while minimizing influencing factors, will contribute to the success of the course.

The results obtained from this study, and the educational plans revised based on these results, will increase historical awareness in students and, consequently, future educators. This will lead to generations that understand the importance of national unity and solidarity, can learn from the past, and can move forward with firm steps. Thus, the results of this study will contribute to social life in general.

5. Conclusion

In general, university students demonstrated above-average levels of interest, positive attitudes, and awareness toward the Atatürk's Principles and History of the Turkish Revolution course. While male students exhibited higher interest levels, gender did not significantly influence attitudes or awareness.

Departmental background played a key role, with history teaching students showing the highest levels of interest and attitude, while science teaching students displayed the lowest. Students who studied regularly or for longer hours (particularly three or more hours per day) showed higher engagement across all three domains.

Although perceived economic status did not yield statistically significant differences, students who rated their income as low tended to score slightly lower across all variables.

These findings suggest that while the course is generally well-received, student engagement can be further improved by tailoring instructional strategies to department-specific needs and ensuring the personal relevance of course content. Future curriculum development should consider these individual and contextual factors to enhance effectiveness and learning outcomes.

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