



## INVESTIGATION OF PERSPECTIVE OF THE NURSING STUDENTS AGAINST REFUGEES IN TURKEY

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The aim of this study is to examine the perspectives of nursing students towards refugees in Turkey.

**Methods:** This is a descriptive and cross-sectional study. The sample was composed of 220 nursing students. As a data collection tool, 19-item questionnaires prepared by researchers based on the literature were used. Descriptive statistics were used to determine students' characteristics.

**Results:** It was found that 63.6% of the students surveyed were women, the mean age was  $19.69 \pm 1.18$ , and the family income level was moderate, and 79.1% were social security. 55.5% of the students reported that they did not contact the refugees before, 92.3% of them offered employment to the refugees in our country, 80.5% felt empathy towards the refugees, 27.3% felt negative attitudes towards the refugees, while 24.5% said their attitude and behavior were positive, 60% said they did not help the refugees so far, 57.3% said that the refugees were, 82.3% reported that the population had an impact on public health, 62.7% reported that the population had a knowledge of the living conditions, 73.6% reported that the population had adequate health services, 83.2% reported that the population did not have any individual problems with the refugees, 95% reported that the refugees should return to their country when the problems in their 53.2% of the participants found that the refugees were unstable to come to our country.

**Conclusion:** In the context of the findings, it was found that nursing students have generally positive thoughts about refugees. It is recommended to plan initiatives for situations where they are unstable due to lack of information.

**Key Words:** Refugee, war, nursing students

## 1. Introduction

The case of migration, which has existed since the beginning of human history, that is, to leave a place where people live for different reasons or temporarily, continues to exist today and becomes one of the important issues that needs to be emphasized (1). In the case of migration, refugees and asylum, defined as the movement of individuals dependent on economic, political and social factors, it is defined as "movement which is outside regulatory norms in transit countries which are sending, accepting and receiving migration vehicles" (2). Current data show that forced Human mobility is becoming more widespread, diversified and gaining speed. The term refugee can often be confused with the concept of "asylum-seekers"

because of the definition of the "right to asylum" of refugees protected in international human rights instruments (3). The asylum seeker is defined as "the person who wants to be admitted to a country as a refugee and expects the result of their application for refugee status (4). People leave their place to another place on a voluntary basis in case immigration settlement, a mandatory reason to replace the person who called the asylum, asylum and refugees (3, 5). The issue of Refugees in Turkey is the most important agenda of recent years. The Ministry of Interior reports that there are no refugees in only 9 provinces and that there are no refugees in 72 provinces. With the increase of refugees, social problems are increasing (4). It is considered to be one of the most serious social

impacts of refugees in the provinces where they are concentrated. This can sometimes lead to ethnic and opinion differences or to the acceleration of existing problems. Due to the prolonged residence of refugees, our people, who were very warm at first, started to show various unrest in the future (6). Among these unrest are the rise of house rent due to the increase of the population of refugees, the employers' choice of refugees instead of the local population due to their work for lower wages, the opening and starting of workplaces in the city center of refugees (7). The majority of refugees speak their own language and do not speak Turkish. Therefore, they can not find solutions to the negative situations encountered. The common problems faced by refugees are that they do not have adequate nutrition, health and housing opportunities, that children cannot continue their education, that they are exposed to cultural incompatibility and social exclusion (8). Refugees who leave their country under negative conditions are subjected to all kinds of exploitation and, therefore, to severe violations of human rights and this leads to security problems (9). The effects of refugees in Turkey are most felt in the social, that is, in the intertwined areas of society. As well as addressing the problems of the individuals who are migrating for prosperity and peace, the determination of the point of view of the citizens of the destination for migrants is very important in terms of social integration (10). Therefore, a study was carried out at a State University in order to assess the future health personnel candidates' perspective on refugees coming to our country.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### **2.1. Purpose and Study Design**

The aim of this study is to examine the perspectives of nursing students towards refugees in Turkey. The cross-sectional and descriptive design was used.

### **2.2. Participants**

The cross-sectional and descriptive study was conducted between February and May 2018 in Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Faculty of Health Sciences in Burdur, Turkey. Convenience sampling methods were used. Fifteen students refused to participate. Participants were first, second, third and fourth year undergraduate students (n=220) in the Bachelor of Nursing Science Degree in the academic term of 2017–2018.

### **2.3. Instruments**

#### **2.3.1. Demographic characteristics**

This form is comprised of four questions regarding students' sociodemographic characteristics: Age, sex, social insurance and income.

#### **2.3.2. Attitudes Against Refugees Questionnaire**

As a data collection tool, 15-item questionnaires prepared by researchers based on the literature were used. The questionnaire consists of 15 items, including whether they have communicated with refugees in the past, their views on refugees and their families, politics and benefits of the state against refugees, the level of knowledge on rights and powers given to refugees, the effects of refugees on public health, and problems with refugees.

### **2.4. Data Collection**

The questionnaires were distributed during class hours, and students were asked to complete and return them at the end of the lesson. The questionnaires were collected by the author after they were completed.

### **2.5. Data Analysis**

For data analysis, the SPSS 22.0 software (SPSS, Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) was used. A test of hypothesis with p value of <0.05 was considered significant. Descriptive statistics were used to determine students' characteristics.

Table 1: Students' Thoughts on Refugees

Questions	n	%
Have you contacted the refugees before?		
Yes	98	44.5
No	122	55.5
Did you empathize with the refugees who came to our country?		
Yes	177	80.5
No	43	19.5
Do you think that work is provided for refugees in our country?		
Yes	203	92.3
No	17	7.7
How are your family and relatives' attitudes and behaviors towards refugees?		
Positive	54	24.5
Negative	60	27.3
Uninterested	53	24.1
I do not know	53	24.1
Did you give any help to the refugees?		
Yes	88	40.0
No	132	60.0
Do you think it's right for refugees to be helped if they want financial assistance?		
Yes	126	57.3
No	94	42.7
Does it bother you that the refugees are getting into the public?		
Yes	130	59.1
No	90	40.9
Do you think refugees have any influence on public health?		
Yes	181	83.3
No	39	17.7
Do you know about the living conditions of refugees?		
Yes	138	62.7
No	82	37.3
Do you think refugees are using their health care adequately?		
Yes	162	73.6
No	58	26.4
Have you ever had an individual problem with any refugee?		
Yes	37	16.8
No	183	83.2
Do you think refugees should go back to their country when the problem is over?		
Yes	209	95.0
No	11	5.0
How do you look at the rights granted to refugees for education?		
Positive	82	37.3
Negative	103	46.8
I do not know	35	15.9
How do you think housing should be provided for refugees?		
Provided individually	51	23.2
Provided by the government	75	34.1
Other	94	42.7
What do you think about refugees coming to our country?		
Positive	32	14.5
Negative	71	32.3
Indecisive	117	53.2
Total	220	100

## 2.6. Ethical Consideration

Written permission from Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Ethical Committee (GO 2018/44) and the Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Faculty of

Health Sciences was also obtained. The objective of the research was explained to the participants and written permission was received from those agreeing to participate in the research.

### 3. Results

The average age of the attendant students is 19.69  $\pm$  1.18. 63.6% of them female, 79.1% have social insurance and 45.5% have income level equal to their life expenses.

In Table 1, when students' reflections on refugees are examined; 55.5% of the students did not contact the refugees before, 92.3% of them offered employment for refugees in our country, 80.5% empathize against the refugees, 27.3% of them showed negative attitudes towards the relatives and family of the refugees, 24.5% of them expressed positive attitudes and behaviors, 60% of them did not provide any assistance to the refugees so far, 57.3% of them, 82.3% said that refugees had an impact on public health. 62.7% of the students stated that the refugees were aware of the living conditions, 73.6% said that the refugees used their health care adequately, 83.2% said that they did not experience any individual problems related to the refugees and 95% said that the refugees should return to their countries when the

problem was resolved in their country.

In Table 2, It was found that the view of the students about how they welcome the refugees to our country did not make any difference in terms of gender ( $p>0.05$ ). It has been determined that female students perceive the arrival of refugees in our country more negatively than male students. It was found that the point of view of the students about how they welcomed the refugees to our country according to the income status of their families did not make any difference according to the income status of the families. In the same way, there is no statistically significant difference in the social security of the students from the point of view ( $p>0.05$ ).

### 4. Discussion

While the number of displaced persons due to conflict, violence and persecution reached record levels globally, Turkey, at the end of 2016 the third consecutive year, continued to be the country

Table 2. Evaluation of students' perspective towards refugees based on gender, income level and social insurance.

	What do you think about refugees coming to our country?			Statistical Analysis
	Positive	Negative	Indecisive	
Gender	n %	n %	n %	
Female	16 (%11.4)	45(%32.1)	79(%56.4)	$\chi^2=3.337^*$ $p=.189$
Male	16(%20.0)	26(%32.5)	38(%47.5)	
Total	32(%14.5)	71(%32.3)	117(%53.2)	
Level of income	Positive	Negative	Indecisive	
1000 Turkish Liras (TL) less than	4(%3.3)	7(%7.4)	12(%12.2)	$p=.399^{**}$
1001-2000 TL	17 (%14.5)	25(%32.3)	58(%53.2)	
2001-3000 TL	9(%8.3)	21(%18.4)	27(%30.3)	
3001-5000 TL	1(%4.4)	14(%9.7)	15(%16.0)	
5001 TL and above	1(%1.5)	4(%3.2)	5(%5.3)	
Total	32(%32.0)	71(%71.0)	117(%117.0)	
Social insurance	Positive	Negative	Indecisive	
Have	24(%25.3)	57(%56.2)	93(%92.5)	$\chi^2=.396^*$ $p=.820$
Have not	8(%6.7)	14(%14.8)	24(%24.5)	
Total	32(%32.0)	71(%71.0)	117(%117)	

\* Yates correction was made because the number is under 25.

\*\* Corrected Fisher  $\chi^2$  was used for that number expected under 5.

which hosts the largest number of refugees in the world. Turkey, more than 3.5 million registered Syrian refugees, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to the person entering the interests of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees registered more than 365,000 other nationalities are also housed (8). Migration is so complex that it can not be explained by a single theory and it is a versatile concept containing many socioeconomic variables. In our study, 53.2% of the nursing students stated that the angle of view towards the refugees was unstable, while 55.9% stated that their opinions changed when they communicated with the refugees. According to Barem's refugee research results in 2016, it was found that people from the youth and upper income group looked more positively towards asylum seekers. Turkey also likewise among young people under 35 years of age, while 39% rate of positive asylum seekers facing, over 35 years, this rate drops to 19% (11). This result is similar to the result of our study. In our study, only 14.5% of the students favor this situation.

Immigrants are considered "the other" because of the language barrier, which is part of the national identity. The fact that the immigration phenomenon is linked to the crime rates shows the immigrants guilty and is considered as the reason for the insecurity and fear in the society. According to Boyraz's (2015) study result, it was observed that the indigenous people who did not want to be affected by the crisis caused by the refugees were exposed to the big cities and the provinces and the surrounding provinces. This incident has caused the destruction of family structures (12). In this survey, 95% of the students think that refugees should return when the problems in their country end. 59.1% of the students did not want the refugees to interfere with the people, 41.9% of them did not welcome the people. Indeed, different perspectives on different groups can make it easier or harder for individuals to live together. In this sense, the viewpoint of the students towards the refugees may vary according to many factors such as the family

order, the viewpoint of the family, the cultural approach and so on. In this respect, generalization is not possible (13,14).

According to Tunç 's (2015) results of the world and behavior of Turkey's saw the most serious refugee crisis from someone with Syria refugee crisis in Turkey migrated to the Syrians and the rest to accept in this migration, especially in the border province of Turkish society, expectations, perceptions and concerns seem to have universal qualities (14). Even today, even after the civil war in Syria, a large part of the Syrians are estimated to be unable to return to their country until the collapsed settlements are made live again. In addition, the experiences and statistics of the United Nations in different geographies of the world show us that at least one third of the refugees may not return (15-18). In the current stage, close to the Syrians in Turkey, a significant portion of the country or to return to the distant future and possibilities to choose to live permanently in Turkey is increasing every day.

The research, but revealed that a high level of social acceptance level for the Syrians in Turkey in a number of areas shows that there were serious sensitivity. The main ones are summarized below.

- (i) In the basic public services (health, municipality, etc.)
- (ii) Economic concerns (loss of business, loss of income, increase in rents, etc.)
- (iii) Security concerns (public order, suspicion, disturbance, tension, etc.)
- (iv) Concerns about basic rights (work permit, residence permit, citizenship, etc.) (14).

As a result, Syrian profile in Turkey, Syria seems to be the universal nature of the behavior and expectations of the community's concerns. Both social adaptation and opposition to social acceptance are separated from universal traits. These high acceptance rate for the Syrian society, while satisfaction with the Syrians is to be in Turkey. The sustainability of these two elements is

important in that the Syrian refugee crisis does not turn into xenophobia and does not cause an environment of social conflict. Syrians have begun to settle in Turkey together with a spontaneous adaptation process there is a need to support and respect the legal aspects of public policy (19).

## 5. Conclusion

In our research, it has been determined that the students have a lack of knowledge about refugees and the ratio of undecided and informal statements is high. From this point of view, it is thought that the education and information to be given to the students can change the point of view. As a result, it has been found that there are compilation studies in the literature on the refugees coming to my country, but the research studies are very limited. For this reason, it is recommended to conduct studies evaluating the social point of view against the refugees.

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