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THE EFFECTS OF MULTICULTURALISM, INTERCULTURAL INTERACTIONS, TOLERANCE, AND PERCEIVED THREAT ON PUBLIC ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS TOWARDS REFUGEES

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ABSTRACT

In the last century, significant migrations have occurred to neighbouring countries due to internal conflicts and upheavals in regions such as Africa, as well as in countries like Syria and Iraq, which have experienced civil wars or similar turmoil. The challenges that arise from these migrations, exacerbated by globalization, profoundly alter the political, social, economic, and cultural structures of the host regions, significantly impacting their stability and security. In recent years, Turkey has witnessed an unprecedented increase in the number of refugees due to the Syrian Civil War. According to official records, the number of refugees in Turkey has approached four million. As a result, refugees are in constant interaction with the local population across various environments. However, this interaction can sometimes lead to problematic areas and conflicts, driven by the negative attitudes and behaviors exhibited by both sides. Therefore, identifying the factors contributing to negative public attitudes and behaviors toward refugees is crucial for preventing such conflicts. This study explores the attitudes and behaviors of the local population towards Syrian refugees through a proposed structural model. The hypotheses and model fit were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The original contribution of this study lies in the inclusion of the positive behavior variable as an intrinsic component of the theoretical model and in its multidimensional analysis of prosocial behaviors toward refugees. The findings indicate that higher levels of cultural acceptance and tolerance significantly enhance positive helping behaviors toward refugees.

1. INTRODUCTION

As of October 2022, Turkey is hosting a significant number of Syrian refugees due to the ongoing Syrian Civil War. According to official data from the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) in Turkey, the number of registered Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey was around 3.6 million (General Directorate of Migration Management (2022). Foreigners under temporary protection of Syrian nationality; https://www.goc.gov.tr ,date of Access: October 20, 2022).

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As official records indicate, the number of refugees in Turkey is approaching four million. Consequently, refugees and the local population interact frequently in various environments, such as workplaces, public spaces, and as neighbors. These interactions, however, can occasionally lead to tensions and conflicts due to the negative attitudes and behaviors exhibited by both groups. Numerous studies have been conducted in Turkey to explore these attitudes and behaviors towards Syrian refugees. A summary of these studies is provided below. Erdoğan (2015) stated that the rate of those who fully agree with the proposition that "Syrian asylum seekers are involved in crimes such as violence, theft, smuggling and prostitution in their places of residence disrupt social morality and peace" is 41.8%, and the rate of those who agree with the proposition "Taking care of so many asylum seekers harms Turkey's economy" is 29.1%. These results can be evaluated as the increase in the perceived threat between groups every year may cause an increase in negative attitudes towards Syrian refugees and these negative attitudes may be reflected in negative behaviors.

Baban, İlcan, & Rygiel (2017) argued that Syrians expect to acquire full citizenship in a country other than Turkey and hope to be recognized as refugees. Many prefer undertaking dangerous journeys to Europe in pursuit of these aspirations. Similarly, Gülyaşar (2017) explored the reactions of Syrians and Turks regarding the issue of Syrian citizenship, a topic that has recently become a significant subject of discussion. The results revealed that Syrians are eager to obtain Turkish citizenship, as they believe that naturalization would grant them equal rights and a greater sense of security. In contrast, the public expressed concerns, believing that naturalization would exacerbate the problems they associate with Syrians.

Yitmen & Verkuyten (2018) examined the behavioral intentions of Turkish citizens toward Syrian refugees, considering factors such as national identity, threat perception, and humanitarian concerns. The study, which involved a questionnaire administered to 605 Turkish participants, found significant relationships between national identity and negative behavioral intentions. Moreover, threat perception was identified as a key factor influencing these negative intentions.

Çimen & Quadir (2018) investigated university students' attitudes toward Syrian refugees. Their research indicated that university students largely aligned with negative perceptions of Syrian refugees. The authors noted that individuals who had initially supported Syrians both financially and emotionally were now expressing negative attitudes due to the numerous adverse experiences they encountered. Furthermore, the study highlighted that students' more

radical and negative views were linked to the prolonged and uncertain duration of Syrians' stay in Turkey. They also viewed refugees as contributing to economic and security challenges within the country.

Aydın et al. (2019) investigated the attitudes of teacher candidates to Syrian refugee children who migrated to Turkey after the outbreak of war in Syria. In the research, it was stated that the integration of refugee children into the national education system is very important. The authors argue that the education and training system is not sufficient for refugees to engage in integration and multiculturalism. In order to support the integration of multicultural societies, it was evaluated that it is very important to implement policy measures that support the improvement of public attitudes towards refugees.

Diker & Karan (2021) aimed to analyze the social exclusion mechanisms that Syrian refugees face in Turkey and the "tactics" they develop against them. Within the scope of the study, a qualitative research method was used to reveal the subjective perceptions of Syrians about the social exclusion mechanisms in a natural environment with a realistic and holistic perspective. In this context, face-to-face meetings were held with a total of thirteen Syrians in Altındağ district of Ankara, where Syrians live intensively. As a result of the study, it was determined that Syrian refugees have problems in terms of access to economic, spatial, cultural and social services and that each of these problems is closely related to each other, and that refugees have developed resistance practices or tactics against social exclusion mechanisms.

Research in the literature has revealed significant differences in attitudes towards immigrants, particularly in the context of multiculturalism acceptance. According to Coenders, Lubbers, and Scheepers (2003), half of the Estonian population and 36% of Cypriots express resistance to a multicultural society. Migration can cause discontent among the population as well as concerns that economic, social, political and security problems may occur. To ensure the integration of migrants and to try to create a successful migration policy, it is important to identify the factors that influence society's attitudes and behaviors towards migrants. Research in literature mainly focuses on society's view of multicultural ideology, intercultural contact and how perceived threat can affect attitudes towards refugees. In this study, based on the contact and multiculturalism hypothesis, the effects on public attitudes and behaviors towards refugees mediated by tolerance and perceived threat were investigated with the help of a model. The research model was designed based on Ward & Masgoret's (2006, 2008) model of attitudes towards immigrants.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Model and Hypotheses

Ward & Masgoret's research sample in the 2006 study consisted of 500 New Zealand households, and in the 2008 study, the 2020 New Zealand household was the same. Ward & Masgoret named the model they developed "The social psychological model for immigrants". In this study, in the proposed research model, the model was expanded by adding behavior and tolerance factors to the factors used by Ward & Masgoret (2006) in their study.

In the proposed research model, $A^{(+)}$: Multicultural ideology and $B^{(+)}$: Intercultural relationship as external latent variables, $C^{(+)}$: Intergroup tolerance and $D^{(-)}$: Perceived intergroup threat mediating latent variables, $E^{(-)}$: Negative attitude towards refugees and $F^{(+)}$: Positive behavior towards refugees has also been identified as an intrinsic latent variable. All of the substances used to measure the hidden variables D and E have negative meanings. Therefore, these factors are shown as the upper indices of the letters (-) and expressed as $D^{(-)}$ and $E^{(-)}$.

Stephan et al. (1998) identified four primary threats that contribute to negative attitudes toward immigrants: (a) realistic threats, (b) symbolic threats, (c) negative stereotypes, and (d) intergroup anxiety. Realistic threats refer to tangible concerns, such as competition for limited resources, including economic assets and job opportunities. Symbolic threats, on the other hand, are linked to differences in norms, beliefs, and values, which may challenge the existing worldview of the host society. Furthermore, the authors suggest that refugees experience a sense of threat due to intercultural interactions, driven by fears of rejection, ridicule, or exploitation by members of the dominant group (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). It has been hypothesized that societies with greater acceptance of multiculturalism may reduce perceived intergroup threats, thereby decreasing negative attitudes toward immigrants (Ward & Masgoret, 2006, 2008).

H1: As multicultural ideology develops, the perceived intergroup threat decreases (A→D).

H6: As the perceived intergroup threat decreases, the negative attitude towards refugees decreases (D→E).

Berry (2006) defines multicultural ideology as "the general and fundamental view that cultural diversity is good for a society and its individual members, and that diversity should be shared and accommodated equally." The multiculturalism hypothesis means that "cultural and economic security leads to intergroup sharing, mutual respect, and a reduction of prejudiced

attitudes." The author states that multicultural ideology and a sense of economic and cultural security lead to greater acceptance of immigrants, with more intercultural relationships (B) being suggested to increase tolerance (C) between groups, which may reduce less threat and therefore negative attitudes towards immigrants (E).

H2: As the level of intercultural relationship increases, the level of tolerance between groups increases (B→C).

H4: As the level of tolerance between groups increases, the negative attitude towards refugees decreases (C→E).

Pettigrew & Tropp (2000) concluded, based on their meta-analysis of over 200 studies, that intergroup contact has positive effects in reducing bias, particularly in contexts such as workplaces and neighborhoods, supporting the friendship and contact hypothesis. Voci and Hewstone (2003) further emphasized that intergroup anxiety serves as a mediating factor in how contact influences Italians' attitudes towards immigrants. The most different difference of the proposed model in this study in the literature is that it includes hypotheses that intergroup tolerance (C) and perceived intergroup threat (D) affect negative attitudes towards multiparticipant and helping behavior (F). It was assumed that the level of tolerance between the groups in society would increase and the perceived intergroup threat would decrease, the helping behavior towards migrants would increase, and these relations were added to the model.

H3: As the level of tolerance between groups increases, the perceived intergroup threat decreases (C→D).

H5: As the level of tolerance between groups increases, positive behavior towards refugees increases (C→F).

H7: As the perceived intergroup threat decreases, positive behavior towards refugees increases (D→F).

In addition, it was evaluated that the decrease in negative attitudes towards refugees in society may also be reflected in the behaviors of individuals. In particular, H8 has been proposed assuming that these behaviors may be in the form of money, food and clothing assistance to refugees.

H8: As the negative attitude towards refugees decreases, the positive attitude towards refugees increases and decreases (E→F).

2.2. Data Compilation Tool and Sample

The multicultural ideology factor has been considered a measure of attitudes towards diversity. The items in this three-item factor were inspired by the work of Ward & Masgoret (2006, 2008) and Berry, (2006). Each item was evaluated using a 5-point scale, with responses ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Higher scores reflect a stronger endorsement of a society that supports cultural diversity.

The intercultural relationship was tried to be measured by two items created by using the studies of Ward & Masgoret (2006) and Ipsos Mori (2012). Measurement of substances is similar to the multicultural ideology factor. In the study of Ward & Masgoret (2006), the negative factor called anxiety is called intergroup tolerance in this study and tried to be measured with two items in the positive sense. High scores mean that participants have a higher tolerance for Syrian refugees.

To evaluate the feelings of threat and competition related to refugees, the perceived intergroup threat factor was included in the research model and tried to be measured with three items. These items are measured by Disagree (1) and Disagree (5); D27. Refugees adversely affect the economic structure in society, D28. I think immigration increases crime, and D29. The opportunities provided to the refugees are more than the opportunities provided to the citizens of the country. Higher scores indicate a higher perceived threat to Syrian refugees.

The so-called negative attitude towards refugees is the E30. The number of refugees entering the country should be limited, E31. Illegal refugees must be deported and E32. It was tried to be measured with three negative points that the citizenship rights given to refugees should be restricted. The 5-point Likert measurement, which is used to measure other factors, was used within this factor and high scores indicate negative attitudes towards Syrian refugees.

Ward & Masgoret's (2006) model include attitude towards refugees as the outermost internal latent variable. In this study, as a new approach, the factor of positive behavior towards refugees was discussed and added to the model. These new relationships were added to the model and hypotheses were designed to investigate the effect of intergroup tolerance, perceived intergroup threat and negative attitude towards refugees on positive behavior towards refugees, which are

considered to bring originality to the study. F13. I donate money to refugees. The behavior factor, measured as Never (1) and Always (5) and generated by the researcher, F13. I provide financial assistance to refugees, E14. I donate clothes to refugees, and I donate to E15. Food aid to refugees consists of three items. High scores for the behavioral factor, which consists of positive statements, show that positive behaviors towards refugees are also high.

The survey was shared on social media platforms via a link (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1kXUyNjlnlSoS7eJv2dIIC3Ib7Sj1-450N3MFNhtosgA/edit) in June 2021. 367 volunteers participated in the survey. The participants were mainly from Eskişehir (number of Syrian migrants living in the province 6,525; 0.6% 0% in the provincial population), Ankara (101,167; 1.74%), Bursa (179,791; 5.90%), Istanbul (525,241; 3.5%) and Sakarya (15,569; 1.48%). The method of determining the minimum sample size in PLS-SEM is the "10-fold rule" method (Hair et al., 2011). This rule assumes that the number of parameters to be predicted in the model must be greater than 10 times. Since the number of parameters to be estimated in the model in this study is 23, it is recommended that the sample volume be greater than 230 according to the rule. A power analysis was conducted to determine the appropriate sample size. With a desired statistical power of 0.80, six latent variables, and sixteen observed variables (items), the minimum required sample size for a significance level of 0.05 was calculated to be 256. These findings indicate that the sample size used in the study is adequate. 67% of the participants in the study were female, 62% were married and the average age group was 40-50 and 38% of the participants were 40-50 years old. In addition, 52% of the participants stated that the relatives of their homes were also living by Syrian refugees. It was predominantly seen that the participants were university graduates (48%).

3. FINDINGS

In this study, the SmartPLS 3.0 software was utilized to analyze the data using the PLS-SEM method. First, the adequacy of the measurement model was assessed, followed by the evaluation of the structural model's fit and the hypothesis testing results.

3.1. Validity of the Measurement Model

Before analyzing the structural model, validity and reliability assessments were conducted for the factors in the measurement model. As part of these evaluations, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were examined. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using CA and CR. To assess convergent validity, AVE values and factor

loadings were considered. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the criteria proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and the HTMT criterion suggested by Henseler et al. (2015).

For the assessment, factor loadings should be ≥0.708, CA and CR should be ≥0.70, and the AVE should be ≥0.50 (Hair et al., 2014; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 1 provides the results of internal consistency reliability and convergent validity for the factors examined in the study.

Table 1.
Construct Reliability and Validity

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha (CA)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
A	0.884	0.928	0.812
B	0.711	0.874	0.776
C	0.715	0.874	0.776
D	0.764	0.863	0.678
E	0.745	0.855	0.662
F	0.842	0.904	0.757

Based on the model, it can be concluded that convergent validity is achieved, as the factor loadings range from 0.796 to 0.920 and the AVE values range from 0.662 to 0.812. Furthermore, CA range from 0.711 to 0.884, and the CR range from 0.874 to 0.928, indicating that internal consistency reliability has been established.

Discriminant validity is assessed according to Fornell and Larcker (1981) and the HTMT criterion. Tables 2 and 3 present the results of the analysis based on this criterion. When analyzed from these tables, it is understood that discriminant validity is achieved.

Table 2.
Fornell and Larckell Criteria for Discriminant Validity (Fornell & Larcker ,1981)

	A	B	C	D	E	F
A	(0.901)					
B	0.510	(0.881)				
C	0.495	0.688	(0.884)			
D	-0.585	-0.506	-0.443	(0.824)		
E	-0.573	-0.372	-0.342	0.626	(0.814)	
F	0.374	0.456	0.401	-0.415	-0.359	(0.870)

In the literature, Harman's single factor criterion is generally used to determine the effects of Common Method Bias (CMB) (Podsakoff et al, 2003). In this study, CMB Harman's single factor criterion was used. The results showed that the fifth factor explained 17% of the variance. Our findings suggest that there was no CMB threat in this study.

Table 3.
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio HTMT Criterion for Discriminant Validity

	A	B	C	D	E
A					
B	0.645				
C	0.619	0.863			
D	0.703	0.679	0.588		
E	0.706	0.509	0.451	0.827	
F	0.419	0.588	0.514	0.504	0.434

3.2. Evaluation of the Structural Model

The PLS algorithm was employed to calculate R^2 and effect size (f^2) for the structural model, while Blindfolding analysis was conducted to assess the prediction power (Q^2). Examination of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values revealed no issues with multicollinearity, as the outer VIF values ranged from 1.436 to 3.279 and the inner VIF values ranged from 1.00 to 1.823, all of which were below the recommended threshold of 5. Upon reviewing the R^2 values derived from the model, it was observed that the values for constructs C, D, E, and F were 47%, 37%, 40%, and 24%, respectively.

According to Cohen (1988), an effect size coefficient (f^2) of 0.02 or above is considered small, 0.15 or above is considered medium, and 0.35 or above is considered large. Sarstedt et al. (2017) state that when the coefficient is below 0.02, no significant effect can be identified. Upon examining the effect size coefficients (f^2), the following values were obtained: B→C = 0.899; A→D = 0.283; C→D = 0.050; C→E = 0.009; C→F = 0.071; D→E = 0.465; D→F = 0.033; E→F = 0.015.

The calculated prediction power coefficients (Q^2) for the endogenous variables being greater than zero indicates that the structural model has predictive power for these variables (Hair et al., 2014). Specifically, the Q^2 values for the structural model are as follows: C = 0.362, D = 0.244, E = 0.254, and F = 0. These results suggest that the model has sufficient predictive power for the factors under investigation.

Another value used to evaluate model fit is the Goodness of Fit (GoF) index. Since there is no universally accepted fit index in PLS-SEM, the GoF index, proposed by Tenenhaus et al. (2005), serves as a measure of model adequacy. The GoF index was developed to assess the performance of both the measurement model and the structural model, providing a standardized metric for the overall predictive performance of the model. The GoF index is calculated by taking the square root of the product of the averages of the AVE and R^2 values for the constructs. The GoF index ranges from 0 to 1. The compliance thresholds for the GoF index are as follows: GoF < 0.10 indicates "low" fit, 0.10 < GoF < 0.25 indicates "medium" fit, 0.25 < GoF < 0.36 indicates "good" fit, and GoF > 0.36 indicates "very good" fit (Wetzels et al., 2009).For the model in the study, it was calculated as $GoF = \sqrt{\bar{R}^2 \,.\, \overline{AVE}}$=0.52. Since the GoF value is greater than the limit value of 0.36, it can be said that the model has a "very good" fit.

For the model to demonstrate acceptable fit, the SRMR value should be less than 0.10. The SRMR value for the model in this study was calculated to be 0.072, which indicates a good fit. Additionally, NFI value, which approaches 1 when the model fits well, was calculated as 0.717 for this model.

3.3. Hypotheses test

To assess the significance of the PLS-SEM path coefficients, t-values were computed by performing resampling through 5,000 subsamples (Bootstrapping). The results of the analysis are presented in Figure 1 and Tables 4 and 5. Upon reviewing Table 5, it is observed that all hypotheses, except for H4 (C → E), are supported.

Multicultural ideology consists of expressions in the positive sense (A^+) and Perceived intergroup threat (D^-) consists of expressions in the negative sense. The relationship between the two factors was calculated as A→D: -0.485. According to this result, as multicultural ideology increases by one unit, the perceived intergroup threat will decrease by 0.485 units.

Intercultural relationship (B^+) and intergroup tolerance (C^+) consist of positive expressions. The relationship between B and C is calculated as B→C: 0.688. From this finding, it can be said that an increase of one unit in the intercultural relationship will increase the tolerance between groups by 0.688 units.

The relationship between intergroup tolerance (C^+) and perceived intergroup threat (D^-) was calculated as C→D: -0.203. This coefficient, which is determined as negative and meaningful, means that as the level of tolerance between groups in society increases, the perceived intergroup threat will decrease. The coefficient between the perceived intergroup threat (D^-) and the negative attitude towards refugees (E^-) was calculated as D→E: 0.590. This result means that as the perceived intergroup threat increases by one unit, the negative attitude towards refugees will increase by 0.590 units, or the negative attitude towards refugees will decrease by 0.590 units as the perceived intergroup threat decreases by one unit.

The coefficient between the perceived intergroup threat (D^-) and positive behavior towards refugees (F^+) was calculated as D→F: -0.214. Negatively and significantly, this coefficient means that positive behaviors towards refugees will also decrease as the perceived intergroup threat decreases, or positive behaviors towards refugees will decrease as the perceived intergroup threat increases. The coefficient between tolerance (C^+) and positive behavior

Table 4.
Expressions, Factors loadings and R^2 values of the Proposed Model

Factors	Substances	Factor Loadings	t-value
A:	"A18. Syrian refugees can continue their culture in Turkey (Ward Ward	0.864**	30.282
CR=0.928	& Masgoret , 2008)		
AVE=0.812	A19. The cultural diversity provided by Syrian refugees is a wealth for the country (Ward Ward & Masgoret , 2008).	0.920**	48.880
	A20. Refugees enrich the culture of society (Ward Ward & Masgoret , 2006)	0.917**	50.162
B:	B21. Refugees can be contacted in social life (Ward Ward & Masgoret ,	0.873**	48.756
CR=0.874	2006).		
AVE=0.776	B23. It doesn't bother me to have a refugee neighbor (Ipsos Mori, 2012).	0.883**	30.358
C:	C24. Although there are some difficulties, I tolerate refugees (Ward	0.853**	30.358
CR=0.874	Ward & Masgoret , 2006).		
AVE=0.776	C25. Refugees should also have rights and be respected	0.908**	85.130
D:	D27. Refugees negatively affect the economic structure of society	0.816**	26.322
CR=0.863	(Ward Ward & Masgoret , 2008).		
AVE=0.678	D28. I think immigration increases crime.	0.848**	39.925
	D29. The opportunities provided to refugees are more than the opportunities provided to the citizens of the country (Ward Ward & Masgoret , 2008).	0.806**	29.108
E:	E30. The number of refugees entering the country should be limited	0.833**	27.080
CR=0.855	(Ward Ward & Masgoret , 2006).		
AVE=0.662	E31. Illegal refugees should be deported.	0.796**	20.027
	E32. Citizenship rights granted to refugees should be restricted.	0.812**	24.653
F:	F13. I donate money to refugees.	0.842**	30.185
CR=0.904	E14. I donate clothes to refugees.	0.883**	42.081
AVE=0.757	E15. I provide food aid to refugees".	0.885**	41.231

**p< 0.01

Table 5.
Standardized Parameter Estimates and Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypotheses	Relationship Coefficients	t-Statistics	P- Values	Decision
H1: A→ D	-0.485	-8.586	P<0.01	Supported
H2: B →C	0.688	17.347	P<0.01	Supported
H3: C→ D	-0.203	-3.611	P<0.01	Supported
H4: C→ E	-0.080	-1.401	0.162	Not supported
H5: F → C	0.260	3.928	P<0.01	Supported
H6: D→ E	0.590	11.418	P<0.01	Supported
H7: D→ F	-0.214	2.549	P<0.05	Supported
H8: E →F	-0.136	-1,749	0.068*	Supported

*p<0.10

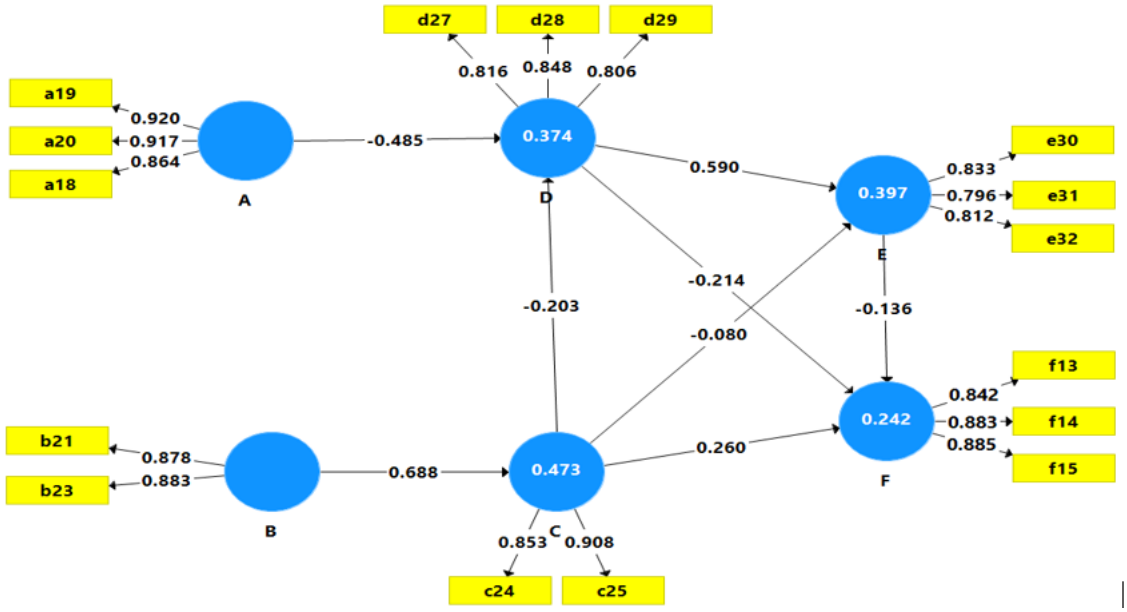

Figure 1. PLS-SEM result

A(+): Multicultural ideology; B(+): Intercultural relationship; C(+): Intergroup tolerance;
D(-): Perceived intergroup threat; E(-): Negative attitude towards refugees, F(+): Behavior

towards refugees (F^+) was calculated as C→F: 0.260. This value means that as intergroup tolerance (C^+) increases, positive attitudes towards refugees will increase. The coefficient between negative attitude towards refugees (E^-) and positive attitude towards refugees (F^+) was found to be negative and significant E→F: - 0.136. This result is that as the negative attitude towards refugees increases, positive attitudes towards refugees will decrease. If this finding is to ensure that society exhibits positive attitudes towards refugees, it is necessary to develop positive attitudes towards refugees.

4. DISCUSSION

Given that the number of refugees in Turkey is approaching 4 million according to official records, refugees and the local population interact in various settings. These interactions can sometimes lead to issues and conflicts due to the negative attitudes and behaviors exhibited by both groups. This study examines these dynamics using a model based on the frameworks of Ward & Masgoret (2006, 2008) to explore the attitudes and behaviors of the local population towards Syrian refugees. The hypotheses and model fit were tested using PLS-SEM. These findings are consistent with the study by Özdemir et al. (2023), which emphasized the role of cultural values in shaping attitudes toward refugees. Similarly, the research by Yitmen and Verkuyten (2018) highlighted a significant association between belief in multiculturalism and more positive attitudes toward refugees. These comparisons indicate that the theoretical model proposed in this study aligns with current literature and is empirically supported within the context of Turkey.

In the research model, in the explanation of attitudes and behaviors towards refugees, multicultural ideology and intercultural relationship were defined as external hidden variables, intergroup tolerance and perceived intergroup threat mediocre internal hidden variables. The highest coefficient in the results of the research is between intercultural relationship and intergroup tolerance (B→C). In addition, B→C→D (0.179; $t=3.651$, $p<0.01$) partial relationship was also significantly determined. From this finding, as the level of tolerance and tolerance for intercultural relations increases, the aid behavior towards refugees also increases. In their study, Brown and Hewstone (2005) concluded that increased contact leads to more positive attitudes**.**

Another prominent result of the study is that it is very important for society to adopt multicultural ideology (A) in reducing perceived intergroup threat (D). The A→D relationship was found to be -0.85 in Ward & Masgoret 's (2006) study and -0.485 in this study. The A→D→E partial relationship coefficient was -0.286 ($t=-5.634$, $p<0.01$) and the A→D→F coefficient was 0.114 ($t=2.596$, $p<0.01$). From these results, it was evaluated that as the multicultural ideology score increased, the perceived intergroup threat and negative attitudes towards refugees could decrease while the behavior of helping refugees increased. Berry (2006) argues that multicultural ideology contributes to a reduced sense of threat, a concept supported by the model in this study. Consistent with this, similar findings were observed in the current research. Furthermore, studies in the field suggest that the effect of contact is mediated by intergroup anxiety (Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Voci & Hewstone, 2003). This research also supports the notion that both intergroup anxiety and perceived threat are influenced by the mediation of multicultural ideology.

The coefficient between the perceived intergroup threat (D) and the negative attitude towards refugees (E) was calculated as D→E: 0.590. This result means that as the perceived intergroup threat decreases by one unit, the negative attitude towards refugees will decrease by 0.590 units. In the study of Ward & Masgoret (2006), this relationship was found to be 0.93.

The study also examined the regulatory effects of gender and the presence of refugees near housing. The moderating effect of gender was found to be negatively significant in the relationship between multicultural ideology and perceived intergroup threat. It was determined that women had a higher belief that the perceived intergroup threat would decrease as multicultural ideology increased. The coefficient calculated in the hypothesis that the perceived intergroup threat will decrease as the tolerance between groups increases, has emerged as higher in men. The relationship between perceived intergroup threat and behaviour was calculated as -0.222 for women and -0.300 for men. As the perceived intergroup threat decreased, the increase in assistive behaviour towards refugees was significantly higher in men.

In the relationship between multicultural ideology and the threat between the groups involved, the regulatory effect of the presence of refugees near the residence where they lived was found to be negatively significant. In the group that stated that there were refugees near their residences, it was determined that the perceived intergroup threat would decrease as multicultural ideology increased. The coefficient calculated in the hypothesis that the perceived intergroup threat would decrease as intergroup tolerance increased was higher in the non-

refugee group near their residences. The relationship between perceived intergroup threats and behavior was found to be negatively significant (-0.260) in the group that stated that there were refugees near their residences, while this relationship was not found to be significant in the other group. As the perceived intergroup threat decreased, the increase in assistive behavior towards refugees was higher among participants living in neighborhoods. As tolerance between groups increased, the rate of helping refugees was twice as high in the group living in a neighborly relationship as in the other group.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The increase in the number of refugees within the country necessitates communication across a variety of environments. However, these interactions can sometimes lead to problematic areas and conflicts, often stemming from the negative attitudes and behaviors exhibited by both groups. To mitigate these conflicts, it is crucial to identify the factors that contribute to the negative attitudes and behaviors of the local population towards refugees. The growing perception of threats can have detrimental effects for both sides. Although coexisting with Syrian refugees has become an inevitable reality, efforts must be made to establish ideal living conditions for both groups. By refining the research model used in this study, more focus could be placed on strategies to reduce the perceived threat between groups.

Building on the parameter estimates from this study, it is suggested that to reduce negative attitudes towards refugees, the development of multicultural ideology and the enhancement of intercultural relations between societies should be prioritized. When these two factors are positively cultivated, tolerance between the groups is likely to increase. As tolerance rises, the perceived threat between groups diminishes, ultimately fostering the development of positive attitudes and behaviors towards refugees.

As a result, it is recommended to use more than one method to examine attitudes and behaviors towards immigrants, to expand the model and to conduct qualitative interviews and experimental research to provide more convincing evidence to support the model. Conducting the survey online may have reduced representational ability.

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