

Turkish Elementary School Students' Perceptions of Local and Global Terrorism

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Abstract

Introduction. Historically, terrorism has occurred in various regions of the world and has been considered a local problem until the September, 11 terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001. After 9/11, terrorism has become a global concern. The definition of terrorism has changed from a violent act of a group of local people against their own government for political gains to a violent act of people of a country against another country for political attention. Now a global phenomenon, terrorism has become analogous to a state of war, affecting children and families all over the world and creating a demand for mental health services directed at helping people cope with their feelings following terrorist attacks. This study investigates Turkish elementary school students' perceptions of worldwide terrorism.

Method. Participants comprised 190 fourth and fifth grade elementary school students (98 boys and 92 girls) from four elementary schools in Istanbul. 98 students were in fourth grade and 92 students were in fifth grade. Students' ages ranged from 9 to 15 ($M=10.66$, $SD=0.76$). The Questionnaire of Children's Perception of Terror (QoCPoT) was developed by the authors and is used in this study. Data were analyzed in SPSS 14.

Results. The results indicate that most children know that terrorist attacks took place in Turkey, the United States and around the world. Students most frequently defined terrorism as 'the killing of innocent people' and categorized terrorists as 'bandits.' They report feeling bad when they hear the word 'terrorism.' Findings suggest that there are gender differences in children's perception of terrorism in the affective and cognitive domains.

Discussion. This study provides preliminary information about Turkish children's perceptions of local and global terrorism in cognitive and affective domains of functioning. In general, most children in the study are knowledgeable about the terrorist attacks took place in Turkey, the United States and around the world. It is likely that the media has had an impact on the amount of information children receive on terrorism. Children's responses show that their definition of terrorism is akin to the original definition of terrorism.

Keywords: *Terrorism, children, elementary school, 9/11.*

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Resumen

Introducción. Históricamente, el terrorismo ha ocurrido en las varias regiones del mundo y se ha considerado un problema local hasta los ataques del terrorista del 11 de septiembre contra los Estados Unidos en 2001. Después del 9/11, el terrorismo se ha convertido en una preocupación global. La definición del terrorismo ha cambiado de un acto violento de un grupo de gente local contra su propio gobierno para los aumentos políticos a un acto violento de la gente de un país contra otro país para la atención política. Ahora un fenómeno global, terrorismo ha llegado a ser análogo a un estado de la guerra, afectando a niños y las familias por todo el mundo y creando una demanda para los servicios psicológicos dirigidos para ayudar a la gente enfrentar las emociones que siguen después de ataques terroristas.

Método. Los participantes eran 190 estudiantes a partir de cuatro escuelas primarias en los grados cuarto y quinto (98 niños y 92 niñas) en Estambul. 98 estudiantes estaban en el cuarto grado y 92 estudiantes estaban en el quinto grado. Las edades de los estudiantes eran entre 9 a 15 años ($M = 10.66$, $SD=0.76$). El cuestionario de la opinión de los niños del terror (QoC-PoT) fue desarrollado por los autores y se utiliza en este estudio. Los datos eran analizados en SPSS 14.

Resultados. Los resultados indican que la mayoría de los niños saben que los ataques terroristas ocurrieron en Turquía, los Estados Unidos y alrededor del mundo. Los estudiantes definieron terrorismo como 'la matanza de la gente inocente' y categorizaron a los terroristas como 'bandidos.' También reportaron tener una mala sensación al oír la palabra 'terrorismo.' Los resultados sugieren que hay diferencias en la opinión de los niños del terrorismo según su género y que los influye en los dominios afectivos y cognoscitivos diferentemente.

Discusión. Este estudio proporciona la información preliminar sobre las opiniones de los niños sobre el terrorismo local y global en los dominios cognoscitivos y afectivos. La mayoría de los niños en el estudio están bien informados sobre los ataques terroristas que ocurrieron en Turquía, los Estados Unidos y alrededor del mundo. Es probable que la televisión haya hecho un gran impacto en la información sobre el terrorismo que reciben los niños. Las respuestas de los niños demuestran que su definición del terrorismo es relacionada con la definición original del terrorismo.

Palabras Claves: *Terrorismo, niños, escuela primaria, 11-S.*

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Introduction

Historically, terrorism has occurred in various regions of the world and has been considered a local problem until the September, 11 terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001. After 9/11, terrorism has become a global concern as its definition has changed from a violent act of a group of local people against their own government for political gains to a violent act of people of a country against another country for political attention. Having its scale transformed from a local to a more global phenomenon, terrorism has become analogous to a state of war, affecting children and families all over the world and creating a demand for mental health services directed at helping people cope with their feelings following terrorist attacks (Kirkley & Medway, 2003).

Terrorism does not only harm its victims, but it also leaves long-lasting negative effects on other people (Ayalon, 2001; Merari & Friedland, 2001; Shaw, 2003). A unique trait of terrorism is that it cannot be predicted when, where, or how it is going to happen and by whom it is going to be executed. This trait pushes both adults and children to live in a constant state of stimulation, anxiety, helplessness and hopelessness. A questionnaire conducted by Schuster et al. (2001) indicated that 44% of adults and 35% of children experienced major symptoms of stress due to 9/11 terrorist attacks. Pasquali (2003) noted that two months after the September 11 terrorist attacks, illegal drug use, insomnia, depression, and general anxiety increased in United States. Although those living in New York City and its suburbs experienced the highest rate of symptoms, similar symptoms were experienced by people throughout the country. Also Schmidt and Winters (2002) noted that on September 11, terrorists did more than destroy buildings, they scarred the American psyche, pointing to the increase in prescriptions for anxiolytics and the antibiotic Cipro. Two years after the attacks, some people were still suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), and many were experiencing anxiety and stress related to the possibility of future attacks (Pasquali, 2003).

Around the world, children are exposed to violence in multiple forms, frequently developing traumatic stress reactions and a wide range of emotions (DeRanieri, Clements, Clark, Kuhn & Manno, 2004) depending on their developmental level. The violence of terrorism often results in a multitiered cascade of negative life events, including loss of loved ones, displacement, lack of educational structure, and drastic changes in daily routine and commu-

nity values. These numerous losses, challenges, and stresses affect children's brains, minds, and bodies in an orchestrated whole-organism response (Joshi & O'Donnell, 2003). For instance, children and adolescents have had very different reactions to the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. Some avoided the horrific images on television and did not know anyone was injured or killed in the attacks. Others were more affected as they watched much of the story unfolding on television, heard news on the radio, or knew someone who was injured or killed in the attacks. Thus, some children experienced the attack as a psychological trauma, having a variety of symptoms of anxiety and depression that ranged from mild to severe (Hanze & Kuntz, 2002).

Research shows that school age children (6-12) actively deal with traumatic events in their fantasies. For instance, children may imagine rescuing their parents and tricking the assailant. Since play and resuscitation is highly developed at this age level, children are able to develop an internal action plan to cope with the consequences of the trauma by reversing the traumatic event in their fantasies and imagining a happy ending. As a result, the ability to cope with trauma through fantasy helps the child to deal with his/her feeling of helplessness. Yet, the child's cognitive maturity of developing an internal action plan goes hand in hand with feelings of guilt and embarrassment. Once they can imagine the ways to avoid traumatic events, children feel guilty of not taking the proper action to avoid it (Macksoud, Dyregrov & Raundalen, 2001).

Schools may or may not be the targets of terrorism, but they are certainly affected by terrorism indirectly through their students who have been exposed to such violence. For instance, some schools and their students were seriously affected by the events of September 11 (National Advisory Committee on Children and Terrorism, 2004). In a study of 8,236 children, Hoven et al. (2005) extrapolated from their findings that 75,916 (10.6%) of NYC public school children who were in Grades 4–12 had symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and more than one quarter of the students had at least one of seven surveyed mental health problems. They estimated that 15% of the children had agoraphobia, with rates of major depression, generalized anxiety disorder, separation anxiety disorder, panic attacks, and conduct disorder ranging from 8% to 12% of their sample. For children in Grades 9–12, 4.5% reported alcohol abuse.

Turkey has been experiencing local terrorism for decades and has recently been affected by global terrorism. Turkey has been dealing with numerous terrorist organizations, including the Islamic Great Eastern Raiders/Front, Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), and Turkish Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Army (TIKKO) for the last two decades. Periodic bombings and shootings by PKK and others during the 1990s had become a part of daily life in many cities in Turkey (Drakos & Kutan, 2003). In one such attack, a woman set off a bomb outside an army barracks in eastern Turkey in December 1998, killing herself and a passer-by and seriously injuring 22 people. A month earlier, a bomb exploded on a bus in central Turkey, killing four passengers and injuring 17. A PKK suicide bomber killed herself with a bomb strapped to her body, killing six people outside a police station in southeast Turkey. These attacks came as a response to the arrest of the PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan, in Italy, in November 1998. In addition to regular attacks by the PKK and others, Turkey has recently been subject to new terrorist incidents because of the political instability in the region (Drakos & Kutan, 2003).

As a consequence of its alliance with United States, Turkey has also been a target of global terrorism. In November 2003, Istanbul witnessed the most horrific, barbaric suicide bomb attacks in its history. On November 15th, suicide bombers attacked the Neve Shalom and Beth Israel synagogues and on November 20th there were two attacks against the HSBC Bank and the British Consulate where the British Counsel-General Roger Guy Short was killed. The four attacks killed nearly 60 people and injured 712 others (Office of the Prime Minister, Directorate General of Press and Information, 2003).

After the September 11 terrorist attacks in United States, many studies were conducted on terrorism and its effects on children (see e.g. DeRanieri et al., 2004; Errante, 2003; Feerick & Prinz, 2003; Shaw, 2003; Silverman, 2002; Tucker, 2004) and many articles on intervention to help children cope with traumatic event during and after terrorist attacks were published in international journals and web sites (see e.g. Fassler, 2002; Gokler, 2001; Green & Ramirez, 2002; NASP, 2001; Perry, 2001). Yet, despite Turkey's prolonged experience with terrorism, there has not been one study on the effects of terrorism on children and children's perceptions of terrorism.

In this study, the perceptions on local and global terrorism among fourth and fifth grade Turkish students who were studying near Istanbul's Neve Shalom and Beth Israel

Synagogues, the HSBC Bank and the British Consulate at the time of the attacks, are explored. The study intends to analyze these children's perceptions of terrorism and their coping strategies for dealing with violence in order to fill a gap in the existing literature on children's responses to terrorism. Answering questions related to terrorism will be a basis for professionals to develop intervention programs for children who have witnessed and/or affected by violence. That is why it is important to investigate children's reaction to terrorism (Foster, 2001).

Method

Participants

Participants comprised 190 fourth and fifth grade elementary school students (98 boys and 92 girls) from four elementary schools in Istanbul. 98 students were in fourth grade and 92 students were in fifth grade. Three schools were public and one school was a private elementary school. Schools were randomly selected from different socio-economic districts. Ninety-five students from middle socio-economic class, 48 students from high socio-economic class, 25 students from low socio-economic class and 22 students from upper-middle socio-economic class were selected randomly. Students' age ranged from 9 to 15 ($M = 10.66$, $SD = 0.76$). Only one student was 15 and two students were 13 years-old.

Procedure

Surveys were administrated by second author in classrooms in the end of spring semester of 2005. The survey required 15-20 minutes to complete. All participants volunteered to participate in the study.

Instruments

Questionnaire of Children's Perception of Terror (*QoCPoT*) was developed by the authors of this study. A pilot study was carried on 60 students from fourth and fifth grades. Students were asked to write a composition on what terrorism is and what they feel about it. After reviewing the compositions, a content analysis performed by authors and 16 open-ended questions were constructed such as 'what is terrorism?', 'what do you feel when you hear the word terrorism?', and 'how can we protect ourselves from terrorists and terrorism?' Each item was reviewed and revised in order to ensure that the reading level was appropriate for elemen-

tary school students before it was administered to actual participants. The current version of the QoCPoT has an overall reading level of fourth grade.

Statistical Analysis

Students' answers to each question were thereafter analyzed. Each answer was broken into smaller meaningful units and themes were identified. Common themes between students' answers were grouped under one category. Students' answers that were meaningful, but did not fit into a certain category were combined, forming the 'other' category. Answers that were irrelevant to the questions being asked were labeled as 'not related'. Because all of the data was discrete and categorical, the frequency and the percentage of answers were calculated. SPSS 14 was used to analyze the data. Since assumptions for Chi-square analysis have not been met, differences related to gender and grade level could not be analyzed. Answer categories that were used by 10% or more of the participants were taken into consideration. When over 10% of the answers were categorized as 'not related,' they were disregarded. Furthermore, answer categories that were under 10% were not analyzed because of the small number of respondents for that category, yet they were left to the reader for consideration.

Results

As it is mentioned earlier, due to small sample size only descriptive statistics can be reported in this study. When asked 'what is terrorism?' students defined terrorism as 'killing innocent people' (37.4%) and 'attacking-fighting-bombing most of the time' (17.9%) (see Table 1). 27.4% of the students reported that they felt 'bad things' when they hear the word terrorism. The second most frequent answer was feeling 'fear-horror' (25.8%) followed by 'ambition-war-attack' (22.6%) (see Table 2). 46.7% of girls reported feeling 'fear-horror' whereas 43.8% of boys reported feeling 'ambition-war-attack'. Also only girls (26.1%) reported feeling 'death' for this question.

Students defined the person who is involved in a terrorist act a 'terrorist-rebel-bandit' (35.8%), a 'bad person' (18.9%), a 'killer' (10%) (see Table 3). When asked why they think a person becomes a terrorist, students thought that people became terrorists to 'change people and governments' (20%) or to 'kill and harm people' (11.6%) and 'for money' (11.1%) (see Table 4). 22.1% of students thought that terrorists came from foreign countries, 17.4% of students thought that they came from places where terrorist groups exist and 14.2% of students

reported that terrorists came from everywhere. Students thought that the goal of terrorists was to 'earn money and commodities' (36.3%), 'kill people' (30%), 'harm people' (10%) and/or 'destroy the Turkish Republic/to establish a new country' (10%). 23.2% of students knew the PKK, 18.9% of students knew the PKK and al-Qaeda. When the category 'al-Qaeda' was added, the PKK and al-Qaeda became the most well-known terrorist groups among students (47.9%).

Table 1. Students' responses to the question of 'What is terrorism?'

<i>What is terrorism</i>	Frequency	Percent
Killing innocent people	71	37.4
Attacking-fighting-bombing	34	17.9
One country attacking another-war	16	8.4
Something bad	16	8.4
Threat-chaos- intimidation	15	7.9
Committing crime-robbery	13	6.8
I don't know	2	1.1
Not related	23	12.1
Total	190	100

Table 2. Students' responses to the question of 'What do you feel when you hear the word terrorism?'

<i>What do you feel when you hear the word terrorism?</i>	Frequency	Percent
Bad things-I feel bad	52	27.4
Fear-horror	49	25.8
Ambition-war-attack	43	22.6
Death	24	12.6
I feel sad	5	2.6
Not related	17	8.9
Total	190	100

A considerable number of students (62.1%) reported that they had heard of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on United States. When asked who committed the terrorist attacks, 20.5% of the students responded, 'Osama bin Laden-al-Qaeda', 17.4% of students responded 'other' (terrorists, Israel, Iran, exc.) and 11.6% of the students responded 'U.S.-Bush'. When asked why they thought the 9/11 terrorist attacks happened most of the students (30.5%) reported that the reason was to destroy (twin towers), take over and intimidate United States.

Table 3. Students' responses to the questions of 'Who is a terrorist?' and 'Who involves in terrorist act?'

<i>Who is a terrorist?</i>	Frequency	Percent
Terrorist-rebel-bandit	68	35.8
Bad people	36	18.9
Killers	19	10.0
Nonpatriotics, enemies	16	8.4
Criminals	7	3.7
PKK	7	3.7
Uneducated people	6	3.2
Saddam	4	2.1
USA	3	1.6
Mentally challenged people	3	1.6
Agnostic people	3	1.6
I don't know	8	4.2
Not related	10	5.3
Total	190	100

Table 4. Students' responses to the question of 'Why a person becomes a terrorist?'

<i>Why a person becomes a terrorist?</i>	Frequency	Percent
To change people-overtake the government	38	20.0
To kill, hurt, scare people	22	11.6
For money	21	11.1
Because they are under threat-pressured	17	8.9
Because they are vicious	15	7.9
Because they are uneducated	13	6.8
Because they are deluded	7	3.7
Because they take pleasure	6	3.2
I don't know	19	10.0
Not related	32	16.8
Total	190	100

Students showed an exceptional awareness concerning local terrorism in their country. 92.6% of the students answered 'yes' and only 7.4% of the students answered 'no' when asked whether terrorist attacks have taken place in Turkey (see Table 5). 49.5% of the students replied 'terrorists-enemies-bad people' and 14.7% of the students identified the PKK as responsible for the terrorist attacks within their country (see Table 6). When asked why they thought terrorist attacks happened, 33.2% of students thought that terrorist attacks happened because people 'wanted to take over and destroy our country' and 11.6% of students replied as 'because they were deluded and pressured' (see Table 7). When students were asked where

else in the world terrorist attacks have taken place, 'foreign countries' (30%), 'United States' (27.9) and 'Iraq' (13.2%) were their most frequent answers.

Table 5. Students' responses to the question of 'Had there been any terrorist attacks in our country?'

<i>Had there been any terrorist attacks in our country?</i>	Frequency	Percent
Yes	176	92.6
No	14	7.4
Total	190	100

Table 6. Students' responses to the question of 'If there had been terrorist attacks in our country, who do you think is responsible?'

<i>Who do you think is responsible?</i>	Frequency	Percent
Terrorists-enemies-bad people exc.	94	49.5
PKK	28	14.7
Osama bin Laden-al-Qaeda	13	6.8
USA	7	3.7
Saddam-Iraq	3	1.6
I don't know	38	20.0
Not related	7	3.7
Total	190	100

Table 7. Students' responses to the question of 'If there had been terrorist attacks in our country, why do you think terrorists did the attacks?'

<i>Why do you think terrorists did the attacks?</i>	Frequency	Percent
To destroy and take over our country	63	33.2
Other (they were deluded, pressured exc.)	22	11.6
To kill other people	19	10.0
To take revenge-wickedness-to intimidate	12	6.3
For money	9	4.7
Because they were infidel	4	2.1
They have no reason	4	2.1
Because Turkey supports U.S.	3	1.6
I don't know	37	19.5
Not related	17	8.9
Total	190	100

61.1% of the students believed that terrorism can be eradicated, whereas 30% of students believed that it cannot be eradicated. Almost all girls believed that terrorism can be eradicated whereas 58.2% of boys believed that it cannot be eradicated. None of the girls answered as such. When asked how we can protect ourselves from terrorists and terrorism, 21.1% of the students replied, 'by increasing security precautions', 12.1% of the students re-

plied, 'by calling the police', 11.6% of the students replied, 'by fighting-killing them' and 11.6%, 'by running away-hiding'.

Discussion

This study provides preliminary information about Turkish children's perceptions of local and global terrorism at the cognitive and affective levels. In general, most of the children seem knowledgeable about the terrorist attacks that had taken place in Turkey, in the United States and around the world. It is likely that the media has had an impact on the amount of information children receive on terrorism. In a globalized world, both adults and children have access and are exposed to such mass information.

Children's responses show that their definition of terrorism is akin to the original definition of terrorism (see e.g. Micewski, 2005; UN, 2004). Children defined terrorism conceptually as 'killing of innocent people' and used the words such as 'threat' and 'chaos.' Children operationally defined terrorism as 'attacking, fighting, bombing, and intimidation'. This shows that children not only understand what terrorism means, but also know its effect on real life.

When children subjected to terrorism were examined, it is found that the prominent emotions comprised fear, panic and helplessness (Gokler, 2001; NASP, 2001; Saylor, Cowart, Lipovsky, Jackson & Finch, 2003). This indicates its negative effect on children regardless of the extent of their experience with terrorism. In this study, children expressed 'feeling bad', 'fear and horror' as a general state of emotion related to terror. These may be real expressions of intricate emotions in the face of terrorism. More specifically, girls provided more affective responses, such as feeling of fear and horror. Unlike girls, boys gave cognitive responses related to ambition, attack, and war.

Children seem to hold mixed ideas about who is involved in terrorist acts and the definition of a terrorist; both of which could be the result of mixed messages that they receive from adult conversations with respect to local and global terrorism. Children's responses to both questions show great variability. Most of the time children defined terrorists redundantly as 'terrorist', 'bandit' and 'rebel.' Some children defined terrorists in a local context as 'non-

patriots', 'enemies of the Turkish people' and the 'PKK'. However, few children affiliated terrorist with Saddam and the United States.

Children gave similar responses as to why they thought a person became a terrorist and what the goal of terrorists is. Although the order of response categories is different, children thought that people became terrorists 'for money', 'to kill and harm people' and 'to take over the country.' Surprisingly, some children thought that people became terrorists as a consequence of threat and pressure and because they were uneducated and deluded. These responses coincide with the representation of terrorists in Turkish media. In Turkey, it is emphasized that PKK activists are involved in terrorist acts because of threat and pressure. PKK activists who gave up their pursuit of terrorism use similar expressions when they are asked why they became a terrorist (See e.g. Aydintasbas, Sabah, 10-31-2006; Anadolu Ajansi, Huriyet, 11-22-2006).

When discussing the psychological mechanisms of terrorism, Connolly (2003) emphasized that people who take action in a terrorist act seem to take pleasure in doing it. This reflects notions of sadism that are discussed in analytic psychology. A few children came up with the answer that people would become terrorists for pleasure. This suggests that some children do consider the possibility of people engaging in harming activities because they enjoy it.

Children perceived terrorism as something external and happening far way. When asked where they think terrorists come from, a considerable number of children answered 'U.S.', 'Iraq-Afghanistan', 'Middle-Eastern' and foreign countries other than Turkey. When we look at the questions related to terrorism in Turkey, most of the children thought that terrorists came from east and southeast Turkey, as well as from mountains. This is an indication of children's acute awareness of PKK terrorism. As it is widely known, PKK terrorism takes place in east and southeast of Turkey in mountains, between Turkish army forces and PKK militants.

The children were knowledgeable about local and global terrorism as they gave PKK and al-Qaeda as the names of terrorist groups they knew. When examined for specific terrorists' names, children replied 'Osama bin Laden', who is affiliated with al-Qaeda, and 'Sad-

dam.’ Interestingly, a few children identified the U.S. and President George W. Bush as well. This could be a result of children’s misconceptions on global terrorism.

Children seem to be aware of both factual information and speculative information on the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Most of the children have heard of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and thought that Osama bin Laden was responsible for them. When asked why they thought terrorist attacks had happened, children gave answers such as ‘to destroy and take over U.S.’, ‘to threaten the U.S. and cause a crisis’. Yet, a few children thought that the U.S. and George W. Bush were responsible for the terrorist attacks, which they understood to have occurred due to oil interests. This suggests that children’s perceptions of terrorism are not only been shaped by factual, but also speculative information they receive through the media.

Children are more aware of local terrorism than global terrorism. Almost all children knew that terrorist attacks took place in Turkey. Specifically, they named the PKK, Osama bin Laden, the U.S., and/or Saddam-Iraq as being responsible for the attacks. Children’s answers to the question of why terrorist attacks happened in Turkey were similar as to why people become terrorists and what the terrorists’ goals are. Most of the children perceived that the reason behind terrorist attacks in Turkey was ‘to destroy and take over the country’ along with ‘to kill people’.

Although girls seem more optimistic than boys about eradicating terrorism, one third of the students drew a negative picture about overcoming terrorism. These findings are important because although these children were not exposed to terrorism directly, they still seem hopeless, which suggests that terrorism may have a larger impact on children than has been perceived.

Children’s solutions for protection against terrorism were structured around the theme of security. Different types of solutions emerged that were mostly age appropriate. Children suggested that increasing security was the best solution for protecting ourselves from terrorists and terrorism. Solutions such as calling the police, fighting and hiding were expected child responses at this age level. Answers such as ‘educating people’, ‘increasing awareness’ and ‘making peace’ required more advanced thinking and were given by few children. Children suggested active solutions such as increasing security, taking precautions beyond passive solutions required children’s seeking an outsider’s help such as calling the police or hiring

security guards. These findings could further be explored under the research topic of internal and external locus of control. Children produced more defensive/positive solutions such as hiding and making peace than offensive/negative solutions such as fighting and killing. These findings suggest that children are more inclined to take action in protecting themselves in the face of violence, yet are constructive in their approach to finding solutions to violent acts.

In summary, young children are aware of global and local terrorism and emotionally affected by it although they are not directly exposed to it. This study has many limitations. Since all results were categorical and other variables that may have had affect on the outcomes could not be analyzed, the results of the study cannot be generalized. Yet, it should be recognized that this study is the first survey conducted in Turkey on children's perceptions of terrorism and a attempt to bring this topic to researcher's attention in the field. Therefore, it is recommended that the findings be interpreted with caution.

Implications for Future Research

Despite its limitations, this study has important implications for future research. First of all, children's responses to local and global terrorism indicate that children have different resources for information and they cannot differentiate the information they receive from these resources at all times. Children's possible resources for information on terrorism are their families and the media. A study on the degree of children's exposure to the media and its effects on children's perception of terrorism can further explain the children's emotions in the face of violence. Secondly, although few in numbers, children perceived the United States as being related to terrorism. This finding raises the question of whether children's responses are a reflection of an emerging animosity against the United States in the public sphere (e.g. Sahin, 2006; TBMM, 2005). A sociological study on people's perceptions of global terrorism may provide information about how the United States is perceived in the international arena. A cross-cultural study on children's perceptions of terrorism that examines the interaction of other variables will provide more detailed and accurate information on the relationship between children and terrorism. This study and future studies on children's perceptions of terrorism should be regarded more than as a sole description of children's current emotional reactions. It should be seen as a database for helping professionals to develop intervention programs for children who were exposed to terrorism and violence around the world.

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