

Prejudice against Homosexuality and Locus of Control

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ÖZET Bu çalışmanın amacı eşcinselliğe ilişkin önyargılı tutumlar ile içsel-dışsal kontrol odağı, cinsiyet farkı ve sosyal temas arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmaktır. Türkiye’deki çeşitli üniversitelerden 198 öğrenci bu çalışmaya katılmıştır. Katılımcıların yaş ortalaması 21.14 (SS = 2.38) değerindedir. Katılımcılar Hudson ve Ricketts’in 25 maddelik Eşcinselliğe İlişkin Tutumlar Ölçeği, İç-dış Kontrol Odağı Ölçeği ve cinsiyet, sosyal temas ve yaşı içeren demografik bilgi formunu doldurmuşlardır. Eşcinselliğe ilişkin önyargılı tutumlar sadece dış kontrol odağının kadere inanç, çabanın anlamsızlığı ve şansa inanç alt faktörleri ile korelasyon göstermiştir. ANOVA sonucuna göre, dış kontrol odağı, cinsiyet farkı ve sosyal temas ana etkileri istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmuştur. Ancak, bu değişkenler arası etkileşim bulunamamıştır. Ayrıca, yapılan regresyon analizi sonucuna göre eşcinselliğe ilişkin önyargıyı kader inanç alt unsuru anlamlı bir şekilde yordamıştır.

ANAHTAR KELİMELELER eşcinsellik, önyargı, iç-dış kontrol odağı, sosyal temas ve cinsiyet farkları

ABSTRACT The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between prejudice against homosexuality, internal-external locus of control, sex differences and social contact. A total of 198 university students from various Turkish universities participated in this study. The mean age of the participants was 21.14 (SD = 2.38). The participants filled Hudson and Ricketts’ 25-item Attitudes toward Homosexuality Scale, Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, and demographic variables including sex differences, social contact and age. The prejudice against homosexuality were only correlated with the sub-factors of external locus of control namely belief in fate, meaninglessness of effortfulness, and belief in chance. The performed ANOVA presented that the main effects of the level of external locus of control, sex differences, and social contact were only statistically significant, but there were no interactions between them. Regression analysis showed that belief in fate was the only significant predictor of the prejudice against homosexuality

KEYWORDS homosexuality, prejudice, internal-external locus of control, social contact, and sex differences

Attitudes toward homosexuality and homosexuals have been such a popular research topic because of its importance in terms of inter group relations, prejudice and discrimination toward minority groups.¹ Parallel to the existing literature on homosexuality abroad, Turkish

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scientists have also started to pay attention to the issues. Researchers in Turkey have demonstrated that men are more prejudiced against homosexuality than women;² the participants with high sexism are more prejudiced against homosexuality than are those with low sexism;³ the participants who have no social contact with homosexuals had more negative attitudes toward homosexuality than those who have social contact;⁴ and religious belief was found to be associated with prejudice against homosexuals.⁵ In addition, testing the Attribution-value model of prejudice,⁶ Sakallı⁷ (2002c) demonstrated that anti-homosexual prejudice was explained by the attributions of controllability and negative cultural value toward homosexuality. The controllability factor seems to be an important one in explaining prejudice against homosexuality as suggested by other researchers in the USA.⁸ The question that remains unanswered is how the perception of controllability of one's own behaviours as internal or external, which is locus of control, is related to prejudice against homosexuality? The purpose of the present study is to explore

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how locus of control accepted as an enduring predisposition of individuals might influence prejudice against homosexuality in Turkey.

Since individual differences influence how people perceive and form attitudes toward other groups⁹ locus of control which is also an enduring individual difference may also influence how people perceive and like/dislike homosexuals. In terms of locus of control, as Rotter¹⁰ (1966) argued people differ regarding the amount of control they feel and have over the reinforcement and punishments they receive. People with internal locus of control feel that reinforcement or an outcome of their behaviour is contingent on their own behaviour or personal characteristics.¹¹ The internal locus of control sub-factor covers the issues of personal responsibility of one's own behaviour. Good outcomes need effort and determination, whereas negative outcomes are results of one's own fault and laziness. However, people with external locus of control feel that the reinforcement is a function of chance, luck or fate, and is under the control of powerful others.¹² The external locus of control includes "belief in chance", "meaninglessness of the effortfulness," "belief in fate," and "belief in an unjust world."¹³ Belief in fate sub-factor includes the issues of religiosity by stating that having religious beliefs help individuals to deal with difficulties in their lives.

When the literature on locus of control is examined, findings from different studies show that positive issues like health preventive behaviours¹⁴ are related with the internality of locus of control, whereas external locus of control is associated with psychological symptomatology,¹⁵ and greater belief in paranormal phenomena including traditional

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religious and superstitious beliefs.¹⁶ The relationship between external locus of control and paranormal issues covering traditional religious beliefs might lead one to argue that external locus of control may be related with attitudes toward homosexuality. The items measuring external locus of control, especially belief in fate sub-factor covers the issues of religion stating that religious beliefs function as a necessary way to deal with difficulties in life, and fate determines one's life. Consequently, it is possible to argue that people with external locus of control who believe that the outcomes of their own behaviours mostly depend on fate are more likely to be prejudiced against homosexuals, since religiosity,¹⁷ and the connected ideologies to religiosity such as authoritarianism,¹⁸ sexism,¹⁹ sexual conservatism,²⁰ and conservatism²¹ are associated with negative attitudes toward homosexuality.

The current study aims to explore how the sub-factors of locus of control are associated with people's prejudice attitudes toward homosexuality. In addition, in tune with the earlier studies conducted in Turkey,²² sex differences and social contact variables are also included

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in the present study to examine whether sex differences and social contact interact with the locus of control.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 198 Turkish university students (98 females) participated in this study. Participants' age range was from 17 to 34 with a mean of 21.14 ($SD = 2.38$). The mean age of female participants was 20.52 ($SD = 1.80$) and of male participants was 21.74 ($SD = 2.70$).

All participants indicated that they were heterosexuals. Most of the students were from urban backgrounds and from middle- to upper-income families (20.7 % slightly below middle class, 41.4 % middle-class, 30.8 % slightly above middle-class, and 7.1 % upper-class).

MEASURES

Attitudes toward Homosexuality Scale: A 25-item scale developed by Hudson and Ricketts²³ (1980) measuring attitudes toward homosexual persons was used in the study. The scale was translated from English into Turkish by Sakallı and Uğurlu²⁴ (2001) and used in several studies of Sakallı.²⁵ One item about walking comfortably through gay section of town was excluded from the scale, because there was no a predominantly gay section of the city of Ankara. Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale for the present study was found as .94. The participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement

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with each item using a 6-point scale, 1 being “Strongly disagree” and 6 being “Strongly agree”. Higher scores on the scale indicate having higher prejudicial attitudes toward homosexuality.

Locus of Control Scale: A 47 item scale of Locus of Control²⁶ was used in the study. Dağ²⁷ (1991) adapted Rotter’s Internal-External Locus of Control Scale into Turkish. Later, Dağ developed a newer Turkish version of Locus of control scale with Likert type response format. The scale has 5 factors as “personal control (internal locus of control; $\alpha = .87$),” “belief in chance ($\alpha = .79$),” “meaninglessness of the effortfulness ($\alpha = .76$),” “belief in fate ($\alpha = .74$),” and “belief in an unjust world ($\alpha = .61$).” By using the present data set, the

Cronbach’s Alphas for the sub-factors of locus of control were .84, .78, .69, .72, and .61 respectively.

Demographic Information Form. Participants were asked to indicate their sex, age, their sexual preferences (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual), and whether they have a homosexual friend (yes or no). The number of subjects who had a homosexual friend was 81, while the number of subjects who did not have any homosexual friends was 117.

PROCEDURE

Students from various universities from Turkey, predominantly from Ankara, participated in the study. They completed an online questionnaire. Participants were ensured that their responses were confidential. After completing the questionnaire, participants were provided with a debriefing about the aims of the study.

RESULTS

THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIABLES

In order to explore the relationship between the variables, a correlation analysis was performed. As seen in Table 1, the results showed that prejudice against homosexuality

26. I. Dağ, “Kontrol Odağı Ölçeği (KOÖ): Ölçek geliştirme, güvenirlik ve geçerlik çalışması (Locus of Control Scale: Scale development, reliability and validity study).”

27. I. Dağ, “Rotter’in İç-Dış Kontrol Odağı Ölçeği’nin Üniversite Öğrencileri İçin Güvenirliği ve Geçerliliği (Validity and Reliability of Rotter’s Internal-External Locus of Control Scale with Turkish University Students).” *Psikoloji Dergisi (Turkish Journal of Psychology)*, 7 (1991), pp.10-16

TABLE 1—Correlations between the Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sex differences (1)	--							
Social Contact (2)	.06	--						
Personal control (3)	-.00	.09	--					
Belief in chance (4)	.05	.09	.38**	--				
Meaninglessness (5)	-.03	.12	.47**	.54**	--			
Belief in Fate (6)	.03	.34**	.15*	.34**	.38**	--		
Belief in an Unjust world (7)	-.14*	.00	.17*	.37**	.48**	.15*	--	
Prejudice (8)	-.25**	.40**	.07	.19*	.20**	.50**	.02	--

** P < .01, * p < .05

Note . Meaninglessness = Meaninglessness of the Effortfulness, Prejudice= Prejudice against homosexuality; Scales ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Higher scores on Locus of Control Sub-factors indicate high internal vs external locus of control; Higher scores on Prejudice against Homosexuality indicate more prejudice. Coding for Sex differences 1 = Males, 2 = Females; Coding for Social Contact 1 = Participants who have a homosexual friend, 2= Participants who does not have any homosexual friends.

was significantly correlated with social contact ($r = .40$), belief in fate ($r = .50$), sex differences ($r = -.25$), meaninglessness of the effortfulness ($r = .20$), and belief in chance ($r = .19$).

THE EFFECTS OF LOCUS OF CONTROL, SEX DIFFERENCES, AND SOCIAL CONTACT ON THE PREJUDICE AGAINST HOMOSEXUALITY

Since “prejudice against homosexuality” was only significantly correlated with “belief in fate”, “meaninglessness of effortfulness”, and “belief in chance”, the sub-factors of “external locus of control” were combined and a new variable called “external locus of control” was created. By using median split (Median = 3.2083), external locus of control was categorized into two groups as scoring low or high . Later a 2 (sex differences: male vs female) X 2 (social contact: present vs absent) X 2 (the level of external locus of control: low vs high) ANOVA was performed on the dependent variable, prejudice against homosexuality. The results showed that there were no significant three-way or

two-way interactions. However, the main effects of the external locus of control, sex differences, and social contact were statistically significant.

First of all, the participants who were high on external locus of control ($M = 4.41$, $SD = .99$) were more prejudiced against homosexuality than were those who were low on the external locus of control ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.14$; $F(1, 179) = 10.86$, $\eta^2 = .06$, $p < .01$). Second of all, male participants ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.04$) were more prejudiced against homosexuality than the female participants were ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.07$; $F(1, 179) = 16.46$, $\eta^2 = .08$, $p < .01$). Finally, the participants who did not have any homosexual friends ($M = 4.55$, $SD = .97$) had more negative attitudes toward homosexuality than did those who had a homosexual friend ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.04$; $F(1, 179) = 42.27$, $\eta^2 = .19$, $p < .01$).

Additionally, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed to explore whether belief in fate sub-factor explains the prejudice against homosexuality more than belief in chance and meaninglessness of effortfulness does, in order to provide support for the argument made in the introduction section, suggesting that external locus of control can be related with attitudes toward homosexuality since the items measuring external locus of control, especially belief in fate sub-factor covers the issue of religion. The regression analysis showed that the belief in chance ($\beta = .03$, $t = .39$, ns), meaninglessness of effortfulness ($\beta = .02$, $t = .23$, ns), and belief in fate ($\beta = .47$, $t = 6.64$, $p < .05$) were significantly predicted the prejudice against homosexuality ($R^2 = .23$, $F(3, 179) = 18.63$, $p < .01$). As seen, the analysis showed that the only significant predictor was belief in fate, but not the others.

DISCUSSION

The present study explored how the sub-factors of locus of control, which is accepted as an individual characteristic, influence people's negative attitudes toward homosexuality. Sex differences and social contact variables were also included in the present study to examine whether sex differences and social contact show any interactions with the locus of control. First, a correlation analysis was performed. Then, depending on the correlation results, the three significant sub-factors of external locus of control were combined and a new variable called external locus of control was created, and an ANOVA was run. The results showed that there were no three-ways or two-ways interactions between sex differences, social contact and the level of external locus of control. The main effects of the level of external locus of control sex differences, and social contact on the prejudice against homosexuality were only statistically significant.

The correlation analysis demonstrated that the prejudice against homosexuality was correlated with belief in fate, meaninglessness of effortfulness, and belief in chance. Internal locus of control and belief in an unjust world were not correlated with the prejudice against homosexuality. In addition, the level of external locus of control main effect suggested that the participants high on external locus of control were more prejudiced against homosexuality than were those low on external locus of control. However, examination of the correlation between the sub-factors of locus of control and the prejudice against homosexuality showed that the strongest correlation was between the prejudice against homosexuality and belief in fate. Further, regression analysis also demonstrated that belief in fate was the only significant predictor of the prejudice against homosexuality. Thus, people who think that fate determine one's life and who think that religious beliefs are necessary to deal with difficulties in life are more prejudiced against homosexuality. The regression analysis supported the argument that the religious connotation of the beliefs in fate sub-factor become a more important issue in explaining the prejudiced attitudes toward homosexuality, consistent with the earlier studies on the association between conservative,²⁸ religious,²⁹ sexist³⁰ ideologies and the prejudice against homosexuality. In short, the results showed that only belief in fate is associated with the prejudice against homosexuality because of its inclusion of religiosity. Other sub-factors of locus of control were not associated with the prejudice.

In terms of sex differences, ANOVA results demonstrated that men are more prejudiced against homosexuality than are women. This particular result was consistent with the earlier studies in abroad,³¹ and in Turkey.³² When the prejudice literature is examined,

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many research show that males were more likely to present explicit negative attitudes toward issues such as racism³³ and sexism,³⁴ which are also relevant to prejudice against homosexuality.³⁵

Finally, consistent with the earlier results in abroad,³⁶ and in Turkey,³⁷ the participants who did not have any homosexual friends were more prejudiced against homosexuality than were who have a homosexual friend. As argued in the existing literature,³⁸ having a homosexual friend might lead people to perceive similarity between heterosexuals and homosexuals. In addition, the positive attitudes of the participants who have a homosexual friend might result from their deviancy from the accepted social norms about appropriate sexual behaviours. If the participants have any social contact with homosexual individuals, then it is easier for them to indicate their positive attitudes toward homosexuality.

In summary, the present study showed that the high external locus of control including belief in fate, meaninglessness of effortfulness, and belief in chance is associated with prejudice against homosexuality, but only belief in fate which is relevant to religiosity significantly predicted the prejudice. In addition, social contact and sex differences are found to be important correlates of the prejudice. Future studies should focus on the issue at hand by considering the relationship between external locus of control and religiosity or religious orientation. It seems that the fate and religiosity items in the external locus of control scale determine the degree of prejudice against homosexuality. In addition, it is necessary to gather more information about how non-college students perceive the issues of homosexuality and how other personality characteristics impact the attitudes toward homosexuality.

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