

## Anxiety Level of the Music Teacher Candidates Studying Music Teaching in Türkiye

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history

Received: January 09, 2024

Accepted: April 06, 2024

Published: April 30, 2024

Volume: 12 Issue: 2

Conflicts of interest: None

Funding: None

### ABSTRACT

The most important factor negatively affecting individuals' success in professional music education is anxiety of unemployment. For them, graduation from university means the beginning of a life of either employment or unemployment. Job selection plans about the role in real life, friendships, fear of unemployment, and other responsibilities are some of the factors creating anxiety. The aim of this research is to discover the professional anxieties of the music teacher candidates studying in music education departments. The study sought to investigate whether the professional anxiety of the teacher candidates varies depending on their gender, income level of their families, the way they studied musical teaching, and their grades. This research is a descriptive study conducted for the purpose of determining the "anxiety levels" of music teacher candidates in Turkey. The data was collected using a personal information form and the anxiety scales for teacher candidates. The sample group of the study consisted of 80 students studying in Marmara University. According to the study, meaningful variances exist between the variables such as "gender, grade, and income level of the family" and professional anxiety levels.

**Key words:** Musical Teaching, Music Education, Music Teacher Candidates, Professional Anxiety

### INTRODUCTION

Music is one of the effective and important ways that is supposed to be exploited in education and that contributes to the development of all pupils no matter whether they need common or special education. It is observed that pupils who have been supported and trained by being in a musical activity since childhood follow a healthier development both spiritually and physically. The effects of music in a pupil's development can be classified as: language improvement, emotional and social development, physical and psychomotor development.

Children can move according to music, and they can play instruments properly and enthusiastically. As their command of language and competence of memorization increases, they can sing some songs completely; what's more they can compose their own songs. The musical development and communicative competence through music flourish in an environment where the participants of society appreciate and enjoy the music (Mesci, 2004).

Making music in group requires self-discipline: It strengthens discovering the sounds, reacting to music, expressing oneself; drums help rhythmic development and muscle coordination and advance the auditory skills and capability of distinguishing the details (Gilbert, 1992).

Besides this, multi-dimensional and complicated problems arise that cause anxiety among university youth, who

constitute the largest manpower and the most productive source in a society. As anxiety increases, it leads to uncertainty and indecisiveness about the future. In the explanations and definitions of anxiety, it is evident that social and cultural aspects bear greater importance. Generally, negative feelings can create anxiety in a person (Varol, 1990).

The most influential factor in the success of a person's professional musical training is "anxiety of unemployment". In Turkey, students can study at university after fierce competition. After they start studying at university, their anxiety never ends, but continues about the graduation and future. The senior students are in their hardest period of life. Their graduation is the start of their employment and unemployment. Job selection plans about real life, friendships, the fear of unemployment and various responsibilities are some of the reasons for anxiety (Tümerdem, 2007).

The focus of self-centered anxieties is anxious about if he/she can continue being a successful teacher and that is why he/she always feels stressful. This kind of person always asks to him/herself: (1) Does teaching fit me best? (2) How can I get new materials, techniques, and ideas in my field? (3) Who can best help me to be successful in my task?

The concept of anxiety started to be studied by Freud in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Previously, the concept of anxiety was handled together with the concept of fear. At the end of his studies, Freud explained that the concepts of anxiety and fear are different concepts from each other. In addition, the

concept of anxiety is also related to the concept of stress (Aydın, 2017).

### Psychological Meaning of Anxiety

In psychology, the concept of anxiety, which refers to a mental state experienced by humans, was first defined by Freud as a function of the ego. This concept, which was previously accepted as a biological concept, entered the psychological literature with Freud. In Psychoanalysis, which Freud pioneered, the concept of anxiety, which has become one of the important concepts that Freud's successors have also studied, has been attributed meanings beyond a mental state experienced by humans (Manav, 2011, p. 202).

Performance is defined as the display of previously acquired behaviors at the level of thought and behavior within a certain period of time in accordance with a specific goal (Kafadar, 2009). The concept of performance is a phenomenon of great importance, especially in fields related to art. Fields of art can be considered not only within the framework of educational programs, but also consist of situations such as concerts, exams, and competitions that must be performed in front of a community. For example, when a musical work is performed in such a place, it is an expected performance (Gündüz, 2013).

Music Performance Anxiety can be said to be a combination of unpleasant emotional state, reaction and experiential qualities and related physiological changes, different from emotions such as stress and anxiety. Music Performance Anxiety is a natural human response. It is a natural human response to be motivated in a way that improves the performance of the body and mind and to adapt to a situation that the individual perceives as a threat or a challenging situation (Aydın, 2017).

According to Nagel (1990), "Music Performance Anxiety" is caused by possible or actual mishaps that musicians experience during a performance, and it is accompanied by feelings of embarrassment, humiliation and fear (Page, 2017). Unrealistic fears are caused by high levels of stress. The performer is aware that these fears are irrational and unwarranted but cannot avoid them during the performance. Professional musicians may experience high levels of stress due to lack of job security, social pressures, lack of prestige and low income, and therefore, may have unrealistic fears that cause anxiety. This problem is called "musical performance anxiety" in the literature. However, among musicians in our country, this problem is usually expressed with the word "excitement". A musician expresses the feeling of movement in his/her body or the intellectual movement in his/her mind before going on stage with the word "excitement". He does not use the words "anxiety" or "worry" (Tezcel & Aşkın, 2007, p. 5). In this direction, it can be said that students studying in the department of music teaching may have high levels of musical performance anxiety in such situations.

The focus of student-centered anxieties is the students. A teacher candidate who has student-centered anxieties is much more focused on students in his/her ideas and designs related to teaching. To make it clear, he/she is curious about

how to meet the cognitive, emotional, and social needs of every single student. Such people ask themselves:

- How can I help every individual learn easier and quicker?
- How can I help every individual consider life-long-learning important and indispensable?
- How can I help students who need special education or have high capacity continue their learning successfully outside school?

The main aim of the research in connection to this information is to find out the factors that affect the musical performance anxiety of the teacher candidates in department of music education. According to this aim, the following research questions were addressed:

1. Does students' gender contribute to any significant differences in their anxiety?
2. Does students' age contribute to any significant differences in their anxiety?
3. Does students' grade contribute to any significant differences in their anxiety?
4. Does students' socio-economic status contribute to any significant differences in their anxiety?

## METHOD

### The Method of the Research

In this study, the survey model, which is a quantitative research approach, was used. In this direction, the scientific quality of this research is the variables that interest the individuals in the society. These variables are gender, the socio-economic status, the education level, age, job, and geographical factors, all of which are the independent variables; and the opinions, the attitude, the manner, the perception, and the interests of individuals which are psychological and socio-psychological attitudes that are the dependent variables.

### Working Group

The participants (n=80) were the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students who were majoring in Music Teacher Education in the music faculty of a University in İstanbul, Turkey. The participants were randomly selected and consisted of mostly the female students aged between 23 and 26.

### Data Collection

First of all, a form of personal information was used, which is prepared by the researcher. This form has 9 questions which were about gender, age, class, high school, selected music course, the socio-economic situation of the family.

Secondly, by using the "The Anxiety Scale for Teacher Candidate" that was adapted and improved from Borich (1996) by Saban et al. (2004). This scale is composed of three parts (self-centered anxieties, task-centered anxieties, and student-centered anxieties and 45 entries. There are 15 questions in the self-centered sub-dimension, 15 questions in the task-centred sub-dimension and finally 15 questions in the student-centred sub-dimension. The maximum point value to

be taken out of each part is 75. For this research Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of inner determinacy to define the validity of the scale. According to this scale, Cronbach Alpha coefficient of inner determinacy is .85 for the first part of the scale, it is .80 for the second part, and it is .78 for the third part.

### Analysis of Data

All the data collected with the Personal Information Form and Student Teachers' Anxiety Scale were analyzed with SPSS (version 22.0). Before analyzing the data, normal distribution was performed for the selection of the analyses to be applied. In this sense, in addition to Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests, the normality distribution status of the data was decided by looking at the Normal Q-Q Graph. In this case, it was determined that the data showed normal distribution and t-test was used in two-group data for data showing normal distribution.

### FINDINGS

This section compares the male and female students' anxiety (Table 1).

When Table 1 is examined, no significant difference was found in the task-centered sub-dimension of the pre-service teacher anxiety scale according to the gender variable of the music teacher candidates. However, a statistically significant difference was found in the student-centered ( $t(78)=-1.038$ ;  $p<.05$ ) and self-centered ( $t(78)=2.047$ ;  $p<.05$ ) sub-dimensions of the prospective teacher anxiety scale. Based on this significant difference, it was determined that the anxiety levels of female students were higher than the anxiety levels of male students.

The next section compares the anxiety of students from different age groups (Table 2).

When Table 2 is examined, no statistically significant difference was found in the 3 sub-dimensions of the pre-service teacher anxiety scale according to the age variable of music teachers' anxiety levels. Finally, we can say that the age of students does not influence of their anxiety level.

The following section compares the anxiety of students from different grades (Table 3).

Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in the anxiety levels of prospective music teachers according to the grade level variable in the task-centered and student-centered

**Table 1.** The levels of anxiety according to the variable of gender

The Anxiety Scale for Teacher Candidate	Gender	n	M	SS	t-test		
					df	t	p
Task-centered	Female	63	38.24	17.34	78	-0.126	0.352
	Male	17	29.45	12.23			
Student-centered	Female	63	46.37	14.47	78	-1.083	0.035
	Male	17	34.15	13.65			
Self-centered	Female	63	23.56	16.46	78	2.047	0.028
	Male	17	11.79	12.35			

\*0<.05

**Table 2.** The levels of anxiety according to the variable of age

The Anxiety Scale for Teacher Candidate	Age	n	M	SS	t-test		
					df	t	p
Task-centered	19-22	23	25.12	12.11	78	2.240	0.245
	23-26	57	14.35	11.32			
Student centered	19-22	23	41.24	15.75	78	0.462	0.432
	23-26	57	36.16	13.24			
Self-centered	19-22	23	18.35	18.76	78	1.580	0.357
	23-26	57	13.72	15.25			

\*0<.05

**Table 3.** The levels of anxiety according to the variable of grade

The Anxiety Scale for Teacher Candidate	Grade	n	M	SS	t-test		
					df	t	p
Task-centered	1-2	32	35.61	11.24	78	1.436	0.145
	3-4	48	28.13	10.47			
Student centered	1-2	32	24.26	16.12	78	1.246	0.241
	3-4	48	15.25	12.21			
Self-centered	1-2	32	29.19	13.23	78	1.472	0.032
	3-4	48	36.23	14.35			

\*0<.05

**Table 4.** The levels of anxiety according to the variable of family socio-economic situation

The Anxiety Scale for Teacher Candidate	Socio-Economic Situation	n	M	SS	t-test		
					df	t	p
Task-centered	Lower-Middle	66	25.55	12.24	78	0.613	0.467
	Higher	14	19.50	11.75			
Student centered	Lower-Middle	66	22.74	13.26	78	-0.196	0.002
	Higher	14	18.23	11.35			
Self-centered	Lower-Middle	66	26.35	14.57	78	-1.499	0.022
	Higher	14	13.25	13.43			

\*0&lt;.05

sub-dimensions of the prospective teacher anxiety scale. However, a statistically significant difference was found in the self-centered ( $t(78)=1.472$ ;  $p<.05$ ) sub-dimension of the prospective teacher anxiety scale. This difference was found to be higher for those with grade level 3-4 than those with grade level 1-2.

Finally, the section below compares the anxiety of students from different socio-economic categories (Table 4).

When Table 4 is examined, when the effect of family socio-economic situation on students' anxiety levels is considered, no statistically significant difference was found in the task-centered sub-dimension of the pre-service teacher scale. However, a significant difference was found in the student-centered ( $t(78)=-.196$ ;  $p<.05$ ) and self-centered ( $t(78)=-1.499$ ;  $p<.05$ ) sub-dimensions of the pre-service teacher scale. It was concluded that the students with low-middle income level were more anxious than the students with high income level. In this direction, it can be said that students with high income level have lower anxiety levels.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When the first research question was examined, it was found that there was no significant difference in the task-centered sub-dimension of the anxiety level scale according to the gender of the prospective teachers, but a significant difference was found in the student-centered and egocentric sub-dimensions and this difference was found to be in favor of women. When the literature was examined, Erözkan (2020), in his master's thesis titled "Investigation of the relationship between music performance anxiety and individual instrument performance exam anxiety of music teacher candidates", found that women's anxiety levels were higher than men's anxiety levels when looking at the relationship between performance anxiety and instrument performance exam anxiety. Likewise, Durak (2020) and Fidan (2020) determined that there was a differentiation according to gender variable exam anxiety levels in their master's thesis and concluded that the anxiety level of women was higher than the anxiety level of men. However, looking at the literature, Çini, (2020), and Ünalın (2023) found that there was no significant difference when they looked at the gender variable in their master's theses. In this direction, when this study conducted by the researcher and the studies conducted in the literature are considered, it is seen that the anxiety levels of female music teacher candidate students are higher than male students.

No significant difference was found in the sub-dimensions of the pre-service teacher anxiety scale and pre-service teacher anxiety scale according to the age variable of pre-service teachers' anxiety levels, which is the second research question. Likewise, when the literature was examined, Çini (2020) did not find a significant difference according to the age variable in his master's thesis. Durak (2020) determined that there was no difference in anxiety level according to grade level in his master's thesis. Fidan (2020) found that there was a significant difference according to the age variable, and this difference was found to be higher in the level of occupational anxiety of music teacher candidates aged 27 and over than music teacher candidates aged 21-23. Again, Hüzmeli (2020) found a significant difference in the age variable according to the results of the general music anxiety scale he used in his experimental doctoral thesis study and concluded that the anxiety levels of students with higher age were higher than those of younger students. In this direction, it can be said that when the data obtained in this study and the literature are examined, it can be concluded that there are different results.

According to the third research question, which is the anxiety levels of pre-service teachers according to the grade level variable, a significant difference was found in the sub-dimension of the pre-service teacher anxiety scale, which is the sub-dimension of egocentrism, but no significant difference was found in the task-centered and student-centered sub-dimensions. Looking at the literature, Danişman (2021) did not find a significant difference according to the grade level variable in his master's thesis. However, Çini, 2020; Durak, 2020; Tök, 2020 found significant differences in the grade level of music teacher candidates in their master's theses and found that these differences were more in the sub-dimensions of the anxiety scales they used and that the anxiety levels of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students were generally higher. Likewise, in this study, it was determined that the students with high anxiety levels were in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades and it was determined that it coincided with the results in the studies in the literature.

The last research question, which is the anxiety levels of pre-service teachers according to the variable of family socio-economic situation level, revealed a significant difference in the student-centered and egocentric sub-dimensions of the pre-service teacher anxiety scale, and it was determined that pre-service teachers with low or medium socio-economic level had higher anxiety levels than pre-service teachers with high socio-economic income. When the

literature was examined, no other study was found in which the income level variable was addressed. In this direction, it was determined that pre-service teachers with high income level had lower anxiety levels than pre-service teachers with low- or medium-income level.

The results of this study and the suggestions developed based on the literature are explained below:

- Conducting more comprehensive studies to determine the anxiety levels of students,
- Conducting studies on students' anxiety levels not only with scales, questionnaires, experimental studies, but also with a combination of clinically supported studies,
- psychologist-supported programmers for individuals with high anxiety levels,
- Organizing activities, concerts, or recitals to reduce students' anxiety levels, and
- Comparing national and international studies and discuss the outcomes.

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