

Original Article

Attitudes of University Students toward Violence in Turkey: A Comparison of Turkish and International Students

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Abstract

Background: Violence is an important social problem that results in negative impacts on life and must be tackled with a multidimensional approach.

Objective: This study was conducted to assess the attitudes of Turkish and international university students studying in Turkey towards violence.

Methods: Designed as a descriptive and relational survey type research, the study was conducted on 234 Turkish and international students. A Personal Information Form and the Attitude Scale toward Violence were used to collect the data. T-test analysis and one-way analysis of variance were performed to analyze the data.

Results: While the Turkish students obtained a total mean score of 95.25 ± 21.74 from the Attitude Scale toward Violence, the international students obtained a total mean score of 132.99 ± 21.57 . In both groups, a significant difference was identified between the total mean scores obtained from the Attitude Scale toward Violence and the gender variable ($p < 0.05$). In both groups, the total Attitude Scale toward Violence scores and all of the sub-dimension scores of the male students suggested a tendency to approve and accept violence more than the female students.

Conclusion: The results of this study indicated that Turkish students had higher tendencies in terms of approving and accepting violence compared to international students, and that male students in both groups approved and accepted violence more than their female counterparts.

Keywords: violence, attitudes, university students

Introduction

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) violence is “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against the person himself, another person or against a group that results in (or has a high likelihood of resulting in) injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation” (WHO, 2002). Violence is an important social problem that must be tackled with a multidimensional and multidisciplinary approach as it can threaten the mental and physical health of society, cause people

to lose trust in other people and life, prevent social development, undermine self-esteem, and arouse feelings such as fear, anxiety and vulnerability in individuals (Adibelli, Sacan and Turkoglu, 2018).

According to WHO, the causes of violence cannot be explained based on a single factor as they can be complicated and involve different stages (WHO, 2002). Genetic properties, family and social structure, economic and social crises, and mostly the change in cultural structure and the breakdown of social values system raise distrust in people and prompt society to display aggressive behavior that

can be triggered at any time (Florea, 2013). Karabacak and Kodan Cetinkaya (2015) examined how the violent behaviors individuals displayed against the problems they faced in their daily life arose and found that individuals encountered violent patterns within the family and in the subcultures of the society or through means of communication, which allowed them to adopt such behaviors through learning. Direct victimization, in particular, witnessing violence in person, watching violence in the media, growing up in families with the incidence of violence, personal beliefs, and punishments or rewards from the environment for behavioral patterns also pave the way for learning and developing violent attitudes (Davidson, Gray and Canivez, 2012).

In addition, it is stated that temperature, weather conditions, alcohol and drugs, as well as gender, are also among factors that can bring out aggression in individuals (Karabacak and Kodan Cetinkaya, 2015; Davidson, Gray and Canivez, 2012). Moreover, it is thought that being brought up in different countries may also have an effect on attitudes toward violence (Adibelli, Sacan and Turkoglu, 2018; Karabacak and Kodan Cetinkaya, 2015).

In this context, it is important to investigate the attitudes of international and Turkish students towards violence and to determine whether cultural factors are effective. According to UNESCO, an international student is defined as “a student who goes outside the national or regional boundaries for educational purposes and who is outside of their country of origin (UNESCO, 2009). Students who leave their homeland for other countries to receive education face numerous problems in the countries they arrive in as international students in addition to problems related to education. International students’ exposure to different geographical, social, cultural and psychological conditions in the countries they temporarily or permanently stay in for education makes it inevitable for them to experience various problems (Sungur et al., 2016).

There are many studies in the literature regarding students’ attitudes towards violence and their perceptions of it (Sharma and Ali, 2016; Karabulutlu, 2015; Karabacak and Kodan Cetinkaya, 2015; Haider and Mahsud, 2014; Kodan Cetinkaya, 2013; Ozgur, Yorukoglu and Baysan-Arabacı, 2011; Siyez and Kaya, 2010; Balkıs, Duru and Bulus, 2005).

These studies have reported that that negative attitudes towards violence in adolescents are

moderate and that being an adolescence poses a risk for violence tendency (Ozgur, Yorukoglu and Baysan-Arabacı, 2011; Siyez and Kaya, 2010). In the study of Sharma and Ali (2016), which was conducted with adolescents, a positive correlation was found between attitudes towards violence and emotional symptoms (Sharma and Ali, 2016).. In the study of Karabulutlu (2015), it was reported that university students were mostly exposed to violence from individuals in their family (Karabulutlu, 2015). Kodan Cetinkaya (2013) reported that the tendency towards violence was higher in male students compared to female students and that female students had a more egalitarian attitude compared to male students (Kodan Cetinkaya, 2013).

In addition, it was found that in the studies conducted with students, attitudes towards violence were significantly affected by the gender factor, and that male students had a higher tendency towards violence than female students (Eksi, Okan and Güner, 2016; Sharma and Ali, 2016; Karabacak and Kodan Cetinkaya, 2015; Haider and Mahsud, 2014; Ozgur, Yorukoglu and Baysan-Arabacı, 2011; Siyez and Kaya, 2010; Balkıs, Duru and Bulus, 2005).

In the review of the relevant literature, no study exploring the attitudes of Turkish and international university students towards violence was found. Starting from the fact that attitudes toward violence are also seen among the causes of violent behaviors, this study aimed to assess the attitudes of Turkish and international university students toward violence.

Study Method and Tools: This study was designed as a descriptive, relational and cross-sectional study. It was conducted on Turkish and international university students studying at a university in Turkey between May 1 and June 1, 2018. The research population consisted of 921 students, 200 of which were international students, and 721 of which were Turkish students, who were studying at a university in Turkey.

The study did not employ a sampling method and intended to reach all of the international students who met the participation criteria for the study during the specified time period. As a result, 121 international students, who were registered to Turkish Teaching Centre (TOMER) during the specified time period and met the participation criteria, participated in the study. In addition, data were also collected from 121 Turkish students,

hence, the research sample consisted of a total of 242 students.

The same number of Turkish students as the international students were included in the study. However, a total of eight students were removed from the study for providing insufficient data, thus, 234 students, 117 of which were international and 117 which were Turkish, who filled out the surveys accurately comprised the final sample of the study. The international students were those who are non-Turkish citizens studying in Turkey. They were Syrian, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan citizens.

The inclusion criteria for the study were assenting to participate in the study, continuing undergraduate education in the relevant university and for international students, having the ability to speak the Turkish language and having no communication problems. In Turkey, international students start their education in the relevant faculty/school after receiving Turkish language education for one year. The surveys in the study were applied to students who received Turkish language education from TOMER.

Data Collection Form and Tools; The research data were collected using the Personal Information Form and the Attitude Scale toward Violence (ASTV).

1- Personal Information Form: The Personal Information Form is a data collection form consisting of 15 questions prepared by the researchers in line with information in the literature (Adıbelli, Sacan and Turkoglu, 2018, Karabacak and Kodan Cetinkaya, 2015, Eksi, Okan and Güner, 2016, Haider and Mahsud, 2014) to assess the socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, residence, etc.) of the students and certain aspects that might be related to violence (psychological disorder history, emergency contact name and exposure to violence).

2- Attitude Scale toward Violence: The ASTV scale, developed by Adıbelli et al. in 2018, consists of 52 items and 5 sub-dimensions (Adıbelli, Sacan and Turkoglu, 2018). The sub-dimensions of the scale are types of violence, making violence a usual thing, violence toward women, disapproval of violence and different dimensions of violence. It is a 5-point Likert-type scale. Total score on the scale varies between 52 and 260, and an increase in total score suggests the existence of positive attitudes in terms of disapproving and not

accepting violence. The answers are rated between 'strongly agree' (1) and 'strongly disagree' (5) for every negative item. For reverse coding in positive statements, the 'strongly agree' option indicates the best attitude (Adıbelli, Sacan and Turkoglu, 2018).

Positive items (27): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 44, 45, 46.

Negative items (25): 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 21, 26, 27, 28, 32, 33, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52.

The Cronbach's Alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.91 by Adıbelli et al. (2018).

Data Collection and Data Analysis: Data collection was performed by the authors. The questionnaire forms were completed by students during lecture hours. Data collection took around 10-15 minutes per participant. Participation to the study was voluntary. Participants received no fees for participation. SPSS 22 package program was used to assess the data. The variables were tested for normal distribution using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and it was found that the data showed normal distribution. Accordingly, for the analysis of the data, t-test and one-way analysis of variance, as well as descriptive statistical methods (mean, standard deviation and frequency), were used in the study. Tukey's post hoc test was performed to determine which group had significant differences. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical approval was obtained from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Osmaniye Korkut Ata University. In addition, the aim of the study was explained to the participants, and their verbal and written approvals were obtained with an Informed Consent Form.

Results

The study was conducted on a total of 234 Turkish and international students, 35% of which were female ($n=82$) and 65% were male ($n=152$). The average age of the students was 21.00 ± 2.91 . The general descriptive properties and certain violence-related characteristics of the students are given in Table 1. Regarding the international students, 44.4% ($n=52$) were Syrian, 32.5% ($n=38$) were Turkmen and 23.1% ($n=27$) were Afghan nationals.

Table 1: Various socio-demographic and violence-related characteristics of the Turkish and international students

	Turkish Students		International Students	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Female	28	23.9	54	46.2
Male	89	76.1	63	53.8
Age				
17-20 years old	76	65.0	44	37.6
21-24 years old	30	25.6	59	50.4
25 and above	11	9.4	14	12.0
Grade				
1 st grade	50	42.7	42	35.9
2 nd grade	46	39.3	30	25.6
3 rd grade	10	8.5	28	23.9
4 th grade	11	9.4	17	14.5
Residence				
State dormitory (KYK)	78	66.7	12	10.3
Private dorm	12	10.3	14	12.0
With family	8	6.8	39	33.3
House	19	16.2	52	44.4
Family type				
Nuclear family	88	75.2	53	45.3
Extended family	29	24.8	64	54.7
Income				
Less than expenditures	33	28.2	41	35.0
Equal to expenditures	77	65.8	66	56.4
More than expenditures	7	6.0	10	8.5
Faculty				
Faculty of Arts and Sciences	40	34.2	45	38.5
School of Health /Faculty of Political Sciences	45	38.5	42	35.9
Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	32	27.4	30	26.6
Have you ever had a psychological disorder?				
Yes	12	10.3	5	4.3
No	105	89.7	112	95.7
From whom do you get help when you have a personal problem?				
Family	55	47.0	53	45.3
Friend	34	29.1	29	24.8
Specialist/Doctor	10	8.5	8	6.8
No one	18	15.4	27	23.1
What kind of violence have you been subjected to?				
Verbal	38	32.5	20	17.1
Physical	7	6.0	6	4.3
Emotional	14	12.0	12	8.5
I have not experienced violence	58	49.6	79	67.5

Table 2: Distribution of the ASTV scores of the students

The scale and its subdimensions	Turkish students		International students		All students	
	Mean±sd	Min-max	Mean±sd	Min-max	Mean±sd	Min-max
Types of violence	22.31±6.93	14-48	32.17±6.75	17-47	27.24±8.43	14-48
Making violence a usual thing	24.18±8.34	13-49	34.54±8.76	14-58	29.36±9.99	13-58
Violence against women	27.27±8.74	11-48	33.31±6.97	15-46	30.29±8.45	11-48
Disapproval of violence	9.76±2.89	7-20	15.55±4.42	7-31	12.66±4.72	7-31
Different dimensions of violence	11.70±3.41	7-24	17.39±3.35	9-25	14.55±4.41	7-25
General attitude towards violence	95.25±21.74	56-166	132.99±21.57	65-167	114.12±28.71	56-167

Table 3: Assessment of the attitudes of Turkish and international students towards the exposure to violence

The scale and its subdimensions	Types of violence**	Turkish students			International students		
		N	Mean±sd	P value	N	Mean±sd	P value
Types of violence	Verbal	38	21.86±6.14		20	30.40±7.17	
	Physical	7	22.57±6.18		6	34.33±9.41	
	Emotional	14	22.64±7.48	F:0.078	12	29.91±8.98	F:1.356
	I have not experienced violence	58	22.50±7.49	P:0.972	79	32.81±5.99	P:0.260
Making violence a usual thing	Verbal	38	23.50±8.11		20	32.15±7.68	
	Physical	7	28.14±3.13		6	45.83±3.31	
	Emotional	14	26.42±8.58	F:1.037	12	34.08±9.17	F:4.148
	I have not experienced violence	58	23.62±8.78	P:0.379	79	34.36±8.71	P:0.008
Violence against women	Verbal	38	27.28±9.38		20	32.60±7.20	
	Physical	7	35.28±5.82		6	37.33±6.74	
	Emotional	14	24.28±7.95	F:2.627	12	32.08±6.98	F:0.858
	I have not experienced violence	58	27.01±8.38	P:0.054	79	33.37±6.94	P:0.465
Disapproval of violence	Verbal	38	9.31±2.30		20	14.85±5.59	
	Physical	7	9.57±1.27		6	15.66±2.16	
	Emotional	14	10.85±4.01	F:0.990	12	16.16±5.00	F:0.250
	I have not experienced violence	58	9.82±3.05	P:0.400	79	15.63±4.18	P:0.861
Different dimensions of violence	Verbal	38	11.84±3.73		20	16.45±2.89	
	Physical	7	12.14±3.57		6	19.83±2.92	
	Emotional	14	11.92±4.28	F:0.134	12	16.25±3.57	F:2.239
	I have not experienced violence	58	11.51±3.02	P:0.940	79	17.62±3.37	P:0.088
General attitude towards violence	Verbal	38	93.81±20.02		20	126.45±22.37	
	Physical	7	107.71±10.59		6	153.00±10.31	
	Emotional	14	96.14±21.46	F:0.850	12	128.50±26.60	F:2.753
	I have not experienced violence	58	94.48±23.74	P:0.469	79	133.81±20.44	P:0.042

* $p < 0.05$ **one-way analysis of variance (Anova)

Table 4: Comparison of ASTV scores by gender

The scale and its subdimensions	Turkish students				International students		
	Gender**	N	Mean±sd	P value	N	Mean±sd	P value
Types of violence	Female	28	24.60±7.95	P:0.044*	54	32.72±6.25	P:0.424
	Male	89	21.59±6.46	T:-2.032	63	31.71±7.17	T:-0.803
Making violence a usual thing	Female	28	29.42±7.87	P:0.000*	54	37.27±8.55	P:0.002*
	Male	89	22.53±7.82	T:-4.057	63	32.20±8.31	T:-3.245
Violence against women	Female	28	32.89±7.50	P:0.000*	54	35.75±6.10	P:0.000*
	Male	89	25.50±8.38	T:-4.165	63	31.22±7.03	T:-3.694
Disapproval of violence	Female	28	10.53±3.43	P:0.108	54	16.88±4.26	P:0.002*
	Male	89	9.52±2.67	T:-1.619	63	14.41±4.27	T:-3.127
Different dimensions of violence	Female	28	12.00±3.61	P:0.608	54	17.92±3.23	P:0.112
	Male	89	11.61±3.37	T:-0.514	63	16.93±3.41	T:-1.601
General attitude toward violence	Female	28	109.46±22.63	P:0.000*	54	140.57±17.68	P:0.000*
	Male	89	90.78±19.53	T:-4.245	63	126.49±22.59	T:-3.708

* $p < 0.05$ *** t test**Table 5: Assessment of the attitudes of international students toward violence in terms of nationality**

The scale and its subdimensions	Nationality**	N	Mean±sd	P and F value
Types of violence	Syrian	52	37.65±4.68	P: 0.000* F: 8.666
	Afghan	38	29.97±1.95	
	Turkmen	27	24.74±5.53	
Making violence a usual thing	Syrian	52	36.71±7.02	P:0.025* F:3.830
	Afghan	38	33.97±8.45	
	Turkmen	27	31.18±11.08	
Violence against women	Syrian	52	33.21±6.45	P:0.905 F: 0.100
	Afghan	38	33.71±6.09	
	Turkmen	27	32.96±9.06	
Disapproval of violence	Syrian	52	16.88±4.39	P:0.001* F:7.785
	Afghan	38	15.57±4.09	
	Turkmen	27	12.96±3.90	
Different dimensions of violence	Syrian	52	19.15±2.56	P:0.000* F:4.220
	Afghan	38	17.02±2.95	
	Turkmen	27	14.51±3.14	
Attitude toward violence scale	Syrian	52	143.61±15.94	P: 0.000* F: 4.741
	Afghan	38	130.26±17.23	
	Turkmen	27	116.37±25.12	

* $p < 0.05$ **one-way analysis of variance (Anova)

Results of the ASTV Mean Scores: The total mean score of the Turkish students on the ASTV was 95.25 ± 21.74 , while the total mean score of the international students was 132.99 ± 21.57 . This proved that the Turkish students had a higher inclination toward the attitudes of approving and accepting violence compared to the international students. The mean scores of both groups on the ASTV sub-dimensions are given in Table 2. In the study, the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient for the ASTV was 0.91. The Cronbach's Alpha values of the sub-dimensions

were found to be between 0.68-0.85. Furthermore, according to the results of the reliability analysis for the international and Turkish students, the Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.86 for the international students and 0.89 for the Turkish students.

Findings of the comparisons of ASTV score averages and various variables: No statistically significant difference was found between the total score averages obtained from the ASTV in terms of age, class level, place of residence, family type,

parental education level, and income level in either group ($p > 0.05$). There was no significant difference between the total score averages obtained from the ASTV in terms of exposure to violence in the Turkish students ($p > 0.05$), however a significant difference was found for the international students ($p < 0.05$) (Table 3). Nonetheless, significant differences were found in the total mean scores obtained from the ASTV based on the gender variable in both the Turkish and international students ($p < 0.05$) (Table 4). It was also found that total scores obtained by the males from the ASTV were lower than females in both groups (Table 4). This result indicates that the males were more approving and accepting of violence. Based on the nationality of the international students, statistically significant differences were observed in terms of total scores on the scale ($p < 0.05$) (Table 5). According to the advanced analysis of post hoc Tukey test, it was determined that the difference in the total score average obtained from the ASTV was due to the Syrian students (Table 5).

Discussion

This study was conducted to evaluate the attitudes of Turkish and international students attending university in Turkey, toward violence. It was found that 32.5% of the Turkish students and 17.1% of the international students were exposed to verbal violence. In their study investigating the knowledge, practices and attitudes of university students towards violence in Pakistan, Haider and Mahmud (2014) reported that 91% of the students had been subjected to verbal violence (Haider and Mahmud, 2014). Kodan Cetinkaya (2013) conducted a study on university students and found that 35.3% of the students had been exposed to or had witnessed verbal violence (Kodan Cetinkaya, 2013). Studies in the literature report that university students who have been exposed to or have witnessed violence have higher levels of attitudes toward violence (Kodan Cetinkaya, 2013; Ayan, 2007). Any exposure to or witnessing violence can be a significant factor in an individual's display of violent behavior. Considering the findings of this study, it should be noted that regardless of its type, violence can have negative impacts on the mental health of students and can cause them to experience undesirable situations in the future.

In the present study, the Turkish students obtained a total mean score of 95.25 ± 21.74 on the ASTV, while the international students obtained a mean

score of 132.99 ± 21.57 . The scores that can be taken from the scale were in the range of 52-260. The decrease in the total score supports higher levels of attitudes in terms of approving and accepting violence. In this context, it can be said that the Turkish students had a higher inclination toward approving and accepting violence compared to the international students. A study on students' perception and their tendency toward violence in Turkey determined the factors affecting violence in students as their psychological state, education, communication and TV series/movies (Ozgur, Yorukoglu and Baysan-Arabacı, 2011). It was also reported in the same study that the majority of the students (72.8%) learned violence through print/visual media. The factors affecting the higher-level attitudes of Turkish students towards violence in the current study can be attributed to many reasons. These can be counted as having different beliefs, different family doctrines and dynamics, the influence of geographic location and climate, customs and traditions acquired in parallel with the developments in that region, the gender perception of the society, the media, etc.

The common feature of the international students who participated in the study was that they all came to Turkey from the Middle East. In this region, especially in Syria, the extreme violence and war that began 10 years ago still continues today. The Syrian students who participated in the study had all been exposed to war. In addition, most of the international students were of Syrian nationality. In this regard, based on their culture and the effects of the war in the country they live positive attitudes among international students in terms of the disapproval of violence in the present study can be considered as a reflection of their responses not to accept violence.

In this study, when the total score averages the Turkish and international students obtained from the ASTV were compared in terms of students' exposure to violence, while there was no significant difference in the Turkish students, a significant difference was found in the international students. In other words, the attitudes of the international students who had been exposed to violence toward violence indicated that they were more likely to approve and support violence. In the literature, it is stated that attitudes toward violence can be shaped by witnessing and being exposed to violence (Davidson, Gray and Canivez, 2012). There are also studies showing that exposure to or witnessing violence increase the

tendency towards violence (Kodan Cetinkaya, 2013; Ayan, 2007). The fact that the international students came from Middle Eastern countries and had witnessed the environment of war can be considered as a factor in these results.

The study found significant differences in the total mean scores the students in both groups obtained from the ASTV based on gender. In both groups, the attitudes toward violence indicated that the male students had attitudes more prone to violence than the female students.

Regarding maintaining violent or aggressive behavior, Carnagey and Anderson (2007) asserted that males displayed physical and verbal aggression at a higher level compared to females (Carnagey and Anderson, 2007). Similarly, Anderson et al. (2006) determined that males had more positive attitudes toward violence than females (Anderson et al., 2006). Other studies have revealed that males are more likely to accept violence than females (Nabors and Jasinski, 2009; Davidson, Gray and Canivez, 2012; Slovak, Carlson and Helm, 2007). Eksi et al. (2016) conducted a study on adolescents who had experienced internal migration and found that their attitudes towards violence differed significantly in terms of gender, and that male students were more inclined to violence compared to their female counterparts (Eksi, Okan and Guner, 2016). In their studies conducted on adolescents, Sharma and Ali (2016) and Siyez and Kaya (2010) determined that males had higher and more positive attitudes toward violence compared to females (Sharma and Ali, 2016, Siyez and Kaya, 2010). These findings are in line with other studies in the relevant literature (Balkıs, Duru and Bulus, 2005; Kodan Cetinkaya, 2013).

The fact that the Turkish society pays particular attention and is tolerant to boys can cause children to experience more violence and to become more inclined to commit violence when faced with problems, due to rebellious behaviors in the adolescence period (Balkıs, Duru and Bulus, 2005, Kodan Cetinkaya, 2013).

Furthermore, the more aggressive behavior of boys compared to girls can be linked to the roles assigned to boys in society. In particular, aggression or violent acts are acceptable in the case of boys according to families and society while such behaviors are not approved in the case of girls (Karabacak and Kodan Cetinkaya, 2015). The findings of the present study with regards to the

male students can be explained with the different expectations society has from women and men.

According to the statistics of the Council of Higher Education (YOK), international students in Turkey mostly came from Middle Eastern and Turkic countries such as Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan and Iraq (YOK, 2017). The international students who participated in the present study were in fact from Syria, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. It is a fact that there are historical, economic, and political relations, as well as geographic and cultural affinity, between Turkey and these countries besides kinship ties and similarities in language (Ozoglu, Gur and Coskun, 2012; Cetin, 2016). Moreover, beyond sharing borders, Syria and Turkey are two countries that have a deep commitment to one another. Individuals living in the provinces near the Syrian border in Turkey kept close interpersonal relationships with the neighboring Syrian people in the pre-war years and created mutual kinship, thus a culture of partnership emerged (Cetin, 2016). According to the results of Erdogan's (2016) survey titled "Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Adaptation", the reasons Turkish citizens accepted Syrians were reported to be "religious brotherhood" (52.9%) and "ethnic fraternity" (42.1%) (Erdogan, 2014). Similar results obtained in terms of gender regarding the Turkish and international students in the present study may be due to this cultural proximity as the Osmaniye province, where the study was conducted, is close to the Syrian border and thus the largest percentage of the international students in this study consisted of Syrian students. The study found statistically significant differences in the total scores the international students obtained from the ASTV based on nationality. Further analysis with post hoc Tukey test revealed that these differences stemmed from the Syrian students. The findings of the study indicated that Syrian students had lower levels of attitudes in terms of the approval and acceptance of violence compared to Afghan and Turkmen students.

As result of the civil war that broke out in Syria in 2011, millions of people had to leave their homeland and migrate to other countries and in particular to Turkey, due to historical and geographical proximity (Levent and Cayak, 2017). The results of a study conducted in Turkey determined that more than 50% of Syrian university students stated that they had good or very good relations with Turkish people (ELITE-

DIALOGUE, 2017). As for social distance between the Syrians and the Turkish people, the study showed that the Syrians were warmer and had friendlier feelings toward the Turkish people rather than vice versa. It can be said that the above-mentioned results were likely to have reflected in the findings of the present study.

Limitations of the Study: There were various limitations to this study. The first one was that the majority of the international students who participated in the study consisted of Syrian students. Therefore, the fact that these students came from a war zone and that the Turkish students were not exposed to such conditions are thought to have created a limitation. Secondly, the international students who participated in this study were students who studied Turkish at TOMER for one year at the relevant university. Although these students received language education, the fact that they might have had difficulty in understanding the questionnaire may be considered as another limitation. Finally, the study gives information on a small sample as it was conducted at a university in Osmaniye, Turkey. Additionally, the fact that the international students participating in the study consisted of Syrian, Turkmen, and Afghan nationals, namely only Middle East countries, could be seen as a limitation with regards to the sample. For this reason, more comprehensive studies to cover students from more countries are required. It is not possible to generalize the results to the whole society.

Conclusion and Recommendations: The results of the present study showed that the Turkish students had a higher inclination towards approving and accepting violence compared to the international students. In addition, it was found that the male students approved and accepted violence more than the female students and being an international student showed no difference in violence in terms of the gender variable. In the assessment of the attitudes of the international students toward violence according to nationality, it was determined that the Syrian students had a lower inclination towards the approval and acceptance of violence compared to the Afghan and Turkmen students. According to the results of this study, to reduce the attitudes toward violence, educating individuals, families and even the society at large is important to eliminate violence being seen as a solution to problems (Kodan Cetinkaya, 2013). Increasing the awareness of all members of society towards violence, initiatives to reduce violent content in media and legislative

regulations with deterrent penalties can be effective in the reduction of violent behaviors. Furthermore, as a result of the cooperation between YOK, non-governmental organizations and universities, establishing programs that will increase the interpersonal communications of Turkish and international students and providing international students with advisory and guidance services for violence can be sustained.

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