

Relationship of Peace Attitudes With Personality Traits, Gender and Age Groups

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ABSTRACT

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Objective: Aim of this study is to examine the associations between attitudes towards peace and personality traits, gender and different age groups.

Method: A total of 236 individuals, of whom 118 were adolescents and 118 were elders (111 males and 125 females), completed the NEO Five Factor Inventory and the Peace Attitudes Scale. In this study, hierarchical regression analysis were used in order to determine which personality traits predicts peace attitudes. In order to investigate the associations of the attitudes towards peace with gender and different age groups, independent t-test methods were used.

Results: According to results, female adolescents have higher positive attitudes towards peace than male adolescents. On the other hand, there is no gender difference according to attitudes towards peace among elders. Besides, elders have much positive attitudes towards peace than adolescents. In addition to this, agreeableness of five-factor personality model predicted attitudes towards peace among both adolescents and elders.

Conclusion: Among personality traits agreeableness effects attitudes towards peace. While gender is an important factor for attitudes towards peace among adolescents, it is not important among elders. Reason for this may be the gender roles and development of these roles.

Key words: Adolescents, attitudes, elders, peace, personality traits



ÖZET

Barıřa yönelik tutumların kiřilik özellikleri, cinsiyet ve yař grupları ile iliřkisi

Amaç: Bu arařtırmanın amacı, barıřa yönelik tutumların, kiřilik özellikleri, cinsiyet ve yař grupları ile iliřkisini ortaya koymaktır.

Yöntem: Arařtırmaya 118 ergen ve 118 yařlı olmak üzere, toplam 236 (111 erkek ve 125 kadın) kiři katılmıřtır. Arařtırmada Beř Faktörlü Kiřilik Envanteri ve Barıřa Yönelik Tutumlar Ölçeđi kullanılmıřtır. Ayrıca, arařtırmada kiřilik özelliklerinin barıřa yönelik tutumları ne düzeyde yordadıđını belirlemek amacıyla hiyerarřik regresyon analizi yöntemi kullanılmıřtır. Barıřa yönelik tutumların cinsiyetle ve yař gruplarıyla olan iliřkisini incelemek amacıyla bađımsız gruplar için t-testi yönteminden faydalanılmıřtır.

Bulgular: Yapılan analizlerin sonucuna göre, kız ergenlerin barıřa yönelik tutumları, erkeklere göre daha olumludur. Yařlıların barıřa yönelik tutumları ađısından cinsiyete dayalı fark bulunmamıřtır. Öte yandan, yařlıların barıřa yönelik tutumları, ergenlere göre daha olumludur. Beř faktör kiřilik modelindeki yumuřak bařlılık boyutu, hem ergenlerde hem de eriřkinlerde barıřa yönelik tutumları anlamlı bir řekilde yordamaktadır.

Sonuç: Kiřilik özellikleri arasında yumuřak bařlılık boyutu barıřa yönelik tutumları etkilemektedir. Ergenlerin barıřa yönelik tutumlarında cinsiyet önemli bir faktör iken, yařlıların barıřa yönelik tutumları için cinsiyet önemli deđildir. Bu sonucun nedeni, toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri ve geliřimi olabilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Ergenler, tutum, yařlı, barıř, kiřilik özellikleri

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INTRODUCTION

Peace is the most important factor for both individual and social life. Individuals among societies in which peace has been established could accomplish self-actualization and also provide social support for other

individuals in society. Scientific studies on peace and peace attitudes may support this process mentioned above. Thus, an investigation about the relationship between the peace attitudes and personality traits, gender and different age groups could make a large amount of contribution to the literature.

Psychology considers humans as to have a comprehensive nature. One dimension of this whole includes negative human experience such as violence, aggression, bullying; on the other hand, the other dimension includes positive human experience such as peace, love, virtue and altruism. Current studies have focused their attention to positive side that is mentioned as the second dimension above. The reason is the fact that while improving the quality of life of individuals, positive human characteristics also make them happy and prevent them from illness and pathologies. Peace and peace psychology have been regarded as these positive human features (1). Peace has been described as “an active structure based on the intimacy and cooperation between individuals and nations” by Wagner et al. (2). The reason for construction of this active structure in both individual and social level is the need of using scarce resources in a balanced way in the face of endless needs.

According to some of scientific researchers, people are regarded as harmful creatures, while the others consider people to have actualization of themselves into their surroundings. In this context, some of the individuals support establishing of peace, despite the fact that the others oppose it. One of the important indicators of supporting peace is the attitudes towards peace. Having a positive attitude towards peace means that an individual wants peace according to affective, behavioral and cognitive aspects (3).

In literature, it is unfortunate that there are only a few studies undertaken on the subject of attitudes towards peace. Whilst, there are some known theoretical explanations in the literature emphasizing the peace process. For instance, the basic assumption of the theory of value, which explains peace is that people have attitudes towards themselves and the other creatures positively or negatively. Because of the fact that the war is proceeding in the cognitive structures of individuals, the peace researches have been focused on the attitudes of the peace and to change of these attitudes (4). In terms of a positive state of peace in human mind relationships should be in positive status. Thus, the peace psychologists have conducted studies in which individuals come together to interact in order to establish a sustainable peace. According to contact

theory of peace, which supports this process, if people interact with each other, their attitudes of peace may become in a better position. As a result, individuals take perspectives, trust and forgive each other (5).

The studies of pathology-based approaches so far suggested that humans tend to have aggression and lack of power that supplies positive life experiences. Thus the peace psychologists focused their studies on preventing and diminishing aggression, peacemaking and sustaining peace. Nevertheless, important research results showed that humans were not inclined with aggression inherently. Therefore, people have some capabilities. If suitable conditions are established, people may improve their skills (5-8).

There are some studies concerning attitudes towards peace in Turkey. These studies on attitudes towards peace are concerned with peace education and peace activities that have been done by non-governmental organizations. However, there are only a few studies focusing solely on peace attitudes. For instance, Eryilmaz (9) developed the Peace Attitudes Li' Scale (PALiS), which measures the attitudes of peace. The relationship between peace attitudes and self-esteem was investigated in another study (10). According to this study, females have higher peace attitudes than males, and also peace attitudes were found to be related with self-esteem at the moderate level (10). Thus, relationship of peace attitudes with age and gender has not been investigated yet.

The most important variable related with the attitudes towards peace is personality of individuals. Personality traits are defined as features that differentiate people from each other (11). It has been found that both heredity and environment have impact on the development of personality traits. If we know the personality traits of the individual, we will predict behaviors of that individual. In addition, there are so many personality traits differentiating the people from each other (12).

In the literature, the most accepted and valued personality model is “big five personality model”. This model explains the human personality with respect to five traits such as extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness (12-14).

There is no study in the literature that investigates the relationships between personality traits and peace attitudes. However, there are some theoretical explanations on the relationships between these variables. For instance, the personality trait of agreeableness has been associated with the peace attitudes. This trait includes features such as mercifulness, trustworthiness, respect and sincerity. Considering these features, it is suggested that agreeable people have more positive peace attitudes (12-14).

It is important that different societies and their citizens live together with mutual respect and peace. Thus, the findings about studies of peace and peace attitudes provide contribution for both individuals and societies. Additionally, there have been limited studies in this subject (14), and the explanations included theoretical bases. Thus, the current study investigates the relationships of the peace attitudes with personality traits, gender and age groups.

METHOD

Sample

This study was conducted with 118 adolescents and 118 elderly, among which 125 were female (53%) and 111 were male (47%). The mean age of adolescents was 15.9 (SD=0.50). Ages ranged between 14 and 17, and high school students constituted the adolescent group. Among the adolescent group 67(56.8%) were female and 51 (43.2%) were male. Among the elder group mean age was 68.3 (SD=9.37) age ranged between 60 and 75. There were 58 female (48.3%) and 60 male (51.7%) among the elder group. The elderly, who were included in the study was not suffering from a chronic illness that may restrict their daily life activities and also they were living with their family. Among the elderly participants 48 (40.5%) had primary school graduation, 25 (21.6%) high school graduation, 29 (24.1%) university degree, and 2 (1.7%) had a master degree. Also, 101 (87.1%) elderly reported that they perceived themselves in the middle socioeconomic status and 12 (9.5%) perceived themselves in the low and 5 (3.4%) perceived themselves in the high level of socioeconomic status.

Informed consent was obtained from both the elder and the adolescent groups and participation was voluntary. In the adolescent group informed consent of the families were also obtained.

Measures

Peace Attitudes Li' Scale (PALiS): PALiS was developed by Eryilmaz (9). This scale has one dimension and five items with four-Likert type answers. Getting higher scores from this scale means that an individual have higher peace attitudes. The variance of the scale was 47.58% and its Cronbach's alpha value was 0.71. The test and re-test reliability was 0.78. The criterion validity was computed with Domain General Perceived Control Scale, which was correlated with PALiS ($r=0.44$, $p<0.001$) (9). The results showed that the scale was valid. In this study group, exploratory factor analysis showed that the scale had an eigenvalue of 2.40, and explained 47.0% of the variance. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha of the scale was found as 0.72.

NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI): NEO-FFI consists of five traits such as openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism with 44 items. The original form of the scale was developed by John and Srivastaya (15), which was adapted to Turkish by Evinc (16). The Cronbach's alpha values of the subscales were found to be satisfactory. In the present study, the exploratory factor analysis was also computed, which was consistent with 5 factor structure and the explained variance was 54.65%.

Statistical Analysis

This study was a cross-sectional research. The dependent variable was peace attitudes, and independent variables were age, gender and personality traits. Socio economic and educational levels of participants were not included in the analyses, because of the fact that the sample was not evenly distributed.

In this present study, the relationships between variables were evaluated with the Pearson Correlation technique. Variance analysis was used to investigate

the common effect of the gender and developmental stages; however, the common effect was not statistically significant. Thus, the effect of the gender was computed with the help of independent t-test in the each developmental stage. Also, independent t-test was computed to evaluate whether there was any differences in peace attitudes according to the developmental stages. The hierarchic regression analysis technique was used in order to find the relationships between peace attitudes and personality traits one by one for each developmental stage and for the whole participants.

RESULTS

In this section, the findings of the study are presented respectively as the analyses of the relationships between the peace attitudes and personality traits; the results of independent t-test and the results of hierarchical regression analysis.

A-The relationships between peace attitudes and personality traits.

As Table 1 indicates, there are significant moderate positive relationship of peace attitudes and agreeableness ($r=0.48$, $p<0.001$) and conscientiousness ($r=0.39$, $p<0.001$) personality traits, whereas significant but low positive relationship between peace attitudes and extroversion trait ($r=0.18$, $p=0.01$).

B-The results of independent t-test in terms of age groups

The peace attitudes of age groups differ significantly (Table 2). Accordingly, the peace attitudes of elderly ($\bar{X}=16.91$) were found as more positive than the adolescents ($\bar{X}=16.13$) ($t=-2.60$; $p=0.01$).

C-The results of independent t-test in terms of gender

Table 3 shows that when both adolescent and elder groups were evaluated the females ($\bar{X}=16.86$) had more positive peace attitudes than the males ($\bar{X}=16.13$) ($t=2.39$; $p=0.01$). Similarly peace attitudes of the female adolescents was more positive ($\bar{X}=16.62$), than the male adolescents ($\bar{X}=15.47$). ($t=2.80$; $p<0.001$). On the contrary, the results indicated that peace attitudes did not differ in terms of gender among the elder group.

D-The results of hierarchical regression analysis

Table 4 illustrates that the five personality traits were included as the independent variables at the first step of regression analysis ($R^2=0.55$; $F=19.87$; $p<0.001$). Particularly, the personality traits of extroversion ($t=2.85$; $p<0.001$), agreeableness ($t=6.19$; $p<0.001$) and conscientiousness ($t=3.81$; $p<0.001$) were predictors of peace attitudes. These personality traits explained 55%

Table 1: Pearson's correlation coefficients of the relationship between personality traits and attitudes toward peace

	Extraversion	Neuroticism	Openness	Conscientiousness	Agreeableness
Peace attitudes	0.18*	-0.11	0.11	0.39*	0.48*
Extraversion	-	-0.20*	0.45*	0.02	0.12
Neuroticism		-	-0.03	-0.21*	-0.36*
Openness			-	0.07	0.18*
Conscientiousness				-	0.45*

* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$

Table 2: Comparison of attitudes towards peace in terms of the development periods

Age Groups	n	Mean	SD	t	p
Adolescents	118	16.13	2.29	-2.60	0.01
Elderly	118	16.91	2.37		

Table 3: Examination of attitudes toward peace by gender: t-test results

	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t	p
Adolescents	Female	67	16.62	2.05	2.80	<0.001
	Male	51	15.47	2.41		
Elderly	Female	58	17.05	2.42	0.80	0.42
	Male	60	16.70	2.30		
Total (Adolescents+Elderly)	Female	125	16.86	2.24	2.39	0.01
	Male	111	16.13	2.42		

SD: Standard Deviation

Table 4: The results of hierarchical regression analysis for all individuals in the study group

	R ²	R change	F	β	t	p
BLOCK-1	0.55	0.30	19.87			
Extraversion				0.18	2.85	<0.001
Neuroticism				0.11	1.92	0.06
Openness				-0.06	-0.96	0.33
Agreeableness				0.40	6.19	<0.001
Conscientiousness				0.24	3.81	<0.001
BLOCK-2	0.29	-0.03	24.61			
Extraversion				0.15	2.71	<0.001
Neuroticism				0.11	1.81	0.07
Agreeableness				0.40	6.12	<0.001
Conscientiousness				0.24	3.80	<0.001

Table 5: The results of hierarchical regression analyzes for the elderly

	R ²	R change	F	β	t	p
BLOCK-1	0.29	0.28	8.76			
Extraversion				0.17	1.75	0.08
Neuroticism				0.15	1.62	0.10
Openness				-0.04	-0.41	0.68
Agreeableness				0.46	4.46	<0.001
Conscientiousness				0.10	1.17	0.24
BLOCK-2	0.28	0.01	10.13			
Extraversion				0.15	1.51	0.13
Openness				-0.02	-0.23	0.81
Agreeableness				0.39	4.13	<0.001
Conscientiousness				0.11	1.19	0.23
BLOCK-3	0.27	0.00	13.61			
Extraversion				0.14	1.63	0.10
Agreeableness				0.39	4.15	<0.001
Conscientiousness				0.10	1.18	0.23
BLOCK-4	0.26	0.00	19.64			
Extraversion				0.15	1.76	0.08
Agreeableness				0.43	5.04	<0.001

of the variance in peace attitudes. At the second step, three personality traits, except openness and neuroticism, were included in the analysis as independent variables ($R^2=0.30$; $F=24.61$; $p<0.001$). Similarly with the first step, it was observed that the personality traits of extroversion ($t=2.71$; $p<0.001$),

agreeableness ($t=6.12$; $p<0.001$) and conscientiousness ($t=3.80$; $p<0.001$) were predictors of peace attitudes. These personality traits explained 30% of the variance in peace attitudes.

Table 5 indicate that the five personality traits were included as independent variables at the first step of

Table 6: The results of hierarchical regression analysis for adolescents

	R ²	R change	F	β	t	p
BLOCK-1	0.31	0.31	10.01			
Extraversion				0.23	2.66	0.08
Neuroticism				0.13	1.58	0.11
Openness				-0.15	-1.75	0.08
Agreeableness				0.36	4.32	<0.001
Conscientiousness				0.35	4.15	<0.001
BLOCK-2	0.28	0.01	11.73			
Extraversion				0.15	2.31	0.02*
Openness				-0.02	-1.46	0.14
Agreeableness				0.39	4.05	<0.001
Conscientiousness				0.11	3.87	<0.001
BLOCK-3	0.27	0.00	14.78			
Extraversion				0.15	1.89	0.06
Agreeableness				0.32	3.90	<0.001
Conscientiousness				0.31	3.67	<0.001

the regression analysis ($R^2=0.29$; $F=8.79$; $p<0.001$). Especially, personality trait of agreeableness ($t=4.46$; $p<0.001$) predicted peace attitudes in the elder group. These personality traits explained 29% of the variance in peace attitudes. In the second step, four personality traits, except neuroticism, were involved as the predictor variables in the analysis ($R^2=0.28$; $F=10.13$; $p<0.001$). Similarly, personality trait of agreeableness ($t=4.13$; $p<0.001$) predicted peace attitudes among the elder group. These personality traits explained 28% of the variance in peace attitudes. In the third step, the personality traits of extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness predicted peace attitudes of the participants ($R^2=0.26$; $F=13.61$; $p<0.001$). Similar to the second step, it was again observed that the personality trait of agreeableness ($t=4.15$; $p<0.001$) predicted peace attitudes of the participants. These personality traits explained 26% of the variance in peace attitudes. Furthermore, at the fourth step, the personality traits of extroversion and agreeableness were included as independent variables ($R^2=0.25$; $F=19.64$; $p<0.001$). Again the personality trait of agreeableness ($t=5.04$; $p<0.001$) predicted peace attitudes of the participants.

Table 6 indicate that the five personality traits were included as independent variables in the first step of the regression analysis ($R^2=0.31$; $F=10.01$; $p<0.001$). Particularly, the personality traits of agreeableness ($t=4.32$; $p<0.001$) and conscientiousness

($t=4.15$; $p<0.001$) predicted peace attitudes of the adolescent group. These personality traits explained 31% of the variance in peace attitudes. In the second step, four personality traits, except neuroticism, were included as independent variables in the analysis ($R^2=0.28$; $F=11.73$; $p<0.001$). Likewise, personality trait of agreeableness ($t=4.05$; $p<0.001$) and conscientiousness ($t=3.87$; $p<0.001$) predicted peace attitudes of the adolescents. These personality traits explained 28% of the variance in peace attitudes. At the third step, three personality traits predicted peace attitudes of the adolescents ($R^2=0.27$; $F=14.78$; $p<0.001$). Similar to the second step, it was again observed that the personality traits of agreeableness ($t=3.90$; $p<0.001$) and conscientiousness ($t=3.67$; $p<0.001$) predicted peace attitudes of the adolescents. These personality traits explained 27% of the variance in peace attitudes.

DISCUSSION

The present study has investigated the peace attitudes of the adolescents and the elderly with respect to gender, age groups and personality traits. It is found that the elderly group has more positive attitudes than the adolescent group. Particularly, with respect to gender, the female adolescents have more positive attitudes than the males have, and also peace attitudes of the elderly group have not differentiated significantly

in terms of their genders. Additionally, among personality traits, the strongest association with peace attitudes is found for agreeableness in both adolescent and elder groups. For the whole sample group, conscientiousness and extraversion traits are significantly related with peace attitudes.

a) The evaluation of peace attitudes with respect to gender

Being female is found as a significant factor for peace attitudes for the adolescents and the whole sample. This was consistent with the results of the previous studies (10). Having a traditional masculinity and femininity gender roles have been found as important for interpreting the peace attitudes. Individuals who have masculinity gender role display more aggressive and fighting manner. However, individuals who have femininity gender roles show more care giving, and take charge of the regulatory roles for interpersonal relationships. Consequently, these different structures could influence the attitudes of individuals.

Consistent with above mentioned explanations, it could be taught that the elderly came from a more traditional structure than the adolescents did. Having a positive attitudes towards peace was not related with being female or male among the elderly group. Nevertheless, it is usually considered that since the elderly are more traditional, they should display traditional gender roles such as femininity and masculinity. According to this assumption, we expect that the male elderly show more aggressive and fighting attitudes than female. However, this study result does not confirm this idea. Some explanations come from the literature for this dilemma. Recently, transformation of gender roles have been examined. Transformation of gender roles means that the hormonal changes are observed from middle adulthood to elderly, so it is suggested that females show interestingly more masculinity roles. On the other hand, males display much more self-disclosure and care giving behaviors. Briefly, males exhibit more femininity gender roles than masculinity on the contrary to their developmental history. Some research support this claims (17). Thus, it

is possible that as a result of transformation process in the elderly group, peace attitudes did not differentiate between genders in this age group. Therefore, further studies are essential to explain this assumption.

b) Evaluation of the relationships between peace attitudes and age groups

The present study shows that the elderly had more positive peace attitudes than the adolescent group. There is no study in the literature to investigate the relationships between peace attitudes and personality traits at different stages of adolescence and elderly. However, some explanations have been made about development of these structures. For instance, the subject of wisdom could be considered with this aspect. In literature, it is found that the development of wisdom differs according to developmental stages (18). The elderly develop their wisdom much more than adolescents. In this process, their life experiences contribute to development of their wisdom. Similarly, their life experiences might have contribution for understanding the importance of peace attitudes in human relationships in a better way than adolescents. Consistent with these, elderly are found to have more positive peace attitudes than adolescents in the present study.

As another perspective, there have been many explanations and approaches considering how the individuals develop their positive features. One of them is normative developmental approach, which claims that in accordance with the age some psychological structures develop much more than the others as adaptive features (19). Peace attitude may also be such an adaptive feature, as a positive structure. It is clear that the elderly are more mature than adolescents are. This maturity could have improved their adaptation ability to live with people, thus their peace attitudes might be more positive than the adolescents.

The findings may also be evaluated with respect to life-span developmental approach, which investigates the development of human from birth to die and claims that the development process has been established via losses and gains (20). The reason why the elderly have more positive peace attitudes than adolescents could be

that the elderly have more gains than adolescents. Additionally, the theory of psychosocial development argues that the elders have to achieve being in intimacy and productivity (21). Satisfying the need of intimacy require having close relationships (22). Having close relationships and managing it could lead to developmental gains.

c) Evaluation of the relationships between peace attitudes and personality traits

The present study indicates that personality traits such as conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness are related with peace attitudes. In the literature, there are theoretical explanations on the relationships between agreeableness and peace attitudes (13-14). This study supports these explanations. Because agreeableness requires altruism, trustworthiness, reliability and mercifulness, having these personality traits increases positive peace attitudes. On the other hand, the reason why the peace attitudes are related with extraversion could be that extraverted individuals have great tendency for reward (14). Positive relationships with people in society give opportunities for presentation and recognition of themselves and satisfying the need for relatedness for extraverted individuals can be considered as a reward. Extraverted individuals can take such good rewards by means of peace attitudes in the relationships with people. Unfortunately, there are no studies to investigate the

relationships between peace attitudes and conscientiousness trait in an empirical way. The relationships with conscientiousness and peace attitudes that are found in the present study could be considered in the view of cultural psychology. In cultural psychology, societies are considered according to two important groups such as individualistic and collectivistic society. It is necessary that collective cultures give importance to group coherence and cooperation with other people in society. Additionally, living with other people in a harmonic way requires not fighting and competing but living with peace (23). In Turkey, there are individuals from both cultural groups (24). As a result, collectivistic features of participants could provide positive relationships between peace attitudes and conscientiousness trait.

Although the present study is a cross-sectional one, it may suggest that the peace attitudes increase from adolescence to late adulthood. In addition, peace attitudes are related with gender and personality traits. In this study, worldview, political references and properties of social class, life experiences, cultural features and traumatic experiences of the participants were not taken into consideration. Ignoring these factors in the present study can be considered as limitations. Additionally, development losses and gains, which people experience are also important factors for elderly (20). Illness and organic functions influence the elderly from different aspect. Thus, further studies are needed on this issue.

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