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The Attitudes of University Students towards Today's World Affairs

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Abstract

This study was conducted to evaluate the attitudes of university students towards today's world affairs according to some variables. A total of 560 senior grade students participated in the study. The students were studying at Karabük University, Faculty of Literature in 2015-2016 Academic Year. The Review Model was used in present study, and a scale named as "*Today's World Affairs Attitude Scale*" was used as the data collection tool. Frequencies, percentages, arithmetic averages, independent Samplings *t*-Test, and One-Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) were used in the analyses of the data. It was concluded that the attitudes of university students on today's world affairs are positive and high. In addition, it was also determined in the present study that the attitudes of the students who participated in the study on today's world affairs vary according to the gender variable at a significant level, and do not vary according to the programs in which they are studying.

Keywords: World affairs, Student attitudes, Karabük University.

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1. Introduction

There are various reasons in the basis of the matters of today's world. With the increase in the population of the world, humans have sought ways for better life conditions, which have become varied at a great deal with the effect of globalization. The terms "globalization" was first used by Theodore Levitt, who is a marketing professor, in his articles in "Harvard Business Review" published in 1983, and was interpreted as the integration process of humans and cultures. Globalization has gained speed with the advances and developments in information and communication technologies in recent years (Zeiler, 2002:135; Croucher, 2004:10; Baykal & Baykal, 2008).

As of the 21st Century, countries have faced a fast change and development process, and have begun to feel the effects of globalization at serious levels. Fast population increase caused that the resources were not adequate in developing countries, the development speed is slowed down, and economic and social reasons are increased. Developed countries, on the other hand, are concerned that this increase will disrupt the socio-economic balance and the stability in the world. On the one hand, it presented the artificial residential areas as the indicator of civilization, which was a requirement of industrialization and development; and on the other hand, it caused that a human generation that was disconnected with the nature was raised. Due to incorrect policies of the state, the existing problems were doubled with the participation of new ones. The following are some of the world matters of our present day;

- Fast population increase,
- The problem of immigrants,
- Terrorist activities,
- Starvation and poverty,
- Natural disasters and environmental problems,
- International water problem,
- Educational problems,
- Problems related with women,
- The problems of the handicapped,
- Global energy problem,
- Health problems,
- Basic human rights problems,
- Media and communication problems,
- Agriculture-based problems,
- Problems stemming from belief differences,
- Unemployment problems (Çamurcu, 2005; Topal, 2011; Demirkaya, 2016).

The balances between the nature and human have been disrupted against the nature, and it has become more difficult for the nature to protect and renew itself and stay within tolerable limits against the production and method mechanisms of humans; and in some areas, it has become nearly impossible to recover. The examples for this are numerous. Seasons are changing, glaciers are melting, forests are destroyed without mercy, seas are polluted, the air we breathe is loaded with poison, our ears, eyes and brains are filled with noise; and there are concrete and metal pollution everywhere. Preventing pollution and fighting against it, transferring the environment in which we live to future generations without disrupting are among important problems in our present world (Anonymous, 2008; Baykal & Baykal, 2008; Çepni and Aksoy, 2016; Aydın ve Çepni, 2010, Aydın ve Çepni, 2012).

2. The Purpose of the Study

When the relevant literature is reviewed, the studies conducted on the attitudes towards world affairs are limited in number. Kılıçoğlu, Karakuş and Öztürk (2012) conducted a study and developed a scale on world affairs for our modern world. Researchers developed this scale by making use of the perceptions of 477 students studying at the 4th Grade at various departments of Gazi University, Gazi Education Faculty. Aydın and Sağdıç (2013) conducted a study and reported that the attitudes of students from geography department were at a high and positive level on world affairs. In addition, it was determined that the attitudes of the students from geography department, who participated in the study, differed at a significant level according to the gender variable on world affairs; and did not differ at a significant level according to grades, departments, and secondary schools they graduated. Hashizaki and Kawaguchi (2012) investigated the perceptions of Japanese teacher candidates studying at two private universities in Kyoto on teaching global problems, and reported that teacher candidates generally showed a positive attitude towards the teaching of global problems.

Answers for the following questions were sought in the study:

1. What are the attitudes of university students towards world affairs?
2. Do the attitude scores of the university students in *"Today's World Affairs Attitude Scale"* vary at a significant level according to the gender and programs they study at?

3. Method

The Study Model

Since this study was conducted to determine the attitudes of university students on world affairs of our present day, the Review Method was used.

The Population and Sampling of the Study

560 senior grade students who studied at 2015-2016 Academic Year at Karabük University, Faculty of Literature participated in the study. The personal information of the university students who participated in the study are given in Table 1.

Table 1. The personal information of the geography teacher candidates who participated in the study

Variables	Demographic Characteristics	Student Number(n=560)	Percentage (%100)
Gender	Male	194	34.6
	Female	366	65.4
Department	History	134	23.9
	English language and literature	123	22
	Turkish language and literature	123	22
	Sociology	82	14.6

Archeology	18	3.2
Geography	80	14.3
Total	560	100

As seen in Table 1, 34.6% (n=194) of the university students, who participated in the study, were male; and 65.4% (n=366) were female.

The Data Collection Tool

The questionnaire, which was used in the study in the light of specialist viewpoints, was developed by Kılıçoğlu, Karakuş and Öztürk (2012) to determine the attitudes of university students towards world affairs. In order to determine the validity of the scale used in the study conducted by Kılıçoğlu and others (2012); exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, substance discrimination powers were calculated. Internal consistency level was calculated to determine the reliability of the scale. As a result of these operations, a total of 24 items on the scale were collected under three factors. In its final form, the BMD value of the 24-item scale was 0.936; The Bartlett Test values $\chi^2 = 4721,614$; $sd = 276$; $p < 0.001$. The scale is scored and scored as "I fully agree", "I agree", "I am undecided", "I do not agree" and "I absolutely do not agree". As a result, it can be said that the scale of attitude toward today's world problems is a valid and reliable instrument for determining the individual's thoughts in this respect.

The Collection and Analysis of the Data

The questionnaire was completed in 15 minutes with volunteering participants. Frequencies, percentages, and arithmetic averages were used in analyzing the scores obtained in the attitude scale, which was applied to determine the attitudes of university students towards world affairs. The "Independent Samples t-test" was used to determine whether the attitudes of university students varied according to "gender" variable; and the "One-Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA)" was used to determine whether the scores varied according to the "program type" variable in the study. In the statistical analyses of the study data, the significance level was taken as 0.05.

4. Findings

The Attitudes of University Students on World Affairs

The frequencies, percentages and arithmetic averages of the university students received in the scale that was used to determine the attitudes on world affairs based on the items in the scale are given in Table 2.

Table 2: The frequencies, percentages and averages of the scores received by the university students in Today's World Affairs Attitude Scale

The Statements in "Today's World Affairs Attitude Scale"	I Definitely Agree		I Agree		I am Indecisive		I do not Agree		I definitely do not Agree		Arith. Ave.
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	

1. I am sorry for the situation of hungry people in Africa.	390	69.6	164	29.3	4	0.7	2	0.4	-	-	4.68
2. The violence towards female children in the world makes me sad.	491	87.7	66	11.8	3	0.5	-	-	-	-	4.87
3. I am concerned because the number of people starving is increasing.	443	79.1	114	20.4	1	0.2	2	0.4	-	-	4.78
4. I am sorry for people who collect foods from garbage to eat.	474	84.6	79	14.1	6	1.1	1	0.2	-	-	4.83
5. I am concerned about the scarcity of forests.	389	69.5	159	28.4	8	1.4	4	0.7	-	-	4.66
6. I would like to do something about the starvation problem in the world.	464	82.9	90	16.1	5	0.9	1	0.2	-	-	4.81
7. I feel bad because drinking water is polluted.	364	65	175	31.3	19	3.4	2	0.4	-	-	4.60
8. I believe that terror is the problem for all humanity.	453	80.9	74	13.2	23	4.1	9	1.6	1	0.2	4.73
9. I think that countries in the world cannot unite in problems that concern the whole world, and this is a sad situation.	420	75	121	21.6	12	2.1	5	0.9	2	0.4	4.70
10. I believe that excessive growth of cities in the world make it impossible to find solutions for problems.	248	44.3	219	39.1	79	14.1	11	2.0	3	0.5	4.24
11. I am disturbed because of the use of carbonaceous fuels.	243	43.4	240	42.9	65	11.4	10	1.8	3	0.5	4.26
12. I believe that diseases will increase because of the pollution in the natural environment.	397	70.9	146	26.1	14	2.5	3	0.5	-	-	4.67
13. I become happy when medical wastes are disposed in any way.	332	59.3	170	30.4	34	6.1	12	2.1	12	2.1	4.42
14. I want heavy penalties enacted to prevent environmental	316	56.4	189	33.8	46	8.2	7	1.3	2	0.4	4.44

problems.											
15. I believe that soil pollution will cause scarcity in food in the future.	366	65.4	173	30.9	18	3.2	3	0.5	-	-	4.61
16. I think that the starvation problem in the world occurs because of the unjust sharing of resources among countries.	342	61.1	170	30.4	40	7.1	5	0.9	3	0.5	4.50
17. I believe that globalization is a threat for humanity.	275	49.1	163	29.1	86	15.4	23	4.1	13	2.3	4.18
18. I believe that excessive accumulation of the world population in certain regions and countries is a problem.	248	44.3	222	39.6	65	11.6	19	3.4	6	1.1	4.22
19. I would like to be a member of an NGO to accelerate the transformation into alternative energy resources.	198	35.4	237	42.3	11	20.7	8	1.4	1	0.2	4.11
20. I would like to work for NGOs about the social problems around me.	209	37.3	251	44.8	89	15.9	10	1.8	1	0.2	4.17
21. I would like to work in NGOs that act in the field of preventing environmental pollution.	206	36.8	242	43.2	96	17.1	1	2.5	2	0.4	4.13
22. I try to participate in meetings, seminars, and conferences organized in the field of world affairs today.	170	30.4	237	42.3	10	19.1	3	6.8	8	1.4	3.93
23. I would like to be in an authorized position on world affairs.	225	40.2	210	37.5	10	18	1	3.2	6	1.1	4.12
24. I would like to participate in works intended for the prevention of conflicts in terms of religion and cults.	315	56.3	177	31.6	55	9.8	7	1.3	6	1.1	4.40
TOTAL											4.47

As seen in Table 2, the arithmetic average of the responses given by the university students in attitude scale about the world affairs was determined to be 4.47. According to this finding, the attitudes of university students in our present day are at a positive and high level. Most of the university students stated that they agreed to the statements given in the attitude scale.

Comparison of the Attitudes of University Students on World Affairs according to “Gender” Variable

Whether there was a significant difference between the attitude scores and genders of the university students in world affairs was analyzed with the Independent Samples *t*-test, and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The Results of the *t*-Test of the Participants according to the Gender Variable in the Attitudes Scale on World Affairs

Gender	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	p
Female	366	107,72	8,48	558	2,009	.045
Male	194	106,12	9,81			

According to the analyses results in Table 1, the total scores of the participants received in attitudes scale show a significant difference according to the “gender” variable [$t_{(558)}=2,009$; $p<,05$]. Although the arithmetic average of the total scores of the female participants on world affairs was $\bar{X}=107,72$; the average of the male students was $\bar{X}=106,12$. The difference between these values is statistically significant.

Comparison of the Attitude Scores of the Students on World Affairs according to “Program Type” Variable

The results of the ANOVA test according to the “Program Type” variable in the attitudes scale on world affairs are given in Table 5.

Table 2. The Results of the One-Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) test according to the “Program Type” variable in the attitudes scale on world affairs

Variable	Department	N	\bar{X}	S
Department	History	134	106,86	8,20
	English Language	123	107,97	8,89
	Turkish Language	123	107,11	9,30
	Sociology	82	107,70	7,44

	Archeology	18	108,89	6,13		
	Geography	80	105,59	11,56		
Source of the Variance	KT	sd	KO	F	p	Fark
Intergroup	367,760	5	73,552	,909	,475	--
Intragroup	44823,126	554	80,908			
Total	45190,886	559				

According to the analyses results given in Table 2, no significant differences were detected between the total points of the participants towards world affairs and the “*Program Type*” variable [$F_{(5-554)}=,475$; $p>,05$]. This finding may be interpreted as the “*Program Type*” having no effects on the attitude towards world affairs.

5. Result and Discussion

The level of the attitudes of university students on today’s world affairs was determined in the present study. In addition, the attitudes of the university students on today’s world affairs were also investigated in terms of some variables (the gender and program type variables).

In the present study, it was determined that the attitudes of the university students studying at geography department were at a positive and high level ($\bar{x} = 4.47$). This result supports the results of the limited studies conducted previously (Aydın and Sağdıç, 2013; Yazıcı, 2013; Parker et al., 1997; Hashizaki and Kawaguchi, 2012). Cogan, Torney-Purta & Anderson (1988) conducted a study and reported that Japanese students had more knowledge and positive attitudes about the world affairs when they entered university; however, throughout their 4-year education, they had little progress in this field; however, students in the USA learn about global problems when they have classes at university. Parker et al. (1997) examined the attitudes of teacher candidates towards global problems and connections in a comparative manner. The students studying at 2 universities in the USA and the teacher candidates studying at 1 university in Japan at Class Teachers Departments were taken as sampling of the study. The candidates generally showed positive attitudes towards global problems and connection. However, it was also determined that the Japanese teacher candidates were less positive when compared with the candidates from the USA. Çavdar (2006) conducted a study and reported that the whole of the participants (181 high school English teachers) accepted the importance of global problems and global values; and the author concluded that the participants had to be informed about the political, economic and global developments and problems as the leaders of the future world.

In the present study, the attitudes of university students towards today’s world affairs showed significant differences according to the gender variable. The attitude scores of the female students in world affairs are more than those of males. There are several studies in the literature supporting this result. Yazıcı (2013) conducted a study and female students were more sensitive towards global problems than the male students, and reported that the results showed significant difference in favor of females. As Tikka, Kuitunen and Tynys (2000) stated, women have strong sensitivity towards the nature, while men have tendencies to manipulate the nature and benefit from natural resources. In this context, the gender

difference in favor of the females in terms of the attitudes towards the environment is an expected outcome (Teksöz, Şahin ve Ertepinar, 2010).

In Karabük (Turkey), where environmental problems are experienced frequently, and where air pollution is a real problem, having positive attitudes on world affairs is of great importance for the prevention of environmental problems and for creating a decent environment for living. If the attitudes of the students towards world problems are changed in a more positive way with a conscious education on the environment, it must be born in mind that environmental problems may be decreased at a great deal. On the contrary, it must also be born in mind that individuals who have negative attitudes and behaviors towards the world problems will have low-level awareness and sensitivity about the environment and environmental problems. It is necessary that the knowledge, conscious and attitude levels of university students on world affairs are determined developed in further years (Aydın and Sağdıç, 2013).

The following ***recommendations*** are made in the light of the results of the present study:

1. The city of Karabük was chosen as the sampling of the present study because the city of Karabük experiences environmental problems (mostly air pollution) in an intense level. The attitudes of university students towards environment may be investigated in other residential areas in Turkey where environmental problems are experienced, and the results may be compared.
2. In the present study, it was concluded that female students have higher-level attitude scores on today's world affairs. The reasons why female students have high-level attitude scores on today's world affairs may be investigated. In addition, applications that will develop the attitudes of male students may be included at universities.
3. It is possible to claim that the number of the university students who are indecisive about the solution of today's world problems is more. Right at this point, university students may be encouraged to become members in NGOs to contribute to the solution of world problems and to participate in seminars and conferences.

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