

A Study on Xenophobia and Anti-Immigrant Sentiment

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Abstract

Migration has significantly influenced societies throughout history and continues to be a critical phenomenon in contemporary times. Various factors, such as wars, economic hardships, and natural disasters, have compelled individuals to migrate across different regions. With globalization, migration has evolved into a multidimensional issue encompassing societal transformation processes. In host societies, negative attitudes towards migrants often emerge, complicating integration efforts. Due to its geopolitical position, Turkey has been profoundly impacted by migration as both a destination and transit country. Particularly following the mass influx of Syrian refugees in 2011, negative perceptions of Syrian migrants have intensified within Turkish society. Migrants are frequently associated with issues such as crime, security concerns, and are perceived as economic and cultural threats. These perceptions contribute to the proliferation of xenophobia, defined as fear or hostility towards foreigners. Xenophobia reflects negative attitudes and fears directed towards migrants. This study examines university students' levels of xenophobia and its relationship with demographic variables. Data collected through surveys were analyzed based on variables such as gender, age, marital status, educational level, and the presence of foreign students in their classes. Additionally, students' responses to statements included in a xenophobia scale were evaluated. The findings indicate that xenophobia levels increase with age. However, no significant effects were observed regarding gender, marital status, educational level, or the presence of foreign students in classes on xenophobia levels. These results suggest that attitudes toward xenophobia exhibit similarities independent of specific demographic characteristics.

Keywords: Xenophobia, International Migration, Anti-Immigrant Sentiment, Security, Threat Perception, Xenophobia Scale

Zenofobi ve Göçmen Karşıtlığı Üzerine Bir Arařtırma

Öz

Göç, tarih boyunca toplumları etkileyerek, günümüzde de önemli bir olgu olarak varlığını sürdürmektedir. Farklı coğrafyalarda savaş, ekonomik sıkıntılar, doğal afetler gibi nedenlerle insanlar göç etmek zorunda kalmıştır. Küreselleşmeyle birlikte göç, toplumsal değişim süreçlerini de içeren çok boyutlu bir konu haline gelmiştir. Göç alan toplumlarda göçmenlere karşı olumsuz tutumlar gelişebilmekte, bu da uyum süreçlerini zorlaştırmaktadır. Türkiye, jeopolitik konumu nedeniyle hem hedef hem de transit ülke olarak göçten yoğun şekilde etkilenmektedir. Özellikle 2011'de Suriye'den gelen göç dalgasıyla birlikte, Türkiye'de Suriyeli göçmenlere yönelik olumsuz bakış açıları artmıştır. Göçmenler, suç ve güvenlik sorunlarıyla ilişkilendirilmekte, ekonomik ve kültürel tehditler olarak algılanmaktadır. Bu durum, zenofobi yani yabancı düşmanlığını tetiklemektedir. Zenofobi, göçmenlere yönelik korku ve olumsuz tutumları ifade eder. Bu çalışmada, üniversite öğrencilerinin zenofobi düzeyleri ve demografik değişkenlerle ilişkisi incelenmiştir. Anket yoluyla toplanan veriler, cinsiyet, yaş, medeni durum, eğitim düzeyi ve sınıflarında yabancı uyruklu öğrenci bulunma durumu açısından analiz edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte Yabancı düşmanlığı ölçeğinde yer alan ifadelerle öğrencilerin katılım oranı da değerlendirilmiştir. Sonuçlar, yaş arttıkça zenofobi düzeyinin de arttığını göstermektedir. Ancak cinsiyet, medeni durum, eğitim düzeyi ve sınıfta yabancı uyruklu öğrenci bulunmasının zenofobi düzeyleri üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi bulunmamıştır. Bu bulgular, zenofobiye yönelik tutumların belirli demografik özelliklerden bağımsız olarak benzerlik gösterdiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Zenofobi, Uluslararası Göç, Göçmen Karşıtlığı, Güvenlik, Tehdit Algısı, Zenofobi Ölçeği


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Introduction

Migration, as in the past, continues to influence societies in the present day. A review of historical processes reveals that individuals across various regions have engaged in short- or long-term migration due to factors such as wars, conflicts, economic reasons, natural disasters, and climate change. The social dynamics of each era demonstrate that migration can stem from a multitude of reasons with evolving dimensions. "In its most general definition, migration is described as the act of moving from one place to another, or in other words, a state of relocation. However, today, it has become a phenomenon with numerous dimensions, including political, cultural, and economic aspects" (Üstün & Vargün, 2022, p. 43). With globalization, migration has transitioned into a topic of global significance. Beyond being a form of social mobility, it encompasses processes of transformation. Castles and Miller define migration as a multidimensional phenomenon that affects everyone in both sending and receiving countries, emphasizing that it stems from diverse factors, including political, economic, and violent conditions (1998, pp. 8-9). Similarly, Marshall conceptualizes migration as movements carried out by crossing symbolic or political boundaries to new settlements or societies (1999, p. 685). According to Sirkeci and Cohen, a critical determinant of migration is "conflicts reflected as a perception of insecurity" (2015, p. 9).

Migration, as in the past, continues to deeply influence social processes in the present day. Due to its geopolitical position and strategic significance on the global stage, Turkey serves as both a destination and a transit country for migrants. "Although Turkey has historically been a region that both receives and sends migrants, the general perception is that international migration began in the early 1960s. However, in reality, migration flows persisted during both the Ottoman and Republican periods" (Sirkeci & Erdoğan, 2012, p. 298). Since the 2000s, Turkey has increasingly experienced migration, both legal and irregular, driven by factors such as regional conflicts in Central Asia, the Middle East, and African countries, political instability and security issues, and economic inequalities (Nar, 2021, p. 216). The developments following the Arab Spring resulted in large-scale migration movements, positioning Turkey as one of the most significantly affected countries. The first large-scale wave of migration from Syria to Turkey occurred in 2011, and currently, 3,116,713 individuals are under temporary protection in Turkey (Göç İdaresi Başkanlığı, 2024). Alongside this, irregular migration from Central Asia, the Middle East, and African countries also continues to flow into Turkey.

In migration-receiving societies, migrants are frequently linked to issues of crime and security. Irregular migration, in particular, exerts multifaceted impacts, encompassing political, cultural, economic, and psychological dimensions within host communities. Negative perceptions of migrants often give rise to various societal anxieties, shaping attitudes and behaviors toward them, which consequently affect the processes of social integration. In his study "Türkiye'de Suriyeliler: Toplumsal Kabul ve Uyum," Erdoğan (2014) highlights how the Syrian presence has become an integral part of daily life and politics in Turkey. Notably, 62.3% of respondents believed that Syrians pose a security risk, while 70.7% expressed the view that migrants have negatively impacted the Turkish economy. Similarly, Türk (2019) observes that initial interactions between migrants and host communities were framed through the lens of "hospitality." However, this perception has gradually shifted over time, as evidenced by comments on news articles, where a portion of readers explicitly stated their reluctance to live alongside migrants. Türk argues that "the social acceptance of hosts has occasionally been undermined by hate speech triggered by unfolding events" (2019, pp. 25–26). Overall, migration and the presence of migrants are often perceived as factors that could negatively affect long-term security and bring about political, economic, and cultural challenges. Such concerns have the potential to deepen divisions between host communities and migrants, leading to integration difficulties. Issues such as the settlement of migrants in urban areas, participation in economic activities, and increased expenditures are cited as reasons for individuals with differing ideologies to harbor negative attitudes toward migrants (Akin et al., 2020, p. 126).

Negative perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward migrants are often conceptualized through the term xenophobia. The term originates from the combination of the Greek words *xenos* (foreigner) and *phobos* (fear). In her study "Xenophobia: Understanding the Roots and Consequences of Negative Attitudes Toward Immigrants", Yakushko (2009) highlights an increase in negative attitudes toward newcomers in migration contexts. Xenophobia is defined as a behavioral, attitudinal, and emotional prejudice against migrants or individuals perceived as foreign (Yakushko, 2009, p. 43). Similarly, Reynolds and Vine describe xenophobia as "a psychological hostility or fear of outsiders" (1987, p. 28). Xenophobia

can be characterized as a pathological condition involving an irrational aversion or hostility toward individuals from different cultures, nations, societies, ethnic groups, regions, or neighborhoods (Gezer & İlhan, 2022, p. 230). According to Cashdan, xenophobia manifests as distrust, disdain, and negative attitudes (2001, p. 761). Nyamnjoh characterizes xenophobia as an intense fear, dissatisfaction, or hatred directed toward others (2006, p. 2). Özmete et al. define xenophobia as "discrimination comprising negative perceptions and practices toward non-citizen groups based on their foreign origins or nationality" (2018, pp. 194–195).

Ocaklı and Avaner (2023) further elaborate that "xenophobia refers to prejudices held against out-groups perceived as foreign, often rooted in feelings of insecurity. This mutual distrust between groups can escalate into fear of crime, indicating that xenophobia can contribute to the fear of crime" (p. 1513). Mackie et al., in their work "Intergroup Emotions and Intergroup Relations," examine the role that emotions arising from group membership and the associated identity play in shaping intergroup dynamics (2008, p. 1866). When individuals are identified as members of a group, their perception of the world shifts from a personal lens to a collective one, where events and objects are evaluated based on their impact on the in-group rather than on individual consequences. Phenomena that adversely affect the in-group or its members are perceived negatively, while those that benefit the group or its members are viewed positively. For example, the killing of an in-group member due to their group affiliation can provoke fear or anger among other members, even in the absence of direct physical harm to themselves (Mackie et al., 2008, p. 1871).

Sumner, in his analysis of in-group and out-group distinctions, posits that individuals within the "we-group" (in-group) engage in relationships marked by peace, order, law, governance, and mutual cooperation. Conversely, interactions with out-groups are inherently adversarial unless mediated by formal agreements. Each group maintains its own internal structure and discipline (1906, p. 12). Loyalty to the group, willingness to sacrifice for it, hostility and disdain toward outsiders, solidarity among members, and aggression toward external groups are interconnected phenomena. Sumner defines this perspective as the technical foundation of ethnocentrism. Within this framework, one's own group is positioned as the central reference point, and all other groups are assessed in relation to it. Every group perceives itself as superior, dismisses outsiders, and regards its own customs and traditions as the sole standard of correctness (1906, p. 13).

The concept of xenophobia is sometimes used interchangeably with racism or is confused with it. However, xenophobia is a broader term. While xenophobia relates to individuals entering a society from outside, racism, based on ethnic discrimination, also encompasses those already within the community. According to Karataş and Güzel (2020), "racism, as an ideology of superiority, legitimizes the sociocultural and political dominance of one ethnic group over another, functioning to justify avoidance of and differentiation from the 'other'" (p. 502). Özmete et al. (2018) further clarify this distinction: "Xenophobia refers to behavior based on the notion that the 'other' is foreign to the group, whereas racism explains discrimination rooted in physical differences such as skin color, hair type, and facial features. Racism is often considered the extreme form of xenophobia" (p. 193). Racial prejudice fundamentally necessitates that individuals harboring racial biases perceive themselves as members of a distinct racial group. Central to racial prejudice is the dynamic of intergroup relations among racial groups. This entails that such individuals ascribe those against whom they hold prejudices to other racial categories. Consequently, both logically and empirically, a framework of racial identification is essential for the existence of racial prejudice. This process of identification inherently involves the formation of perceptions or conceptualizations about one's own racial group and another racial group, framed within the context of their relational dynamics. Recognizing that individuals construct their identities through affiliation with a racial group necessitates an understanding that such self-identification is fundamentally rooted in lived experiences. Moreover, it is imperative to understand that the self-image a racial group constructs, as well as the image it projects onto others, are similarly shaped by experiential factors. Thus, a comprehensive understanding of racial prejudice must be rooted in examining how racial groups develop and internalize perceptions of themselves and others (Blumer, 1958, p. 3).

Xenophobia, distinct from racism and other biases toward migrants, reflects fear based on the perception of threats posed by foreigners (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). According to Van der Veer et al., the underlying basis of xenophobia lies in an individual's perception of the "other" as untrustworthy and a potential threat to their own group (2013, p. 1430). Crush and Ramachandran (2010) note that migrants are often blamed for societal tensions and chaos, including issues such as unemployment, environmental

degradation, local and international terrorism, and crime (pp. 215–216). The perception of migrants as threats in host societies stems from xenophobic thoughts and attitudes. These perceived threats can be categorized as security-related, economic, political, cultural, or environmental. According to Esses et al., immigrants encounter a fundamental dilemma stemming from the perceived threats linked to their presence. On one hand, immigrants who lack economic success may be regarded as a strain on social services, including welfare and unemployment benefits, and are consequently perceived as undermining national prosperity. Furthermore, immigrants who are not socially well-integrated and who fail to assimilate into the dominant cultural "mainstream" may be seen as posing a threat to the collective identity of the host society. On the other hand, and perhaps less explicitly, immigrants who achieve economic success may also be viewed unfavorably by members of the host society. As a result, regardless of whether immigrants experience economic and social success or failure, they are likely to be perceived negatively by those who strongly identify with the host society (2001, p. 391).

Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, and Xu (2002), in their work *A Model of (Often Mixed) Stereotype Content: Competence and Warmth Respectively Follow from Perceived Status and Competition*, sought to clarify the meaning of xenophobia. They assessed members of socio-cultural out-groups based on their "warmth" (trustworthiness and sincerity in group relations) and "competence" (their perceived ability to carry out intentions toward the in-group). Moisi's research found that in the U.S. and Europe, reactions to migration are often shaped by fears of the "other," as well as concerns about losing national identity and ideals. While Moisi emphasizes the fear dimension of xenophobia, the study lacks a framework for measuring the reactions within in-groups when confronted with such fears (Veer et al., 2011, p. 29).

Xenophobia remains an ambiguous and contentious concept, making it challenging to measure. As Bozdağ and Kocatürk (2017) state, "the ambiguity of xenophobia as a concept complicates its quantification" (p. 619). Despite these difficulties, understanding and analyzing xenophobia is essential to addressing the underlying fears and prejudices that influence societal attitudes toward migrants.

As observed, perceptions of threat related to migrants influence the xenophobic attitudes and behaviors exhibited toward them. Research focusing on the relationship between threat perceptions of migrants and xenophobia appears to be limited. In this context, the present study aims to examine the relationships between university students' attitudes toward xenophobia and various demographic variables. Specifically, the study explores how students' levels of fear toward foreigners are related to different demographic factors.

Method

The study employed a quantitative research method. Data were collected using a survey technique. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Ardahan University under the protocol number 2200037477, dated 04.11.2022. The population of the study consists of students at Ardahan University. Participants were selected using a random sampling technique. During the data collection phase, surveys were administered to 367 out of 5,719 students enrolled at Ardahan University, with a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error. The data were analyzed using the SPSS 25.0 software package.

Xenophobia Scale

The Xenophobia Scale was developed by Van der Veer, Ommundsen, Yakushko, and Higler (2011). As an international phenomenon, the scale focuses on the fear that the "other," namely migrants, may cause personal and societal harm (Van der Veer et al., 2011). The scale consists of 14 items, rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree... 6 = strongly agree). It was adapted into Turkish by Özmete, Yıldırım, and Duru (2018), who conducted validity and reliability studies. During the Turkish adaptation, three items were removed, resulting in an 11-item unidimensional scale. The highest possible score on the scale is 66, while the lowest possible score is 11. A higher score on the scale indicates a higher level of xenophobia. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale is $\alpha = 0.87$. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was also calculated as $\alpha = 0.87$. Additionally, the participation rates of students in the statements of the Xenophobia Scale are presented in Table 7.

Findings

In the results section, the level of xenophobic attitudes among university students was determined in line with the purpose of the study, and the relationship between xenophobia levels and various

demographic variables was analyzed. A total of 367 students participated in the study, and their level of agreement with the statements in the immigrant-related scale is presented in Table 7. Among the students, 79.3% believed that the migrant population was uncontrolled, 84% stated that borders should be made more secure, 84.5% reported an increase in crime rates, and 83.6% indicated that migrants were taking up more employment opportunities. Additionally, there was a high level of student participation in statements related to trust, social expectations, and future concerns.

Table 1. *Descriptive Information about the Participants*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Female	176	48,0
	Male	191	52,0
Age	17 - 20	164	44,7
	21 - 24	171	46,6
	25 - 28	16	4,4
	29 and above	16	4,4
Marital Status	Single	349	95,1
	Married	18	4,9
Education Level	No response	2	,5
	Associate degree	224	61,0
	Undergraduate degree	141	38,4
Presence of Foreign Students in Your Class	No response	1	,3
	Yes	57	15,5
	No	309	84,2

48% of the participants are female, and 52% are male. When examining the marital status of the participants, it is observed that 95.1% are single, and 4.9% are married. Among the participants, 38.4% are enrolled in undergraduate programs, 61% are in associate degree programs, and 0.5% did not respond to this question. Regarding the presence of foreign students in the participants' classes, 15.5% have foreign students in their classes, while 84.2% do not.

Table 2. *Analysis of Xenophobia Levels in Terms of Gender*

	<i>Gender</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>ss</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Xenophobia Scale	Female	176	4,8079	1,23437	1,092	,658
	Male	191	4,6696	1,19076		

No significant difference was found between participants' gender and their levels of xenophobia ($p \geq 0.05$). Here, $p = 0.658$, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between gender groups. As shown in the table, the mean score for women was 4.80, while the mean score for men was 4.66. Based on these results, no significant difference was observed in the Xenophobia Scale concerning gender. This suggests that both genders scored similarly on the scale, reflecting comparable levels of xenophobia.

Table 3. *Analysis of Xenophobia Levels in Terms of Age*

	<i>Age range</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>ss</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
Xenophobia Scale	17 - 20	164	4,6008	1,42788	1,305	,272
	21 - 24	171	4,8283	1,02948		
	25 - 28	16	4,9602	,90786		
	29 and above	16	4,9091	,69234		

There is a statistically significant difference in xenophobia levels among age groups ($p < 0.05$). Here, $p = 0.272$, indicating a statistically significant difference between the age groups. As the averages increase, it is observed that the age groups also rise, with the lowest average found in the 17–20 age group and the highest average in the 29 and above age group.

Table 4. *Analysis of Xenophobia Levels in Terms of Marital Status*

	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>ss</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Xenophobia Scale	Single	349	4,7147	1,22754	-1,476	,141
	Married	18	5,1465	,77525		

($p > 0.05$), with $p = 0.141$.

No significant difference was found between participants' marital status and their xenophobia levels. As shown in the table, the mean score for single participants was 4.71, while for married participants, it

was 5.14. The averages indicate that married individuals scored higher than single individuals. However, the significantly smaller number of married participants ($n = 18$) should not be overlooked. This necessitates caution regarding the generalizability of the findings for this group.

Table 5. *Analysis of Xenophobia Levels in Terms of Education Level*

	<i>Education Level</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>ss</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Xenophobia Scale	Associate Degree	224	4,7995	1,24821	1,197	,232
	Undergraduate Degree	141	4,6433	1,15732		

Here, $p = 0.232$, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between the education level groups. As presented in the table, the mean score for associate degree students is 4.79, whereas the mean score for undergraduate students is 4.64. The analysis of the Xenophobia Scale shows no significant difference between participants' education levels and their levels of xenophobia.

Table 6. *Analysis of Xenophobia Levels in Terms of Presence of Foreign Students in the Class*

	<i>Are there any foreign students in your class?</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>ss</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Xenophobia Scale	Yes	57	4,8182	1,02665	1,092	,658
	No	309	4,7204	1,24617		

Here, $p = 0.577$. Based on these results, there is no statistically significant difference in the Xenophobia Scale based on the presence or absence of foreign students in the classrooms. The presence of foreign students in the classrooms does not appear to affect the students' levels of xenophobia.

Table 7. *Participation Rate in the Statements Included in the Xenophobia Scale*

<i>Statements Included in the Scale</i>	<i>Participant Rate</i>
Immigration in this country is out of control.	%79,3
Borders should be made more secure to prevent immigrants from entering this country.	%84
Immigrants cause increase in crimes.	%84,5
Immigrants take jobs from people who are here already.	%83,6
Interacting with immigrants makes me uneasy.	%64,5
I worry that immigrants may spread unusual diseases.	%72
I am afraid that in case of war or political tension, immigrants will be loyal to their country of origin.	%81,5
I trust immigrants will support my country in times of crisis (R).	%28,1
With increased immigration I fear that our way of life will change for the worse.	%79,8
I doubt that immigrants will put the interest of this country first.	%70,5
I am afraid that our own culture will be lost with increase in immigration.	%76,9

Table 7 highlights students' negative perceptions of migration and immigrants, expressed through various concerns and fears. These highly endorsed statements indicate that security, economic, cultural, and health concerns related to migrants are widely shared among students, reflecting a prevalent trend of anti-immigrant sentiment (xenophobia). Xenophobia is a social and psychological phenomenon, primarily fueled by the perception of foreigners as a threat and the fear that migrants may negatively impact national identity, the economy, and security. In this context, a detailed analysis of the statements and participation rates presented in the table can shed light on the political dimensions of xenophobia and its interaction with societal dynamics.

Perception of Control and Security Concerns

The statement regarding the perception that migration is out of control received 79.3% agreement. This percentage reflects a widespread belief among students that migration flows are inadequately monitored, migration policies are ineffective, and borders are insufficient to handle migration surges. Security concerns surrounding migration and migrants are not limited to border security but are also perceived as factors threatening societal safety. The 84% support for securing borders further indicates that a significant portion of students view migrants as a direct security risk. Such concerns are closely tied to the fear of security, one of the core elements of xenophobia. Moreover, the perception of insufficient control over migration exacerbates this insecurity, potentially deepening and entrenching xenophobic attitudes.

Economic Concerns and Perceptions of Competition in the Job Market

The statement suggesting that migrants take jobs from the host society is supported by 83.6% of participants. This finding reveals that a significant portion of students perceive competition introduced by migrants in the labor market as a source of economic concern and view migrants as a threat to the economic security of the host society. Individuals facing challenges such as unemployment or working in low-wage jobs may perceive migrants as competing entities responsible for these difficulties. The belief that migrants deplete economic resources and jeopardize the economic security of the local population, particularly during periods of economic crisis, further exacerbates xenophobic tendencies. Economic concerns, when combined with a sense of societal insecurity and perceived threats to individual economic interests, provide fertile ground for the emergence of negative attitudes toward migrants. Xenophobic attitudes are also fueled by the perception that migrants exhaust state resources by benefiting from social welfare programs.

Cultural Identity and Integration Fears

Concerns that migration poses a threat to local culture received a 76.9% agreement rate. This figure highlights that a significant portion of students perceives migrants as a threat to cultural identity. Fears of cultural assimilation trigger anxieties that migrants, with their distinct lifestyles and values, may disrupt the existing social fabric. Xenophobia, in a cultural sense, is shaped by an "us" versus "them" dynamic of othering. When migrants' cultural values are seen as conflicting with the cultural norms of the host society, anti-immigrant sentiments gain deeper roots. Concerns over preserving cultural identity are particularly pronounced in societies with a homogeneous cultural structure, where migrants' efforts to maintain their own cultural practices are met with heightened suspicion and the belief that they cannot assimilate. This situation intensifies xenophobic tendencies, fueled by the pressure for cultural assimilation.

Health and Infectious Disease Fears

The fear that migrants might spread unusual diseases was expressed by 72% of participants. Global health crises, such as pandemics, have heightened societal sensitivities about health security and led to the perception of migrants as potential health threats. The belief that migrants place a burden on the national healthcare system and pose risks to public health is one of the key factors reinforcing xenophobic rhetoric. When migrants are perceived not only as economic or cultural threats but also as risks to health security, xenophobic attitudes in society are intertwined with deeper anxieties.

Loyalty and Lack of Trust During Times of Crisis

The fear that migrants will not provide support to the country during times of crisis and will remain loyal to their home countries has been highly supported among the participants (81.5%). The perception that migrants will not remain loyal to the 'we' identity during national crises and may be viewed as a potential internal threat is one of the fundamental aspects of xenophobic thoughts. The belief that migrants will not act in harmony with the local community or prioritize the country's interests during crises leads to doubts about their national allegiance. The fact that only 28.1% of participants believe that migrants will support the country during a crisis highlights the lack of social trust and the widespread nature of xenophobic perspectives.

Lack of Social Integration and Unease

The sense of unease in interactions with migrants was reported at a rate of 64.5%. The reluctance of society to engage with migrants and the tendency to maintain social distance indicates that xenophobic attitudes are not limited to economic or cultural spheres but also have a significant impact on social relationships. The fear that migrants will not integrate into society or will be unable to establish social cohesion leads individuals to feel uneasy in their interactions with migrants. In xenophobia, the tendency to create social distance is closely related to the perception of migrants as 'the other' and the belief that their integration into society is not possible.

The data in the table indicate widespread distrust, concern, and fear towards migrants within society. These perceptions constitute the fundamental elements of the concept of xenophobia. Fears about migrants' access to economic resources, their potential to threaten cultural integrity, and their perceived risks to security contribute to the reinforcement of negative sentiments towards migrants. Such concerns about migrants create a fertile ground for the support of anti-migrant policies in the social and political arenas, and for populist politicians to exploit these fears to gain political advantage.

This table highlights the importance of necessary policies for understanding and addressing xenophobic tendencies in society, as well as for achieving social cohesion.

Conclusion

Migration has historically brought about significant changes in the socio-economic, cultural, and political structures of societies. This impact continues to be relevant in the present day. Migration occurs due to various reasons such as war, conflict, economic hardship, natural disasters, and climate change. Migration is not solely a process of relocation; rather, it is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. With globalization, migration has become a process of social mobility and change on a global scale. Migration is driven by factors such as politics, economics, and violence.

Due to its strategic and geopolitical location, Turkey plays an important role as both a destination and a transit country for migrants. Throughout history, Turkey has been situated in a region that both receives and sends migrants. Particularly since the 2000s, migration to Turkey has increased due to internal conflicts, political instability, and economic inequalities in countries of Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. The mass migration wave from Syria to Turkey that began in 2011 has resulted in millions of Syrians being temporarily protected in Turkey. The large-scale migration movements have directly impacted Turkey.

The phenomenon of migration has been observed to lead to various security and crime concerns in receiving societies. Syrians have become an integral part of daily life and politics in Turkey, and this has resulted in various security and economic anxieties within the society. It is noted that the initial encounters with migrants in our society were framed through the concept of 'hospitality,' but over time, this perception has shifted in a negative direction. Negative judgments and attitudes towards migrants are explained through the concept of xenophobia. Xenophobia refers to the fear and prejudice directed towards foreigners. It can be defined as behavioral, attitudinal, and emotional prejudices against migrants.

According to the research results, there was no significant difference found between the participants' gender and their levels of xenophobia. It was observed that both female and male participants had similar levels of xenophobia. This suggests that gender is not a determining factor in xenophobia levels.

A significant difference was found in xenophobia levels between age groups. Specifically, it was observed that xenophobia levels increase with age. The lowest mean score was found in the 17-20 age group, while the highest mean score was found in the 29 and older age group. This indicates that age is an influential variable on xenophobia.

In terms of marital status, no significant difference was found between the levels of xenophobia among single and married participants. However, it was observed that married individuals had higher levels of xenophobia compared to single individuals. This suggests that married individuals may exhibit more negative attitudes towards immigrants. However, due to the small number of married participants, caution should be exercised when generalizing this result.

No significant difference was found between participants' education levels and their levels of xenophobia. It was observed that the levels of xenophobia were similar among participants. This indicates that education level is not a determining factor in xenophobia.

There was no significant difference between the presence of foreign students in the classrooms and the levels of xenophobia. The levels of xenophobia were found to be similar among participants who were in classrooms with foreign students and those who were not. This suggests that the presence of foreign students in classrooms does not affect the levels of xenophobia among students.

79.3% of the participants stated that the migrant population is uncontrolled, 84% indicated that borders need to be made more secure, 84.5% reported an increase in crime rates, and 83.6% mentioned that migrants are more involved in employment. 64.5% of the participants expressed feeling uneasy about interacting with migrants, 72% were concerned that migrants could spread unusual diseases, and 79.8% agreed with the statement that increasing migration would worsen their lives. There is a high level of participant engagement with statements related to insecurity, social expectations, and future concerns. The proportion of those who believe that an increase in migration would worsen living conditions is 79.8%, while 81.5% agreed with the statement that in times of war or political tension, migrants would remain loyal to their countries of origin. Additionally, 76.9% of participants fear the loss of their own culture due

to increasing migration. As seen, the perception of migration and migrants appears to be surrounded by factors such as fear, insecurity, and concerns about the future.

This study provides significant data on the prevalence of xenophobia among university students. Understanding the socio-psychological factors underlying anti-immigrant sentiment is crucial for the development of policies and integration programs in this area. Reducing xenophobic attitudes and facilitating the integration of migrants require the implementation of education and awareness programs. Additionally, more comprehensive and inclusive approaches must be adopted to support the integration process of migrants and improve the attitudes of the host society toward them.

In conclusion, promoting empathy, tolerance, and inclusivity within society is essential for reducing negative attitudes toward migrants and xenophobia. In this regard, awareness campaigns and educational programs that highlight the contributions and positive impacts of migrants on society should be implemented. Particularly, initiatives such as education, social integration programs, and public information campaigns are crucial for taking measures against xenophobia. Reducing the social distance between migrants and the host society is necessary to address the broader concerns related to security and cultural integration. Increasing research on migration and anti-immigrant sentiment and ensuring that policymakers take steps based on these findings is critical for fostering a more harmonious and inclusive society.

Ethical Declaration

During the writing process of the study “*A Study on Xenophobia and Anti-immigrant Sentiment*” scientific rules, ethical and citation rules were followed. No falsification was made on the collected data and this study was not sent to any other academic publication medium for evaluation. In addition, permission was obtained from the Ardahan Üniversitesi Ethics Committee (Date: 04/11/2022 and Decision no: 2200037477) to conduct the research.

Declaration of Conflict

There is no potential conflict of interest in the study.

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TÜRKÇE GENİŞ ÖZET

Göç, tarih boyunca toplumların sosyo-ekonomik, kültürel ve politik yapılarında önemli değişiklikler yaratmıştır. Günümüzde de bu etki sürmektedir. Göç, insanların savaş, çatışma, ekonomik sıkıntılar, doğal afetler ve iklim değişiklikleri gibi çeşitli nedenlerle yer değiştirmesine yol açmaktadır. Göç, basit bir yer değiştirme olarak değil, çok boyutlu bir olgu olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Küreselleşme ile birlikte göç, dünya genelinde bir sosyal hareketlilik ve değişim süreci haline gelmiştir. Göç, politik, ekonomik ve şiddet gibi çeşitli etkenlerden kaynaklanmaktadır. Türkiye, stratejik ve jeopolitik konumu nedeniyle göçmenler için hem bir hedef hem de transit ülke olarak önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Türkiye, tarih boyunca göç alan ve veren bir coğrafya üzerinde yer almaktadır. Özellikle 2000'li yıllarla birlikte Orta Asya, Ortadoğu ve Afrika ülkelerindeki iç çatışmalar, siyasal istikrarsızlıklar ve ekonomik eşitsizlikler nedeniyle Türkiye'ye göç hareketleri artmıştır. 2011 yılında başlayan Suriye'den Türkiye'ye kitlesel göç dalgası sonucu milyonlarca Suriyeli Türkiye'de geçici koruma altında bulunmaktadır. Yaşanan kitlesel göç hareketleri, Türkiye'yi doğrudan etkilemiştir. Göç olgusunun göç alan toplumlarda çeşitli güvenlik ve suç kaygılarına yol açtığı görülmektedir. Suriyeliler Türkiye'de günlük hayatın ve siyasetin bir parçası haline gelmişlerdir ve bu durumun toplumda çeşitli güvenlik ve ekonomik kaygılara yol açtığını belirtilmektedir. Toplumumuzda göçmenlerle ilk karşılaşmalar "misafirlik" algısı üzerinden yürütüldüğü ancak zamanla bu algının olumsuz yönde değiştiği ifade edilmektedir. Göçmenlere yönelik olumsuz yargılar ve tutumlar zenofobi kavramıyla açıklanmaktadır. Zenofobi, yabancılara karşı duyulan korku ve önyargıyı ifade etmektedir. Zenofobi, göçmenlere yönelik davranışsal, tutumsal ve duygusal önyargılar olarak tanımlanabilir. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, katılımcıların cinsiyetleri ile yabancı düşmanlığı düzeyleri arasında anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmamıştır. Hem kadın hem de erkek katılımcıların yabancı düşmanlığı düzeylerinin benzer olduğu görülmektedir. Bu durum, cinsiyetin zenofobi düzeyleri üzerinde belirleyici bir faktör olmadığını göstermektedir. Yaş grupları arasında yabancı düşmanlığı düzeyleri açısından anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmuştur. Özellikle yaş arttıkça yabancı düşmanlığı düzeylerinin de arttığı gözlenmiştir. En düşük ortalama 17-20 yaş grubunda, en yüksek ortalama ise 29 ve üzeri yaş grubunda bulunmuştur. Bu durum, yaşın zenofobi üzerinde etkili bir değişken olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Medeni durum açısından bakıldığında, bekâr ve evli katılımcılar arasında yabancı düşmanlığı düzeylerinde anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmamıştır. Ancak, evli bireylerin yabancı düşmanlığı düzeylerinin bekâr bireylere göre daha yüksek olduğu gözlenmiştir. Bu durum, evli bireylerin göçmenlere karşı daha olumsuz tutumlar sergileyebileceğini düşündürmektedir. Ancak, evli katılımcı sayısının azlığı nedeniyle bu sonucun genelleştirilebilirliği konusunda dikkatli olunmalıdır. Katılımcıların eğitim düzeyleri ile yabancı düşmanlığı düzeyleri arasında

anlamalı bir farklılık bulunmamıřtır. Katılımcıların yabancı dūřmanlıęı dūzeylerinin benzer olduęu g r lmektedir. Bu sonu, eęitim d zeyinin zenofobi  zerinde belirleyici bir fakt r olmadıęını g stermektedir. Sınıflarında yabancı uyruklu  ęrenci bulunma durumu ile yabancı d řmanlıęı d zeyleri arasında anlamalı bir farklılık bulunmamıřtır. Yabancı uyruklu  ęrencilerle aynı sınıfta olan ve olmayan katılımcıların yabancı d řmanlıęı d zeyleri benzer bulunmuřtur. Bu durum, sınıflarda yabancı uyruklu  ęrenci bulunmasının  ęrencilerin zenofobi d zeylerini etkilemedięini g stermektedir.  ęrencilerin %79,3'  g men n fusunun kontrols z olduęunu, %84'  sınırların daha g venli hale getirilmesi gerektięini, %84,5 su oranlarının arttıęını, %83,6'sı ise g menlerin istihdamda daha fazla yer aldıęını belirtmiřlerdir. Katılımcıların %64,5'i g menlerle etkileřimin kendilerini tedirgin ettięini, %72'si g menlerin olaęandışı hastalıklar yayabileceęinden endiře etiklerini ve %79,8 oranında ise gittike artan g lerle, hayatının k t leřeceęinden korkarım ifadesine katılmıřlardır. G vensizlik, sosyal beklentiler ve gelecek kaygısı gibi ifadelere y nelik  ęrenci katılımı olduka y ksektir. G  n artması durumunun yařam kořullarını k t leřtireceęini belirtenlerin oranı %79,8 iken, savař ya da siyasi gerginlik durumunda g menlerin k k  lkelerine sadık kalacaklarından korkarım ifadesine katılanların oranı %81,5'tir. Katılımcıların %76,9'u artan g le birlikte kendi k lt r m z n kaybolmasından korkmaktadırlar. G r ld ę  gibi g  ve g menlik olgusuna bakıř, korku, g vensizlik, gelecek kaygısı gibi etkenlerle evrenlenmiř g r nmektedir. Bu alıřma,  niversite  ęrencileri arasında zenofobinin yaygınlıęına dair  nemli veriler sunmaktadır. G men karřıtlıęının temelinde yatan sosyo-psikolojik fakt rlerin anlařılması, bu alandaki politikaların ve uyum programlarının geliřtirilmesi iin  nemlidir. Zenofobik tutumların azaltılması ve g menlerin entegrasyonunun saęlanması iin eęitim ve farkındalık programlarına ihtiya duyulmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, g menlerin topluma uyum s relerinin desteklenmesi ve ev sahibi toplumun g menlere y nelik tutumlarının iyileřtirilmesi iin daha kapsamlı ve kapsayıcı yaklařımların benimsenmesi gerekmektedir. Sonu olarak, g menlere y nelik olumsuz tutumların ve zenofobinin azaltılması iin toplumda empati, hořg r  ve kapsayıcılık deęerlerinin teřvik edilmesi b y k  nem tařımaktadır. Bu doęrultuda, g menlerin topluma katkılarını ve olumlu etkilerini vurgulayan farkındalık kampanyaları ve eęitim programları hayata geirilmelidir.  zellikle eęitim, sosyal uyum programları ve kamuya aık bilgilendirme kampanyaları gibi giriřimlerle zenofobiye karřı  nlemler alınması b y k  nem tařır. G menler ve ev sahibi toplum arasındaki sosyal mesafenin azaltılması, toplumun genel g venlik ve k lt rel uyum kaygılarını gidermek iin gereklidir. G  ve g men karřıtlıęı konusundaki arařtırmaların artırılması ve politika yapıcıların bu veriler doęrultusunda adımlar atması, daha uyumlu ve kapsayıcı bir toplum iin kritik  neme sahiptir.