

# **The Attitude and Expectations of Turkish Society Concerning Immigrants Residing in Turkey and Their Social and Linguistic Acculturation Patterns**

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## **Abstract**

The aim of the present study is to explore the attitude of Turkish society as a host towards immigrants living in Turkey, and Turkish people's expectations about the immigrants' acculturation. The data were collected via questionnaires and interviews from 498 participants recruited with non-probability quota sampling. A sample of 298 participants compatible with the target population was analyzed. The results revealed that Turkish people have a positive attitude towards immigrants in general and expect them to integrate into Turkish society. Nevertheless, the responses are marked with high standard deviation, which points to the role of different socio-demographic factors modulating the attitude of Turkish people towards immigrants.

**Keywords** immigrants in Turkey; acculturation; attitude towards immigrants; expectations of the host society

## **1. Introduction**

When a group of immigrants settles in a new country for a long term or permanently, they are expected to adapt to the new environment. This process, known as acculturation, is defined as the contact of individuals or groups coming from different sub-cultures of a given society or from different societies, and the emergence of a new blend stemming from their interaction (Berry 1990; 1997). The process of acculturation is not unidirectional but bidirectional (Berry 1997). In other words, acculturation of immigrants is interrelated with the attitude of the host society towards immigrants and is dependent upon the extent to which the host society accepts immigrants. So far, there have been several survey studies conducted in European, Canadian and American contexts on the acculturation of immigrants and the attitude of the host societies towards them. The findings revealed that the host societies do not always have a positive attitude towards immigrants in their countries (e.g. Zick, Ulrich, van Dick, and Petzel 2001, Arends-Tóth

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and Vijver 2003, Kosic and Phalet 2006). However, the current literature is not generally concerned with the expectations of the host societies towards the immigrant groups in terms of the linguistic and cultural adaptation. Turkey, which is the context of this study, has traditionally been an immigrant-sending country for long. However, the country has also become an immigrant-receiving one since the 1980-90s when immigrants from neighboring Balkan and Central Asian countries as well as countries of the former Soviet Union started a migration flow. The recent report of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI) (Uluslararası Göç İstatistikleri, 2017) (<http://www.tuik.gov.tr>) indicates that Turkey hosts immigrants from different countries, such as Russia, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, the USA among many others. Such rich migration flow has led to the formation of various diasporas in Turkey. Additionally, Turkey has also become a refugee-receiving country in the last decade, particularly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. The number of the refugees in Turkey is estimated as more than three million (TSI, 2018). For this reason, several descriptive survey studies have been conducted on the attitude of Turkish society towards refugees in Turkey (especially Syrians) (Altıok and Tosun 2018; Erdoğan and Uyan Semerci 2017 among others). These studies revealed that Turkish people have adopted a relatively negative attitude towards refugees and perceive them as a threat in general. On the other hand, the attitude and expectations of Turkish society regarding immigrants from the European and Post-Soviet countries as well as the USA have not been examined yet, although a considerable number of immigrants from these countries live in Turkey. In this respect, it might be reasonable to hypothesize that the attitudes are likely to differ from those reported towards Syrian refugees. Thus, the current study aims to fill in the gap via examining the attitude and expectations of Turkish people regarding immigrants from European and Post-Soviet countries as well as those from the USA.

### *1.1. Background to the study*

Acculturation is a process by which individuals adopt the practices, culture, norms and values of a particular society while retaining their own culture of origin (Berry 1990; 1997). Acculturation may take place in different forms and result in different outcomes. Four patterns of acculturation are distinguished typically: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. Integration occurs when immigrants adapt to cultural values of the host society while preserving their own. Those who integrated into the new society, are considered as bilingual and bicultural. Assimilation occurs when immigrant societies do not tend to preserve their own cultural values during the acculturation process. In this case, assimilated individuals become culturally indistinguishable from the dominant culture. Separation takes place when immigrant societies tend to preserve their own cultural values while rejecting the cultural values of the host society. Finally, marginalization occurs when immigrant societies reject both their own cultural values and the cultural values of the host society. In this case the marginalized individuals are pushed aside or neglected in the rest of the society (Berry et al. 2006).

Immigrants develop insights into the host society and environment and then, adapt to the host society through communication. Thus, communication can be regarded as a fundamental constituent of acculturation (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982). Research into acculturation has long indicated a positive correlation between immigrants' communication with the host society and their acculturation level (Hsu, Grant, and Huang 1993; Harris 2004; Young and Gardner 1990 among others).

In other words, the potential of acculturation develops as immigrants seek interpersonal relationships with the members of the host society, develop a host network and benefit from the mass media of the host society. These communication channels serve as agents to facilitate adaptation. It is important to note that knowledge of the host language is required for both the interpersonal communication and the use of host media. Thus, knowledge of host language plays a crucial role in acculturation process. Research has demonstrated a positive correlation between proficiency in host language and acculturation process (Young and Gardner 1990). Thus, communication of immigrants with the members of the host society is a mechanism of acculturation but also, its outcome. Accordingly, patterns and extent of communication of immigrants, their communication network and the use of host media can be considered as indicators and predictors of their level of acculturation (Hsu, Grant, and Huang 1993; Harris 2004).

There is abundant research examining the attitude of the host society towards immigrant societies in the immigrant-receiving countries as European countries, the USA, Canada and Australia. The study conducted in Germany (Zick, Wagner, Rolf van Dick, and Petze 2001) demonstrated that while 27 percent of immigrants living in Germany are originated from the European Union countries such as Italy, Greece, Poland and Austria; 24 percent of them are from Turkey and 14 percent of them are from Serbia and Croatia. German society displays different tendencies when immigrants' acculturation is concerned: Certain parts of the society are of the opinion that immigrants are to be assimilated into the German society, while others openly support marginalization. In the Netherlands, it was observed that restrictive immigration policies have consequences on immigrants' acculturation (Arends-Tóth and Vijver 2003). Although the country aims for integration, survey results showed that negative attitudes towards immigrants among the Dutch are on the rise and the immigrant societies are increasingly being assimilated into the Dutch society. Studies in Italy, another country with a large immigrant population, addressed integration of Albanian, Moroccan, Polish, Chinese and Ukrainian immigrants with the Italian society. Kasic and Phalet (2006) characterized the attitude of Italians towards immigrants as "hostile" and "xenophobic". Nevertheless, the Italian society is more lenient and accepting when compared to other European Union societies (Thalhammer, Zucha, Enzenhofer, Salfinger, and Ogris 2001). A study conducted in Canada (Berry and Kalin 1995), which is another immigrant-intensive country, indicated that Canada is in favor of integration and embraces the notion of multiculturalism to a large extent. The results of the questionnaire-based study indicated that 93 percent of Canadians are of the opinion that it is important to accept different cultures

in Canada. As for the USA, where the majority of immigrants are from countries of Latin America, Asia and European Union, most Americans view openness to immigrants as an essential feature of the nation, yet, expect the new comers to the country to be assimilated (Pew Research Centre, 2018, <http://www.pewresearch.org>). Australia, another multilingual and multicultural society, is known to follow a migration policy of multiculturalism (Clyne, Clyne, and Michael 2003). The research indicated that the attitude towards immigrants is affected by the unemployment rates in the country. It was demonstrated that the immigration policy of the government affects attitude of the society towards immigrants in New Zealand and New Zealanders support integration (Colleen, and Masgoret, 2008). All in all, these studies revealed that the majority of the host society members tend to prefer assimilation as the best way to adapt to the host society, even though integration is seen as the ideal pattern of acculturation. These contradicting attitudes are commonly explained in the acculturation research with the Group Threat theory (Blalock 1967; Bobo 1999; Jackson 1993). Group Threat theory suggests that the host society would become less open to integration and prefer assimilation when the host society perceive immigrants as a threat to their political and economic power as well as their wellbeing. Along with it, the threat might increase when the host and immigrant societies do not share common morals, values and beliefs. Finally, individuals who have a vulnerable position in the society (with being unemployed, less educated, possessing a lower socio-economic status etc.) are more likely to perceive immigrants as a threat due to the intergroup competition for scarce resources (Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky 2006; Savelkoul, Gesthuizen, and Scheepers 2011; Rosenstein 2008). The members of the host society would develop a negative attitude towards and prejudices about the immigrants due to these threats.

In contrast to the Group Threat theory, Intergroup Contact theory suggests that increased intergroup contact is likely to reduce prejudices and to result in positive attitudes towards immigrants. The theory puts forwards that equal group status within the situation, common goals, cooperation and authority support are the factors that promote positive attitudes of the host members towards immigrants. Among all the intergroup contact situation, friendship with an immigrant enables gaining knowledge about the immigrant group and contributes to the tolerance towards diversity (Pettigrew 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006).

### *1.1.1. The Turkish context*

People who have come to Turkey from other countries to reside permanently or for a long term can be divided into two main groups as immigrants and refugees. Immigrants can be defined as individuals who migrated to countries or regions different from their own. As opposed to refugees, immigrants are not obliged to leave their countries. They migrate with their own will due to sociocultural or economic reasons. Immigrants are able to continue to enjoy the shelter provided by their native county. On the other hand, refugees are defined as individuals who are forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. Immigrants in Turkey consist of those coming from European countries (mainly from

Germany, Netherlands and the UK), Post-Soviet countries and the USA (TSI, 2018). They are mostly settled at Aegean and Mediterranean coasts, as well as in the major cities such as İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir. On the other hand, refugees in Turkey come from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, and they are settled in the eastern parts of the country (mainly Gaziantep, Maraş, Hatay) and in the big cities (İstanbul and İzmir).

So far, there have been plenty of studies examining the attitude of Turkish society towards refugees, particularly towards those coming from Syria (e.g. Altıok and Tosun 2018; Erdoğan and Uyan Semerci 2017). These studies commonly revealed that the majority of Turkish society is not content with presence of refugees in Turkey and perceive them as a cultural and economic threat. For instance, in a recent survey study (Erdoğan and Uyan Semerci 2017), the majority of the participants considered Syrians as threat in the society since they are taking jobs away from Turkish people, raising crime rates in the country and are damaging moral values and traditions in Turkey.

Studies examining the acculturation of immigrants from European and Post-Soviet countries and the USA are limited and they mostly address the demographic properties of immigrant societies and the reasons for migration. Only a few studies have focused on the acculturation of immigrants. To illustrate, Tamer-Görer, Erdoğanaras, Güzey and Yuksel, (2006) examined German, Netherlandish and British immigrants in Dalyan and Alanya and reported that the participants were unwilling to learn the language as well as to have Turks or other immigrants as their neighbors, although they considered the Turkish language as an important for integration. In another study, Toprak (2009) looked into the integration of European immigrants in various towns of the Mediterranean coast. The participants indicated their intention to integrate into the host society. However, they were not able to do so due to the lack of Turkish language knowledge. Similarly, Antonova-Ünlü, Sağın-Şimşek and Kavanoz (2016) examined the language use, preference and attitudes of British immigrants and reported that though British immigrants were willing to get closer to Turkish people, their lack of Turkish language knowledge prevented them from this. Ozerim (2012) reported that German and Dutch participants of the study appreciated Turkish culture and lifestyle and considered them to be one of the reasons for their immigration to Turkey. Antonova-Ünlü et al. (2015) examined linguistic and cultural adaptation of Russian immigrants in Turkey and revealed that Russian immigrants can be defined as bilingual and bicultural and demonstrated a pure sample of integration.

The abovementioned studies probe into the acculturation of the immigrants via examining their attitude towards the host society and the Turkish language, and immigrants' use of Turkish. However, to our knowledge, there has been no research that specifically aims to examine the attitude of Turkish society towards immigrants living in Turkey, and its expectation about immigrants' acculturation. The present study aims to fill in this gap.

## 2. Methodology

### 1.1. Participants

The number of the participants in total were 498 who were recruited with non-probability quote sampling. Gender (female/male), age (20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59 and over 60), educational level (primary, secondary, high school, undergraduate, master's degree and PhD degree), marital status and occupation were identified as demographic parameters. The proportions for the above-mentioned parameters were identified for the target population relying on the available statistics of TSI collected via address-based censuses in 2013, 2015 and 2017 ( <http://www.tuik.gov.tr> ) as well as Kabalcı and Metin (2011).

A sample was then created compatible with the target population in terms of the defined parameters. The sample included 286 participants (130 females) chosen randomly out of the available 498 participants with the help of the randomize function of R programming language and environment. Table 1 presents the comparison of the descriptive statistics of the sample and the target population. All participants were fully informed about the details of the procedure and gave written consent.

Table 1

*Comparison of the sample with the population of Turkey*

Gender	Sample (%)	Population (%)
Female	45.07	49.80
Male	54.93	50.20
Status		
Married	60.56	63.76
Single	39.44	36.24
Education level		
Primary school	32.87	40.20
Secondary school	9.79	7.58
High school	30.77	32.40
University	17.48	17.98
Master	5.24	1.43
PhD	3.85	0.41

\* All values are in percentages.

### 1.2. Instrument and Procedure

A questionnaire and interviews were administered to investigate the attitude of Turkish society towards immigrants and its expectations. The questionnaire was developed via adopting questions used in the previous similar studies (Arends-Tóth and Vijver 2003; Kosic and Phalet 2006; Thalhammer et. al. 2001; Yagmur and Akinci 2003; Zick et.al. 2001). Pilot tests were administrated to ensure the content validity of the questionnaire. Four experts in sociolinguistics and ten laymen were asked to fill in the questionnaire and provide their comments. The questionnaire was revised in the light of their feedback.

The questionnaire included four sections: (1) demographic information, (2) attitude towards immigrants, (3) the preferred patterns of acculturation, (4) sociolinguistic factors affecting acculturation. The language of the questionnaire was Turkish. Demographic information was obtained in section one. In section two, the participants were asked questions related to their attitude towards immigrants from European, Post-Soviet countries and the USA, and their opinion about the immigrants' contribution to economy, culture, education and intellectual vision of Turkish people. Along with it, the participants were asked to express their ideas about the extent to which immigrants may threaten the society from different aspects: economy and job opportunities, religion, culture, education, unity of family, and criminal activities. In section three, the participants were asked which acculturation patterns they think immigrants should follow. In section four, the role of Turkish language knowledge in acculturation was examined. In this respect, the participants were asked whether immigrants require a higher proficiency in Turkish and to what extent Turkish is important for a happy and safe life in Turkey. Finally, the participants were requested to provide their opinions about the obstacles that may hinder the integration of immigrants from European and Post-Soviet countries.

The data were collected between 2017 and 2019 in the major cities of Turkey (İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir and Antalya) and in provinces and districts of the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts (Bodrum, Kuşadası, Çesme, Marmaris, Fethiye, Dalyan and Alanya). The choice of the regions was determined by the geo-demographic profile of the immigrants in Turkey. The researchers themselves visited the abovementioned provinces and their districts for data collection. The data were collected via face-to-face interactions with participants in places where Turkish people of various socio-economic backgrounds to be encountered, such as markets, post-offices, airports, restaurants, bars, educational institutions, hospitals and alike. Before the filling in the questionnaire, the participants were explained that the focus of the research was on immigrants but not refugees, and they were provided with clarification regarding differences between the two groups.

The interviews, including eight semi-structured questions, were conducted with 12 participants who volunteered to participate in the study. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, translated into English and used in the study with the consent of the participants. Quantitative data were analyzed and visualized in R programming language and environment (R Core Team 2019).

### **3. Findings**

The findings are presented in four parts corresponding to the sections of the questionnaire. The responses obtained via interviews were categorized and integrated as quotations in relevant sections.

#### *3.1. Demographic information*

The participants were 286 Turkish adults. Table 2 presents distributional characteristics of the sample (gender, age, education).

Table 2  
*Distribution of the participants according to the socio-demographic parameters*

Gender	Number	Percent
Female	130	45.45
Male	156	54.55
<b>Age groups</b>		
20-29	69	24.21
30-39	97	34.03
40-49	65	22.81
50-59	32	10.88
60+	23	8.07
<b>Education</b>		
Primary school	94	32.87
Secondary school	28	9.79
High school	88	30.77
University	50	17.48
Master	15	5.24
PhD	11	3.85

The data analysis revealed that the participants represent Turkish society in terms of their variety regarding age, education, occupation, knowledge of foreign languages and the degree of the contact with immigrants residing in Turkey.

In particular, the participants have a variety of 58 occupations such as engineers, academics, policemen, medical staff, concierge, taxi drivers, shop assistants, farmers, waiters, tailors, janitors and housewives among others. 151 participants (52.80 percent) reported to know a foreign language at different levels. English (141), German (35) and French (19) were the most common languages. The participants stated that they obtained information about immigrants from multiple sources: immigrant friends (22), school classes (15), TV (26), books (19), Internet (35), friends who know immigrants (16) and others (e.g., clients and employers) (17). More than half of the participants (188 – 65.73 percent) reported that they have immigrant friend(s) and/or acquaintance(s) in their close environment. The frequency of communication between the participants and their immigrant friends/acquaintances varied from always (14 – 6.54 percent) and often (56 – 26.17 percent) to sometimes (88 – 41.12 percent) and rarely (35 – 16.36 percent). Those who have immigrant friends/acquaintances listed 48 countries from where their immigrant friends/acquaintances come from. The most frequently mentioned countries were Russia, Germany, the UK, Bulgaria, Azerbaijan and the USA. 113 participants stated that the immigrants they know are their friends, 60 stated that they are neighbors, 32 stated that they are colleagues, 26 stated that they are relatives. Along with that, eight participants indicated that they have immigrants among their clients.



### 3.2. Attitude towards immigrants

The attitude towards immigrants was investigated with 18 questions of section two. The questions in section two, three and four were close-ended questions with the use of Likert scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). The thresholds to interpret the descriptive results were determined as 1-3: negative, 3-4: neutral and 4-7: positive. In the first part of section two, the participants were asked about their attitude towards immigrants and their perception of immigrants' contribution to different socioeconomic domains (Table 3).

Table 3

*Attitude towards immigrants and perception of immigrants' contribution to socioeconomic domains*

No	Question	Mean	SD
16	I have an overall positive attitude towards immigrants in Turkey	5.31	1.88
17	I admire the personal characteristics of immigrants in Turkey	4.19	1.98
18	Immigrants significantly contribute to Turkish economy	4.20	2.02
19	Immigrants significantly contribute to culture development of Turkish people	4.42	2.08
20	Immigrants significantly contribute to Turkish educational system	3.70	1.98
21	The education is better in schools where immigrants teach or study	3.74	2.06
22	Immigrants significantly contribute to vision of Turkish society	4.42	2.11
23	Immigrants significantly broaden the intellectual horizon of Turkish society	4.35	2.06

It can be stated that the participants have a positive attitude towards immigrants residing in Turkey ( $M = 5.31$ ,  $SD = 1.88$ ). The participants also noted that immigrants contribute to the cultural and intellectual development of Turkish society. The responses to 16, 19, 22 and 23 with means between 4.21 – 5.31 support this inference. However, as it can be seen in Table 2, the mean scores appear with a pretty high standard deviation, which indicates that the data are not homogenous. This suggests that there might be underlying sociocultural and demographic factors that influence the responses of the participants. For this reason, multiple linear regression analysis is conducted to reveal the explanatory variables predicting the participants' responses. Multiple linear regression analysis regarding the attitude of Turkish society towards immigrants indicated that having immigrant friends/acquaintances is the most crucial predictor of the attitude (Figure 1). The participants who have immigrant friends/acquaintances have significantly more positive attitude towards immigrants ( $\beta = 2.24$ ,  $t = 11.81$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). Another factor modulating the attitude was educational level. The results showed that the high-school graduates have significantly more negative attitudes compared to the

graduates of primary school ( $\beta = 1.24$ ,  $t = 4.31$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) and secondary school ( $\beta = 1.21$ ,  $t = 3.57$ ,  $p = .0004$ ) and the PhD holders ( $\beta = 1.56$ ,  $t = 3.19$ ,  $p = .002$ ).

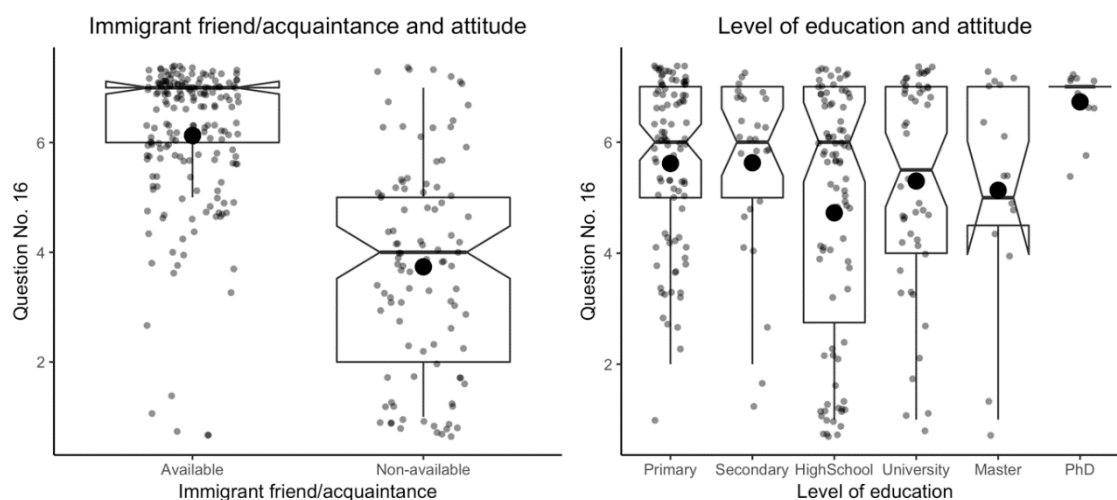


Figure 1. Values on the y axis correspond to responses to Question No. 16. Large black dot indicates the mean and grey dots represent data points.

During the interviews, when the informants were asked about their attitude towards immigrants and about the characteristics of immigrants that appeal to them, the following responses were received:

“I have had a chance to work with foreigners for many years. I can say that they are very hard-working and trustworthy.” (Retired engineer)

“I have a friend who is an immigrant and she is also my neighbor. She has a golden heart and she’s so trustworthy. I would not exchange her for a Turkish person.” (Housewife)

“I have several immigrant friends. We have been staying in the same dormitory. I can say that they’re very respectful towards our culture and they are very tolerant.” (Student)

“I think it would be incorrect to define immigrants as a whole as being good or bad people. I think a person from any country can be good or bad.” (Teacher)

“In fact, I don’t have any immigrant friends. But in general, to my mind, they are very arrogant and tend to look down to Turkish people.” (Interior designer)

When the participants were asked about immigrants’ contribution to Turkish education, they seem not to have any strong stance, though some of them indicated that they would like to have foreign teachers for their children. Some of the responses were as follows:

“Since the level of education is higher in Europe, foreign teachers tend to be more knowledgeable in their subject.” (Pharmacist)

“There is a German teacher in my son’s school. He treats the kids with perfect German discipline. All parents are very pleased with his educational approach.” (Engineer)

“I can’t say anything definite on this topic. I don’t think that immigrants might contribute to the educational system of Turkey. How can it be possible?” (Interior designer)

In the second part of section two, the participants were asked about their perception of threats that can originate from immigrants for different socio-economic domains (Table 4).

Table 4

*Perception of immigrants as a threat to different socio-economic domains*

No	Question	Mean	SD
24	The more I know about immigrants, the less I like them	2.45	1.93
25	Immigrants take jobs of Turkish people away	3.27	2.14
26	The unity of Turkey weakens because of immigrants with different ethic/cultural backgrounds	2.85	2.22
27	Immigrants threaten Turkish economy	2.93	2.17
28	Immigrants threaten employment opportunities	3.54	2.27
29	Immigrants threaten religious stability	2.35	1.99
30	Immigrants threaten culture	2.77	2.14
31	Immigrants threaten the family unity	2.90	2.19
32	Immigrants threaten education	2.38	1.93
33	Immigrants increase the crime level	2.51	1.94

It can be stated that Turkish people do not consider immigrants as a threat to the family ( $M = 2.90$ ,  $SD = 2.19$ ), education ( $M = 2.38$ ,  $SD = 1.93$ ), cultural unity ( $M = 2.77$ ,  $SD = 2.14$ ) and religious stability ( $M = 2.35$ ,  $SD = 1.99$ ) of Turkish society. However, the responses might be interpreted that some of the participants may be concerned about their employment and may perceive immigrants as a threat for finding a job ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 2.27$ ) and being employed ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 2.14$ ), since the means for these questions are the highest in the section.

Multiple linear regression analysis regarding the perception of threat demonstrated that the major factor modulating the perception of threat for employment (Question 25) is the availability of immigrant friends/acquaintances in the participant’s environment (Figure 2). The participants who do not have immigrant friends/acquaintances are more likely to consider immigrants as a threat for finding a job ( $\beta = 1.48$ ,  $t = 5.39$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). Educational level stands out as another factor predicting the perception of threat. The high school graduates are more likely to consider immigrants as a threat for finding a job compared to the primary school ( $\beta = 0.97$ ,  $t = 2.32$ ,  $p = .02$ ), secondary school ( $\beta = 1.06$ ,  $t = 2.22$ ,  $p = .03$ ) and PhD holders ( $\beta = 2.24$ ,  $t = 3.16$ ,  $p = .002$ ). Lastly, the males perceive more threat for the employment ( $\beta = 0.50$ ,  $t = 1.98$ ,  $p = .05$ ). Age, marital status or knowledge of a foreign language do not predict the perception of threat.

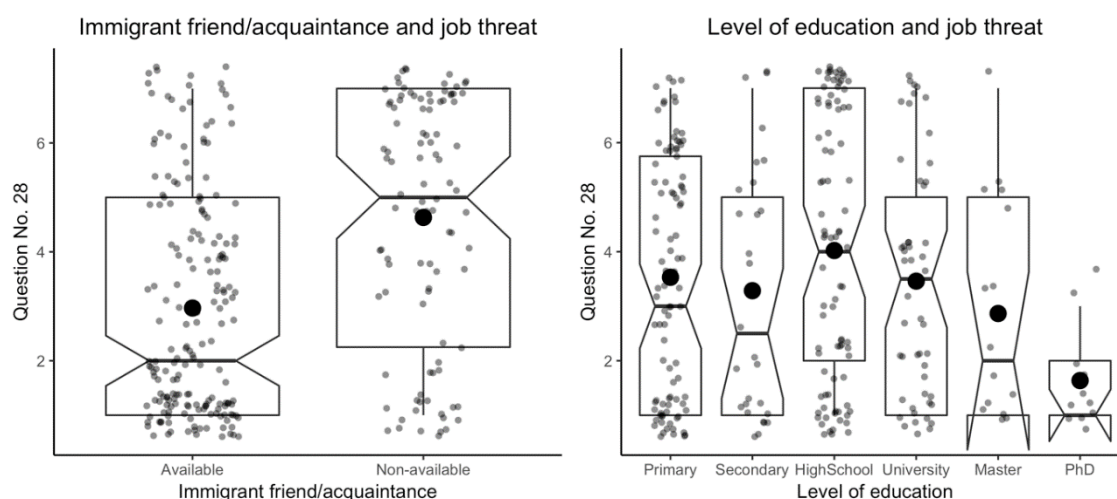


Figure 2. Values on the y axis correspond to responses to Question No. 28. Large black dot indicates the mean and grey dots represent data points.

The responses obtained from the interviews are consistent with the statistical analyses:

“Education level is important to find a good job. But Turkish people have an advantage here because we know Turkish as a native language, while immigrants cannot communicate with Turkish people the way we can do.” (Pharmacist)

“There are already so many unemployed people in Turkey. I don’t understand why they are recruiting immigrants. This makes me really angry.” (Coach)

“Many clients prefer immigrants just because they are foreigners. However, we do the same job.” (Beauty specialist)

### 3.3. Expectations related to immigrants’ acculturation

To examine the expectation of Turkish people about acculturation, the participants were asked which acculturation pattern they would like immigrants to follow (Table 5).

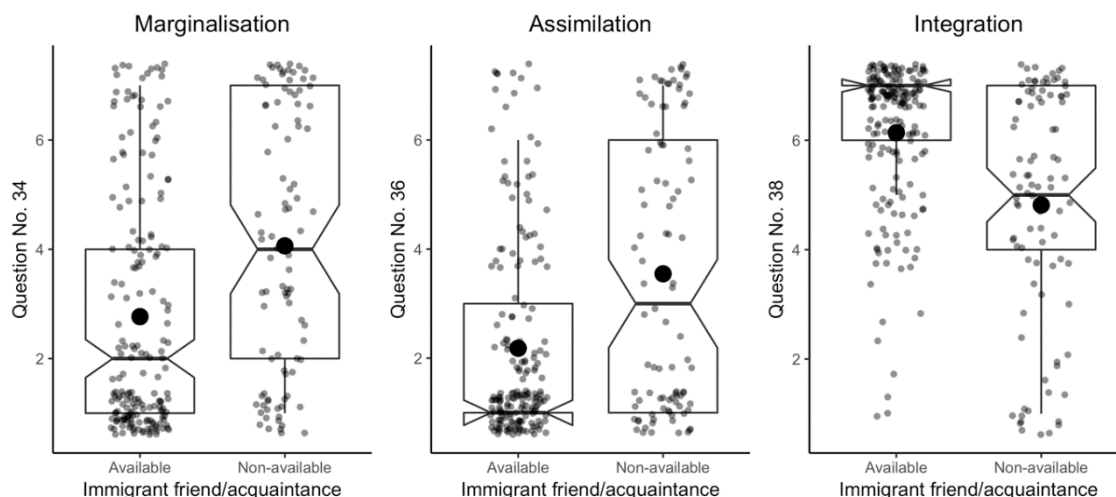
Table 5

*Expectations of Turkish people as to immigrants’ acculturation*

No	Question	Mean	SD
34	Immigrants should neither preserve their own culture nor acquire the host culture	3.20	2.33
35	Immigrants should preserve their own culture and reject the host culture	3.33	2.29
36	Immigrants should adapt the host culture and abandon their own culture	2.64	2.16
37	Immigrants should preserve key features of their culture while orienting themselves to the host culture	5.70	1.74

The participants expect immigrants to orient themselves to Turkish culture along with preserving the key features of their own culture ( $M = 5.70$ ,  $SD = 1.74$ ), that is Turkish people, by and large, for the integration of immigrants living in Turkish society.

Regression analyses regarding the expectations towards immigrants' acculturation pattern indicated that having immigrant friends/acquaintances, gender, age, educational level and being able to speak another language are predictive factors of acculturation preferences (Figure 3). The participants who do not have immigrant friends/acquaintances are more inclined to prefer marginalization ( $\beta = 1.13$ ,  $t = 3.89$ ,  $p = .0001$ ) and assimilation ( $\beta = 1.07$ ,  $t = 4.40$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) and less inclined to prefer integration ( $\beta = -1.35$ ,  $t = 6.27$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). As for gender variable, the males prefer assimilation ( $\beta = 1.47$ ,  $t = 6.47$ ,  $p < .000$ ) and separation ( $\beta = 0.55$ ,  $t = 2.04$ ,  $p = .04$ ) more, while the females are more likely to think that immigrants are free to adopt either their own culture or the host culture ( $\beta = 0.62$ ,  $t = 2.87$ ,  $p = .004$ ), which is the pattern of integration. Age was found to another factor predicting acculturation preference. The participants aged between 40-49 ( $\beta = 1.25$ ,  $t = 2.60$ ,  $p = .01$ ) and 50-59 ( $\beta = 1.37$ ,  $t = 2.42$ ,  $p = .02$ ) are more likely to prefer marginalization than the participants between 20-29. The participants over 60 are more likely to prefer separation than the participants between 20-29 ( $\beta = 1.55$ ,  $t = 2.39$ ,  $p = .02$ ). Lastly, knowledge of a foreign language appeared as a factor affecting the acculturation preference. The Turkish monolinguals are more inclined to prefer assimilation compared to the bilinguals ( $\beta = 1.05$ ,  $t = 2.92$ ,  $p = .004$ ).



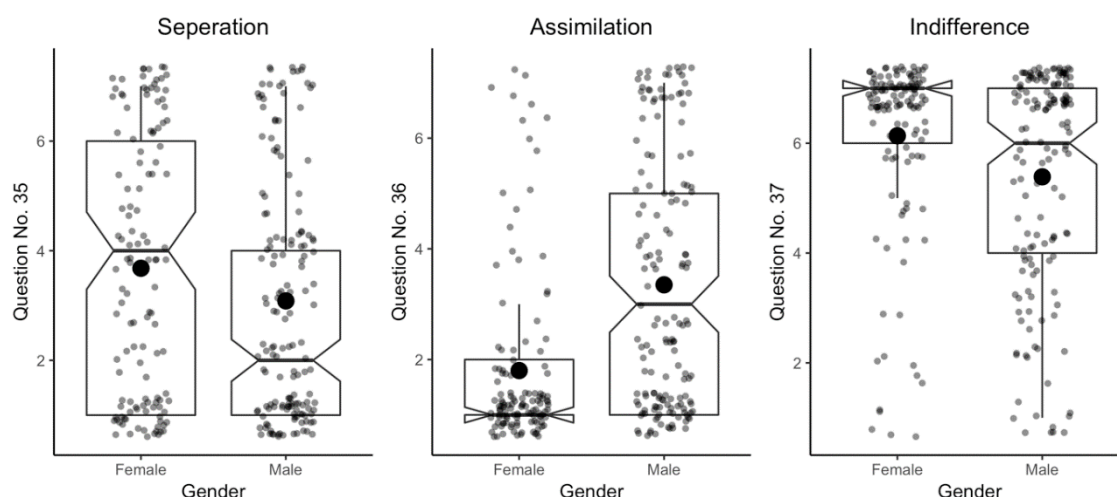


Figure 3. Values on the y axis correspond to responses to Question No. 34, 35, 36, 37 and 38. Large black dot indicates the mean and grey dots represent data points.

### 3.4. Perception of linguistic factors affecting immigrants' acculturation

Assuming that knowledge of the host language is an important predictor of acculturation to the host society (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982), the participants were asked what they think about the Turkish language knowledge of immigrants and to what extent the proficiency in Turkish may affect immigrants' communication efficiency and life standards (Table 6).

Table 6

#### Perception of linguistic factors affecting immigrants' acculturation

No	Question	Mean	SD
39	Immigrants have difficulties in comprehending and expressing themselves in Turkish	4.94	1.98
40	Immigrants need to know Turkish better	5.37	1.93
41	Turkish is an obstacle for immigrants to communicate efficiently	5.19	1.88
42	Turkish is an obstacle for immigrants to reach higher life standards	4.78	2.01

The participants think that immigrants residing in Turkey have difficulties to communicate in Turkish ( $M = 4.94$ ,  $SD = 1.98$ ) and they would like immigrants to be able to speak Turkish better ( $M = 5.37$ ,  $SD = 1.93$ ). Along with it, the participants stated that the limited proficiency is a serious obstacle for efficient communication ( $M = 5.19$ ,  $SD = 1.88$ ) and a better life quality in Turkey ( $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD = 2.01$ ). Further, the participants were presented with 13 social situations and were requested to evaluate the importance of Turkish knowledge in each of them (Table 7).

Table 7  
*The importance of Turkish for various social situations*

No	Social situation	Mean	SD
43_a	Making friends	5.75	1.79
43_b	Earning money	5.83	1.64
43_c	Getting education	6.11	1.40
43_d	Finding a job	5.95	1.56
43_e	Living safely	5.23	1.99
43_f	Having a say	5.91	1.74
43_g	Bringing up children	4.27	2.29
43_h	Being a part of Turkish society	5.22	2.05
43_i	Communicating with Turkish friends	5.59	1.69
43_j	Communicating with Turkish colleagues	5.75	1.67
43_k	Travelling in Turkey	4.64	2.12
43_l	Shopping in Turkey	4.80	2.04

As it is evident in Table 7, participants consider the knowledge of Turkish as especially important for getting education ( $M = 6.11$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ), finding a job ( $M = 5.95$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ), having a say in the society ( $M = 5.91$ ,  $SD = 1.74$ ), earning money ( $M = 5.83$ ,  $SD = 1.64$ ), communicate with Turkish colleagues ( $M = 5.75$ ,  $SD = 1.67$ ), making friends ( $M = 5.75$ ,  $SD = 1.79$ ) and communicating with them ( $M = 5.59$ ,  $SD = 1.69$ ). The participants think that knowledge of Turkish is not that important for bringing up a child ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 2.29$ ), travelling ( $M = 4.64$ ,  $SD = 2.12$ ) and shopping ( $M = 4.80$ ,  $SD = 2.04$ ).

Regression analyses regarding the importance of Turkish knowledge revealed that being able to speak another language and age are critical predictors of the importance attached to knowledge of Turkish in general (Figure 4). The monolingual participants compared to the bilinguals are more likely to think that Turkish knowledge is highly important in all situations ( $\beta = 0.52$ ,  $t = 2.27$ ,  $p = .02$ ). The participants aged between 40-49 ( $\beta = 0.57$ ,  $t = 2.20$ ,  $p = .03$ ), 50-59 ( $\beta = 0.94$ ,  $t = 3.12$ ,  $p = .002$ ) and over 60 ( $\beta = 1.05$ ,  $t = 2.98$ ,  $p = .003$ ) attach significantly higher importance to the knowledge of Turkish compared to the youngest group (participants between 20-29). The participants who do not have immigrant friends/acquaintances are more likely to think that Turkish knowledge is important ( $\beta = 0.83$ ,  $t = 5.25$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). Lastly, the primary school graduates attach more importance to knowledge of Turkish compared to the high school graduates ( $\beta = 0.64$ ,  $t = 2.71$ ,  $p = .007$ ).

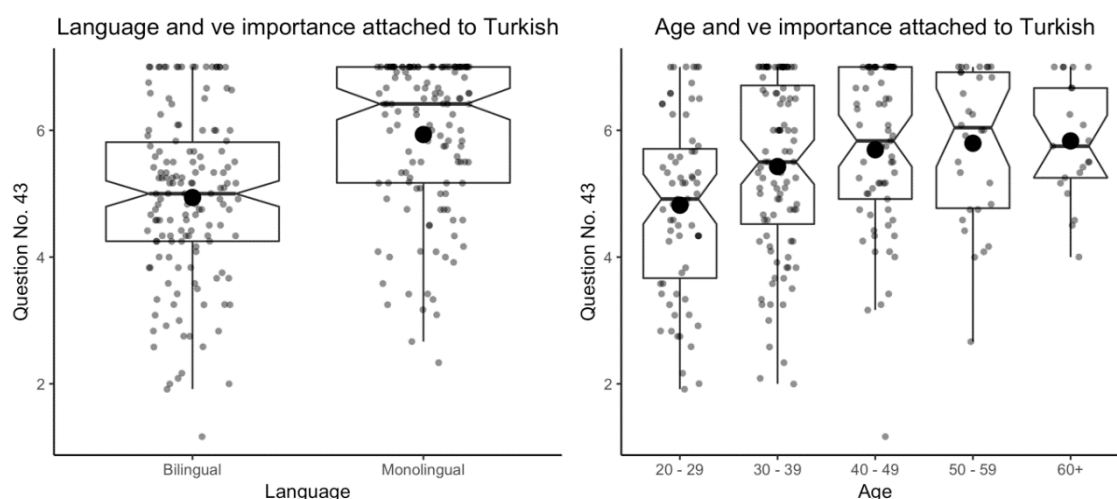


Figure 4. Values on the y axis correspond to responses to Question No. 43. Large black dot indicates the mean and grey dots represent data points.

During the interviews, the participants expressed their opinion about immigrants’ knowledge of Turkish and its importance as follows:

“Many immigrants from European countries do not even try to learn Turkish. They tend to survive with English or German.” (Shop assistant)

“You may not be able to find someone speaking a foreign language. Actually, not all immigrants can speak English either. That’s why it’s very important to learn Turkish for them to live in comfort in Turkey.” (Teacher)

“It is a must to speak Turkish if you want to be accepted by Turkish society. This is especially important in public spaces.” (Engineer)

“You may not need Turkish when shopping or travelling. There is always someone who can speak English more or less. But you definitely need Turkish if you want to be hired.” (University student)

### 3.5. Perception of social factors affecting immigrants’ acculturation

In the last section, the participants were asked about the effect of religious, cultural and behavioral differences between Turkish society and immigrants for immigrants’ acculturation (Table 8).

Table 8  
*Social factors that affect immigrants’ acculturation in Turkey*

No	Question	Mean	SD
44	Religious differences between Turkish and immigrant societies are an obstacle for efficient communication and high life standards	2.90	2.07
45	Cultural differences between Turkish and immigrant societies are an obstacle for efficient communication and high life standards	3.33	2.07
46	Behavioral differences between Turkish and immigrant societies are an obstacle for efficient communication and high life standards	3.41	2.01



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47	Political issues are an obstacle for efficient communication and high life standards	3.53	2.08
48	Turkish people need to be more flexible in cultural issues to contribute to the integration of immigrants	4.60	2.17
49	Turkish people need to be more flexible in cultural issues to contribute to cultural unity with immigrants	4.50	2.17

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The data analysis revealed that the participants do not consider religious ( $M = 2.90$ ,  $SD = 2.07$ ), cultural ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = 2.07$ ), and behavioral differences ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = 2.01$ ) as crucial factors. They moderately agree that Turkish people should be more flexible in cultural issues to contribute to immigrants' integration ( $M = 4.60$ ,  $SD = 2.17$ ) and cultural unity ( $M = 4.50$ ,  $SD = 2.17$ ).

Regression analysis revealed that availability of immigrant friends/acquaintances, education, being able to speak a foreign language, marital status and gender moderate the participants' perception of the differences as an obstacle for acculturation. The high school graduates compared to the primary school graduates ( $\beta = 1.98$ ,  $t = 6.16$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), the monolinguals ( $\beta = 0.87$ ,  $t = 2.77$ ,  $p = .006$ ), the unmarried ( $\beta = 0.72$ ,  $t = 2.74$ ,  $p = .007$ ) and the males ( $\beta = 0.45$ ,  $t = 2.26$ ,  $p = .02$ ) are more likely to think that religious, cultural and behavioral differences between Turkish and immigrant societies are obstacles for efficient communication and high life standards. On the other hand, education, gender, knowledge of another language, availability of immigrant friends/acquaintances and age predict the responses related to the tolerance of Turkish people towards immigrants. The primary school ( $\beta = 2.07$ ,  $t = 5.54$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) and secondary school graduates ( $\beta = 1.01$ ,  $t = 2.37$ ,  $p = .02$ ) compared to the high school graduates, the females ( $\beta = 1.01$ ,  $t = 4.40$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), the bilinguals ( $\beta = 1.54$ ,  $t = 4.21$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), the participants who have immigrant friends/acquaintances ( $\beta = 1.03$ ,  $t = 4.20$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), the participants aged between 20-29 compared to the participants between 50-59 ( $\beta = 0.96$ ,  $t = 2.02$ ,  $p = .04$ ) are more likely to think that Turkish people need to be more flexible to contribute to immigrants' integration and cultural unity with them.

#### 4. Discussion

The aim of the study was to investigate the attitude and expectations of Turkish society as host concerning immigrants and their acculturation patterns in Turkey. The findings revealed that Turkish people have a positive attitude toward immigrants coming from European, Post-Soviet countries and the USA. The participants acknowledged that immigrants contribute to the cultural and intellectual development of Turkish people and broaden their vision. Results demonstrated that the most important factor that has an impact on the attitude of Turkish people is the availability of immigrant friends/acquaintances in their close environments. In this respect, the findings showed that if a participant has immigrant friends/acquaintances, his/her attitude is significantly more positive towards immigrants in general. Our findings can be regarded as supporting

Contact Theory in sociolinguistics suggesting that the intergroup contact typically reduces intergroup prejudice and contributes to the positive dynamics in the relationship (Cook 1984; Harrington and Miller 1992; Jackson 1993; Patchen 1999; Pettigrew 1998; 1971; 1986). The study also indicated that the participants do not consider the existence of immigrants as a threat towards culture, religion, family unity and education. However, they perceive some threat from immigrants when their employment is considered. High school graduates and males were found to perceive significantly more threat from immigrants in this respect. These findings can be explained referring to Group Threat Theory according to which the threat may occur due to the competition for scarce resources. Even though the current study did not examine the causes of threat, it is highly likely that high unemployment rates in Turkey, especially among high school and university graduates, might be a plausible reason for the threat perception. High school graduates may feel economically more insecure compared to other educational level groups: primary, secondary school graduates and PhD holders. PhD holders are likely to have less concerns about their employment due to their high level of education and qualifications. Primary and secondary school graduates do not perceive immigrants as a threat for their employment because immigrants in Turkey, especially those from European countries, are perceived to possess a high social and economic profiles and, thus, are unlikely to apply for unqualified jobs, typically undertaken by primary and secondary school graduates. On the other hand, that males perceive more threat for employment than females can be related to the fact that in Turkey, men are mainly money earners and income providers (Koç 2002).

Concerning the expectations of Turkish society regarding the acculturation patterns of immigrants, the results showed that Turkish people would like immigrants to integrate into their society. This suggests that Turkish people expect immigrants to acquire characteristics of Turkish culture, but they are also not disturbed by the fact that immigrants may preserve their own culture.

The data analysis showed that gender, age and knowledge of another language affect Turkish people's preference for acculturation pattern. Firstly, people above forty are more in favor of marginalization and separation, which might suggest that older generations are more conservative in comparison with young ones. Secondly, monolinguals prefer assimilation more than bi-/multilinguals. This might indicate that monolinguals are less open to different cultures and languages in their environment, most probably, because their linguistic knowledge and cultural vision may be insufficient for apprehending cultural diversity and multilingualism.

As for linguistic and social factors, the results revealed that the most important factor affecting immigrants' acculturation is immigrants' knowledge of the host language, which allows immigrants to communicate, learn about the host society and its culture, and adapt to it. The participants stated that immigrants should know Turkish better since limited proficiency in Turkish is a serious obstacle for immigrants' efficient

communication with the host society, and comfortable and safe life. Turkish people acknowledged the importance of Turkish in various social situations. If to compare the expectations of Turkish society with acculturation tendencies of immigrant diasporas in Turkey, it can be put forward that immigrants are not homogenous in this respect: while immigrants from certain countries (e.g., Russia) were reported to be integrated into Turkish society (Antonova-Unlu et al. 2015), others (West European diasporas) were observed to reject Turkish culture and language following separation (e.g. Tamer-Görer et.al. 2006; Toprak 2009; Antonova-Unlu et. al. 2016). These differences among immigrants can be attributed to several sociocultural factors (age of immigration, marital status and social prestige of languages). All in all, our findings allow us to suggest that Turkish people seem to be more tolerant to European, Post-Soviet and the USA immigrants residing in their country, and they have more positive attitude towards them in comparison to the commonly reported attitudes towards immigrants in the European context. In this respect, Turkish society seems to be more similar to such immigrant-intensive countries as Canada and New Zealand, which were reported to be open to other cultures and in favor of immigrants' integration.

In this respect, it is necessary to mark that the profile of minorities seems to be a critical factor determining the attitude of the host society. For this reason, the findings of the present study focusing on immigrants from Europe, Post-Soviet countries and the USA contradict the findings of the studies focusing on refugees, mainly from Syria, and reporting a negative attitude, a huge perceived threat and unwillingness to host them in Turkish society (e.g. Altıok and Tosun 2018; Erdoğan and Uyan Semerci 2017).

## **5. Conclusions (or Conclusions and Discussion)**

As more societies grow multicultural and multilingual nowadays due to the presence of immigrants, it is becoming more and more essential to know what host societies think about the immigrants in their country and expect from them. The present study provides descriptive findings regarding the attitudes and expectation of the host Turkish society concerning immigrants residing in Turkey. Though our results identify main predictors affecting the attitude and acculturation expectations of Turkish society, they do not allow to draw conclusions about causal relations.

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