



Do Adolescents Intervene in Intergroup Bias-based Bullying? Bystander Judgments and Responses to Intergroup Bias-based Bullying of Refugees

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This study examined 587 Turkish adolescents' ($M_{age} = 13.14$, $SD = 1.61$) judgments and bystander responses towards hypothetical intragroup interpersonal (Turkish victim) and intergroup bias-based (Syrian refugee victim) bullying. Intergroup factors and social-cognitive skills were assessed as predictors. Findings revealed that adolescents were less likely to see bullying as acceptable and less likely to explicitly support the bully in intragroup interpersonal bullying compared to intergroup bias-based bullying. Further, adolescents with higher theory of mind and empathy were more likely to evaluate intergroup bias-based bullying as less acceptable and more likely to challenge the bully. Adolescents' prejudice and discrimination towards refugees were predictors of bystander judgments and responses to intergroup bias-based bullying. This study provides implications for anti-bullying intervention programs.

Key words: bystander responses in adolescence – empathy – intergroup bias-based bullying of refugees – intergroup contact – prejudice and discrimination – theory of mind

From the start of the crisis in Syria in 2011 through 2020, Turkey hosted three million six hundred thousand refugees, the largest number of refugees worldwide (UNHCR, 2020). Evidence from the empirical research revealed that Syrian individuals experience prejudice, negative attitudes, and bias-based treatment (Demir & Özgül, 2019; Yitmen & Verkuyten, 2020). Further, Syrian refugee adolescents are bullied in schools by their Turkish peers due to their refugee status (Yilmaz & Cikili Uytun, 2020). Considering the negative influence of bullying of Syrian refugees on their mental health and school belonging (Sapmaz et al., 2017; Yilmaz & Cikili Uytun, 2020), it is important to explore ways to reduce bullying of Syrian refugee youth. Bystanders as witnesses are one of the central actors in reducing and ultimately stopping bullying incidents when they actively intervene (Salmivalli et al., 2011). However, bystanders might not be willing to intervene in intergroup contexts when the bully is from their ingroup and when the victim is from a marginalized outgroup (e.g., refugees). Thus, in this study, we investigated to what extent adolescents 'bystanders' attitudes and responses vary depending on intragroup interpersonal (Turkish victim) and intergroup bias-based (Syrian victim) bullying. Further, we examined

how bystander responses to intergroup bias-based bullying are associated with intergroup-related and social-cognitive factors.

Bystanders' Judgments and Responses to Intragroup Interpersonal and Intergroup Bias-based Bullying

Intergroup bias-based bullying is defined as repeated aggression involving a power imbalance that targets the victims due to their group membership (e.g., race or ethnicity, nationality, immigration/refugee status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability, Palmer & Abbott, 2018) while intragroup interpersonal bullying occurs when adolescents and children bully their ingroup members because of personality characteristics including shyness (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). Although both forms of bullying have adverse effects on adolescents, intergroup bias-based bullying can be even more detrimental to adolescents' school adjustment and psychological health than intragroup interpersonal bullying (Mulvey et al., 2018; Russell et al., 2012). The cause of the elevated risk of intergroup bias-based bullying is related to the distress caused by prejudicial and discriminatory tendencies (Mulvey et al., 2018; Russell et al., 2012). As noted above, one factor, which influences the occurrence and continuation of both intragroup

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interpersonal and intergroup bias-based bullying, is bystander responses.

Research on bystander responses documents that bystanders can show different types of responses when they witness bullying including challenging the bully or supporting the bully. If bystanders challenge the bully, bullying incidents are likely to decrease (Salmivalli et al., 2011). However, bystanders' challenging responses are rare for many reasons, including possible fear of retaliatory acts and being the next victim (Frey et al., 2014). Bystanders may also fear that they may lose their social status in their peer groups if they intervene, especially when the bully is a popular peer (Forsberg et al., 2018). Thus, bystanders might also support the bully, especially in intergroup bias-based bullying, when the victim is an outgroup member (immigrant/refugee) and the bully is an ingroup member (António et al., 2020; Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2021). Limited research on bystander judgments and responses to intergroup bias-based bullying provides evidence that bystanders may be exposed to higher risks of being socially excluded by their group members if they intervene (António et al., 2020). A recent study by Gönültaş and Mulvey (2021a) showed that shared group membership (immigrant vs. nonimmigrant) was related to participants' bystander responses. More specifically, nonimmigrant adolescents were less likely to show active challenging responses to intergroup bias-based bullying of an immigrant peer while immigrant adolescents reported a higher likelihood of demonstrating bystander responses to intergroup bias-based bullying compared to intragroup interpersonal bullying (Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2021a). Overall, intergroup bias-based bullying contexts might create further concerns and obstacles to bystanders' motivation to intervene in assertive ways. However, very little is still known about how intergroup bias-based bullying might influence bystander judgments and responses. Therefore, it is essential to explore correlates that help explain the different types of bystander responses (e.g., challenging the bully, supporting the bully) in intergroup bias-based bullying incidents, especially in high-conflict contexts such as those involving refugees in Turkey.

Most of the bullying studies conducted in Turkey examine the demographic correlates of being victimized or being a bully and provide information about the prevalence rate of intragroup interpersonal bullying in school settings (Çalışkan et al., 2019; Eyuboglu et al., 2021). Among the few studies, which examined bullying involving Syrian

youth in Turkey, Yilmaz (2020) showed that more than half of the Syrian adolescents in the study sample experienced different types of involvement in bullying (15.1% as a victim, 9.2% as a bully, and 34.5% bully and victim). A recent qualitative study also demonstrated that Syrian adolescents experience social exclusion, rejection, discriminatory-based humiliation both in schools and other public spaces including parks, hospitals, etc. (Demir & Özgül, 2019). Further, compared to Turkish children, refugee children reported higher peer victimization, which was significantly related to emotional and behavioral problems (Çeri et al., 2021). However, there is a lack of research on Turkish adolescents' bystander responses to different types of bullying, including intergroup bias-based bullying targeting Syrian refugee peers. This is a novel and important issue to address as intergroup bias-based bullying of refugee adolescents is a major threat to their inclusion, wellbeing, and harmonious intergroup relations. To advance theoretical understanding of developmental factors and distinct intergroup factors to reduce intergroup bias-based bullying, this study shifts the focus from bullies and their victims to their peers as bystanders. Thus, by bridging developmental and social approaches it is important to examine intergroup-related and social-cognitive and factors as possible correlates of bystander judgments and responses.

Correlates of Bystander Responses to Intergroup Bias-based Bullying of Syrian Refugees in Turkey

To our knowledge, no prior research has examined the bystanders' judgments and responses to intergroup bias-based bullying of refugees. As immigrants and refugee youth share some common experiences (Buchanan et al., 2018), we also reviewed research that has investigated the bullying of immigrants to explain why intergroup contexts matter.

Among the few studies that examine bystander responses in the intergroup bias-based bullying context, Mazzone et al. (2018) showed that adolescents' reasoning differs when the victim is an immigrant or nonimmigrant peer even when the reason for bullying was not explicitly stated to participants. More specifically, adolescents referenced "learned racism and fear towards immigrants (pp. 409, 410)" when they described possible reason for bullying of immigrants compared to describing the reason for bullying of nonimmigrant peers. Similarly, Caravita et al. (2019) found that adolescents'

justifications might depend on the group membership of the victim in hypothetical scenarios (whether the victim is an immigrant or nonimmigrant peer). Although research on adolescents' judgments and reasoning for intergroup bias-based bullying is gaining attention, little is still known about how intergroup-related and social-cognitive factors might shape bystanders' judgments and responses in intergroup bias-based bullying contexts.

In this study, we adopt the Social Reasoning Developmental perspective (SRD; Rutland et al., 2010) to understand factors that are related to adolescents' challenging or supporting behaviors in intragroup and intergroup contexts. The SRD provides a model to understand how group-related factors (e.g., peer evaluations and inclusion decisions into peer groups) and social-cognitive factors (e.g., Theory of Mind [ToM], empathy) can be related to adolescents' judgments, reasoning, and responses.

Intergroup-related Factors as Correlates

In line with the SRD model, we explore the role of various intergroup factors that might underlie differences in bystander responses in intergroup bias-based bullying contexts such as intergroup contact, prejudice, and desired social distance (as an indication of discriminatory tendencies).

Intergroup contact. Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory argues that intergroup contact would reduce prejudice if specific conditions were met, such as equal status, common goals, cooperation, and institutional support (Allport, 1954). Prior findings demonstrate that adolescents who have opportunities for intergroup contact were more likely to develop intergroup friendships with immigrants and refugees and were more likely to support immigrant and refugee peers if they experience peer aggression compared to adolescents who had fewer intergroup contact opportunities (Titzmann et al., 2015). Further, intergroup contact is also associated with more assertive bystander behavioral responses (Abbott & Cameron, 2014). Although the possible link between intergroup contact and bystander responses has not been tested yet in the context of intergroup bias-based bullying of Syrian youth in Turkey, related studies provide some evidence that intergroup contact may foster youth's positive bystander responses. For example, a recent study showed that the association between negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviors

was weaker in Turkish children and adolescents who reported a higher number of Syrian refugee friends compared to children and adolescents with lower contact with Syrian refugees (Bağcı et al., 2020). Further, in a follow-up study, they found that intergroup contact did not matter for individuals who have prior negative attitudes toward Syrian refugees. In other words, for those adolescents, prejudice was a strong correlate of their behavioral tendencies toward refugees (e.g., cooperating, interacting). These findings suggest that, in addition to intergroup contact, it is also important to examine prejudice and discriminatory behavioral tendencies (e.g., desired social distance), given that not all opportunities for contact may be positive and that prejudice and discriminatory behaviors may still occur in contexts where contact is possible (Bağcı et al., 2020).

Prejudice and desired social distance. Prejudice (i.e., negative attitudes or negative evaluative responses to groups as a whole or toward individuals due to their group membership) and discriminatory tendencies (i.e., negatively biased treatment of people based on their group membership like the desire to be social distant from outgroup members, Dovidio et al., 2010) might also shape bystander motivation to intervene when adolescents observe bullying of an outgroup member. Prejudice and discriminatory tendencies toward Syrian refugee children and youth have increased as Syrian refugees have settled in public schools in Turkey (Gönültaş et al., 2020; Uzun & Butun, 2016). Studies with Syrian participants also showed that they experience inequality, social exclusion, prejudice, and discriminatory behaviors (Akçapar & Şimşek, 2018; Demir & Özgül, 2019). Given the prejudice, negative attitudes, discriminatory behaviors toward refugees, and the likely continuation of the global refugee crisis with an increased number of refugees requesting entrance to Turkey, the consequences of such prejudice and discriminatory behaviors including desired social distance in peer social conflicts are essential to understand.

Social-Cognitive Factors as Correlates

Further, the SRD perspective argues that the development of social-cognitive abilities influences whether individuals show intergroup biases toward others from different groups and whether these intergroup attitudes influence their moral judgments toward social conflicts within intergroup contexts (Rutland et al., 2010).

Theory of mind. As one of the most important social-cognitive abilities, ToM can be defined as inferring mental states of the self and others such as intentions, beliefs, and desires (White et al., 2009). ToM, by its definition, allows individuals to be aware that people can differ on what they believe, know and in turn, it helps individuals to make sense of complex social relationship patterns and allows higher levels of social competence. Previous research has demonstrated that ToM is related to active bystander challenging behavior in intragroup interpersonal bullying (Caravita et al., 2010; Gini, 2006). For example, Caravita et al. (2010) demonstrated that ToM helps adolescents to understand experiences of victimized peers and fosters challenging bystander responses to intragroup interpersonal bullying. Further, ToM was associated with higher challenging behaviors against intragroup interpersonal bullying through increased social competence (Metallidou et al., 2018).

More recently, studies also examined the possible role of ToM in bystander responses to intergroup bias-based bullying of immigrant youth (Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2021a). Accordingly, adolescents' ToM abilities were related to the higher likelihood of bystander challenging responses to both bullying and following retaliatory acts in intergroup contexts (e.g., when an immigrant peer are victimized or seeks retaliation by committing the same bullying acts, Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2021a, 2021b). Moreover, previous studies have also shown that ToM can help children and adolescents to regulate their prejudicial attitudes (FitzRoy & Rutland, 2010) and to challenge stereotypical behaviors (Mulvey, Palmer et al., 2016; Mulvey, Rizzo et al., 2016).

All of these studies documenting the relationship between challenging bystander responses and ToM have measured ToM in a generalized contexts without considering the group-related processes. However, recent studies showed that children and adolescents do not always use their ToM effortlessly and automatically (Ekerim-Akbulut et al., 2020; Gönültaş et al., 2020; McLoughlin & Over, 2017). For example, two recent studies showed that Turkish adolescents and young adults were more likely to attribute mental states to their ingroup members compared to Syrian refugees. Moreover, their ToM performance varies as a function of perceived similarity, prejudice, and threat perception toward outgroups (Ekerim-Akbulut et al., 2020; Gönültaş et al., 2020). In other words, they direct their attention to specific aspects of situations and

individuals when trying to grasp others' mental states, and this selectivity in the information they attend to can bias their ToM performance. Similarly, McLoughlin and Over (2017) found that children perceived less humanness in outgroup members compared to ingroup members. Together, these findings suggest that studies that examine the possible role of ToM in intergroup relations should evaluate ToM performance for targeted outgroup members.

Empathy. Empathy is conceptualized broadly as the ability to understand and feel the cognitive and affective experiences of others (Hodgson & Wertheim, 2007). Several studies have been documented the relationship between bystander active responses and empathy, indicating that when bystanders can understand and feel a victim's situation, they are more likely to help the victim by challenging the bully, and thus, more likely to stop the bullying incident (Barchia & Bussey, 2011). Similarly, a recent study showed that empathy was a significant correlate of both bystanders' moral judgments and active responses to intragroup interpersonal bullying and following retaliation on the part of the victim (Gönültaş et al., 2019). Further, inducing empathy toward refugees in children aged between 8 and 11 years improves outgroup attitudes, and in turn, increases helping behavior toward refugees (Taylor & Glen, 2020). What is still unknown, however, is what role empathy plays in shaping bystander responses to intergroup bias-based bullying, in particular.

PRESENT STUDY

Extant literature on bystander responses to bullying documents that when bystanders challenge the bully, bullying is likely to decrease (Salmivalli et al., 2011). However, there is a dearth of literature on bystander responses to intergroup bias-based bullying in a context with high intergroup tension, such as in Turkey, given the refugee crisis. This gap in the literature limits our understanding of how bystander responses might vary based on the group membership of victims and the reason for bullying in high intergroup tension contexts. In this study, we addressed this gap by investigating how bystander responses are related to intergroup-related and social-cognitive factors by bridging developmental and social approaches. With this aim, we examined to what extent Turkish adolescents' reactions to school bullying as bystanders vary in response to two different forms of bullying,

namely intergroup bias-based (if a Syrian youth is bullied because of refugee status) and intragroup interpersonal (if a Turkish youth is bullied because of shyness) bullying in hypothetical scenarios using a within-subjects design. Refugee status was chosen as the reason for intergroup bias-based bullying as this is a salient intergroup context in Turkey and shyness was chosen as the reason for intragroup interpersonal bullying since it is one of the important underlying reasons for peer victimization in generalized or interpersonal contexts (Jantzer et al., 2006).

In this study, we focused on adolescence because, throughout this developmental period, the social horizon and knowledge about group dynamics of adolescents widen (Levy & Klein, 2010). Especially in the context of intergroup attitudes toward immigrants and refugees, earlier studies showed that negative attitudes toward immigrants increase with age (Ruck & Tenenbaum, 2014). Further, research demonstrates that adolescents were less willing to have social contact with their immigrant and refugee peers with age (Verkuyten & Slooter, 2007). Moreover, we specifically focus on middle and high school students because earlier studies showed that adolescents were more likely to see bullying as acceptable and less willing to intervene with age. More specifically, sixth graders were less likely to see bullying as acceptable and were less likely to show active responses compared to ninth graders (Mulvey et al., 2019). Thus, we examine attitudes and expected bystander responses in both younger (middle school students) and older adolescents (high school students).

Overall, our first objective was to compare bystander judgments and responses between intergroup bias-based bullying and intragroup interpersonal bullying. Further, as our second objective, we investigated intergroup-related and social-cognitive factors as correlates of intergroup bias-based bullying.

Hypotheses for Differences in Bystanders' Acceptability Judgments and Bystander Responses Across Intragroup Interpersonal and Intergroup Bias-based Bullying

Based on previous research suggesting that victims' immigration background might shape bystanders' judgments (Caravita et al., 2019; Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2021a), we hypothesized that adolescents would evaluate intragroup interpersonal bullying as less acceptable compared to intergroup bias-based bullying (H1). This difference was expected

to be higher in school districts with lower contact with Syrian refugees (H1a). In line with research documenting bystanders' different attributions to intragroup interpersonal and intergroup bias-based bullying (Caravita et al., 2020), we expected that adolescents would be more likely to reference fairness, refugee status, and discrimination in reasoning about their acceptability judgments for intergroup bias-based bullying while they would be more likely to consider personal characteristics in intragroup interpersonal bullying (H2). We expected that references reasoning about fairness, refugee status, and discrimination would be higher in school districts with higher contact with Syrian refugees (H2a).

We also expected that adolescents would be less likely to challenge and more likely to support bullies in intergroup bias-based bullying compared to intragroup interpersonal bullying (H3). Similarly, we expected this difference to be higher in school districts with lower contact with Syrian refugees (H3a). Further, we hypothesized that middle school students would be more likely to evaluate both intragroup interpersonal and intergroup bias-based bullying as less acceptable (H1b) and would be more likely to challenge and less likely to support bullies (H3b) compared to high school students.

Hypotheses for Correlates of Bystanders' Acceptability Judgments and Bystander Responses in Intergroup Bias-based Bullying

After examining within and between-group differences, we further explored the possible correlates of adolescents' acceptability judgments, their bystanders' responses, and their reasoning in intergroup bias-based bullying. Given the evidence of positive association social-cognitive abilities and challenging responses (Caravita et al., 2010; Gönültaş et al., 2019), we expected that adolescents who have higher ToM and empathy would be less likely to see bullying as acceptable, less likely to support the bully, and more likely to challenge the bully in intergroup bias-based bullying compared to adolescents who lower ToM and empathy (H4). Finally, considering the evidence suggesting that bystanders' responses are likely to be affected by intergroup factors (Palmer & Abbott, 2018), we hypothesized that adolescents who report lower desired social distance, less prejudice toward Syrian refugees, and who have more intergroup contact with Syrian refugees would be less likely to see bullying as acceptable, less likely to support bullies and more likely to challenge intergroup

bias-based bullying than participants who reported higher desired social distance, prejudice, and lower intergroup contact (H5).

METHOD

Participants

Data was collected from 587 Turkish middle ($N = 372$, $M_{\text{age}} = 12.19$, $SD = 1.01$; 208 girls) and high ($N = 215$, $M_{\text{age}} = 14.81$, $SD = 0.97$; 142 girls) school students. The data were collected from eight different schools in Istanbul (located in the north-western part of Turkey), which is a key location that hosts a larger refugee population in Turkey (Ministry of Interior & Directorate General of Migration Management, 2017) (School 1 = 114 (middle), School 2 = 67 (middle), School 3 = 160 (middle), School 4 = 31 (middle), School 5 = 48 (high), School 6 = 18 (high), School 7 = 105 (high), School 8 = 44 (high)). To get variability in intergroup contact with Syrian refugees in Istanbul, schools were chosen from four different districts: two districts where the population of Syrian refugees is relatively high (14% and 19% of the total population of the districts) and two districts where the Syrian refugee population is low (1% and 5% of the total population of the districts). Middle schools in lower and higher contact districts and high schools in lower and higher contact districts are similar in terms of the total number of students and curriculum is taught. We ran a priori power analysis (GPower 3.1; Faul et al., 2009), which indicated that a sample size of 400 participants (for F test analyses for ANOVA, with repeated measures, and within-between interactions) and 372 (for Linear multiple regressions) would be needed to detect effect size at .25 with the desired statistical power at .95, and an alpha of .05.

Procedure and Design

Institutional Review Board approval was obtained from the two universities in the United States and Turkey. After receiving approval from the Ministry of Education of Turkey, the study was introduced to school principals and school counselors. Adolescents were recruited by sending invitation letters and consent forms to parents through their schools. All students with parental consent who assented to participate were included in the study.

A within-subjects design was used to compare adolescents' acceptability judgments and bystander responses to intergroup bias-based bullying and

intragroup interpersonal bullying. All participants were presented the measures in the following order: intragroup interpersonal bullying story, ToM stories, intergroup bias-based bullying story, intergroup contact scale, desired social distance, empathy, and prejudice. All measures were presented in Turkish. Most of the tasks and scales have reliable and validated Turkish versions: Prejudice, Desired Social Distance (Gönültaş et al., 2020; Husnu et al., 2018), Empathy (Nalbant et al., 2018), and ToM (Gönültaş et al., 2020). However, the bullying scenarios and the intergroup contact scale were adapted and translated for this study using forward-translation and back-translation methods.

The data was collected between December 9, 2019, and January 10, 2020. Participants completed the study in a paper-based format, either in their classrooms or in the school libraries in their reading or physical activity classes. Students who did not have parental consent or did not assent to participate did their class activities (reading their book or attending physical activity class). Small stationery items were given to adolescents for their participation.

This study was a part of a larger project that investigated adolescents' bystander responses to different types of bullying including intergroup bias-based bullying, inclusivity judgments toward refugees and individual and social correlates of bystander judgments and responses and different parts of the results have been published.

Measures

Dependent measures. *Acceptability judgments and bystander responses.* Two bullying stories were created based on earlier research (Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2021; Mulvey et al., 2019). The type of aggression and the context were kept as same across stories: social aggression in the school context. However, victim's ethnic background and the reason for bullying were changed. More specifically, in the first story, adolescents read about a hypothetical bullying scenario in which a Turkish peer bullies a Turkish youth due to being shy (intra-group interpersonal bullying).

Story 1: "Your group enjoys telling each other jokes about lots of things, including different personality characteristics. Now, imagine that the school day has not yet started, and you are hanging out with your group of friends in the hallway. There are no teachers around yet. Murat, who is one of the kids in your

group of friends, shouts out rude words against shy people. Meanwhile, Fatih appears. When Murat realizes Fatih is around, he purposely shouts out a rude word at Fatih he did in the previous days, because Fatih is very shy."

In the second story, adolescents read about a hypothetical bullying scenario in which a Turkish peer bullies a Syrian refugee youth because of refugee status (intergroup bias-based bullying).

Story 2: "Your group enjoys telling each other jokes about lots of things, including about different groups of people. Now, imagine that the school day has not yet started, and you are hanging out with your group of friends in the hallway. There are no teachers around yet. Barış, who is one of the kids in your group of friends, shouts out rude words against Syrian people. Meanwhile, Joram appears. Joram is originally from Syria but now lives in Turkey. When Barış realizes Joram is around, he purposely shouts out a rude word at Joram as he did in the previous days, because Joram is from Syria."

After each story, participants rated the acceptability of bullying on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*really not okay*) to 6 (*really okay*). Then, they were asked how likely they would respond as bystanders in the following ways: explicit challenge (tell the bully to stop, tell other members of your group not to join in, $r = .27$, $p < .001$ for intragroup interpersonal and $r = .28$, $p < .001$ for intergroup bias-based bullying) and explicit support (laugh and tell others to come and watch, join the bully, $r = .40$, $p < .001$ for intragroup interpersonal and $r = .58$, $p < .001$ for intergroup bias-based bullying). Their responses were rated on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not likely at all*) to 6 (*really likely*), and composite scores were created for explicit challenge to bully and explicit support to bully for intragroup interpersonal bullying and intergroup bias-based bullying. The categorization for the bystander responses was based on earlier studies investigating bystander responses to race-based humor and exclusion (Mulvey, Palmer et al., 2016; Mulvey, Rizzo et al., 2016).

Reasoning for the acceptability judgments. Participants were also presented with a reasoning question (Why?) after the acceptability question. Participants' responses were coded using coding categories based on previous literature on

individuals' conceptions of moral judgments (e.g., Killen et al., 2007). The analyses were conducted using the following justification codes (used more than 10%): Fairness, Personality Characteristics, Refugee Status, Prejudice & Discrimination, Empathy, Harm, and Prescriptive Norms. We coded all positive and negative references under the related category (please see Table 1 for the example from participants' responses). Double and triple codes were used when there was more than one category to capture. More specifically, the reasoning was coded as 1 = use of only that category; .5 = use of that category along with another category; .33 = use of that category along with two other categories, and 0 = no use of that category. Coding was completed by two independent coders. Interrater reliability was assessed based on about 25% of the interviews, with very good reliability, Cohen's $\kappa = .89$ (for all single, double and triple codes).

Intergroup-related correlates. *Intergroup contact.* Participants' intergroup contact with immigrants was measured via the Developmental Intergroup Contact Survey (Crystal et al., 2008). This scale consists of six items on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*none*) to 4 (*very*). Examples include "How often do you work on school projects and study with students who are from Syria but now lives in Turkey?" and "In the neighborhood where you live, do you have neighbors who are from Syria but now live in Turkey?" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$). The composite score was calculated by averaging the items, with higher scores representing greater contact with Syrian refugees. This measure was initially developed to assess ethnic intergroup contact and was modified to fit the specific intergroup context (contact with Syrian refugees in Turkey).

Desired social distance. Participants' desired social distance with refugees was assessed via a measure developed by Berger et al. (2015). This task includes drawings of a street with eight houses set side-by-side. Participants were told to imagine that they lived in one of the houses and that a new child from Syria was going to move to their neighborhood. Adapting this measure to capture tendencies in school, we also presented participants with a drawing of a classroom with eight desks set side-by-side. Then, participants were told to imagine that they sit at one of the desks (tagged as 'your desk'), and all the desks seen in the picture are available (except theirs). They were asked to indicate the desk in which they would like their

TABLE 1
Examples, mean, standard deviations, and ANOVA results for the reasoning

	<i>Presence/positive example</i>	<i>Absence/negative example</i>	<i>Intragroup</i> M (SD)	<i>Intergroup</i> M (SD)	<i>F value</i>	<i>p Value</i>	η_p^2
Fairness/equality	It is not fair to bully anyone for any reason	Because everyone is not equal and same	0.02 (0.11)	0.09 (0.21)	26.87	<.001	.049
Refugee status	Just because she is from somewhere else, does not mean they have to treat her differently.	They deserved this as they came from a different country	0.00 (0.00)	0.15 (0.25)	168.09	<.001	.245
Personality characteristics	We shouldn't treat anyone differently because of their shyness	They should not be shy if they want to be friends with others	0.12 (0.24)	0.01 (0.05)	96.42	<.001	.157
Discrimination	It's racist and discriminatory	Because Syrian students are bad and we should stay away from them	0.001 (0.02)	0.11 (0.23)	72.96	<.001	.123
Empathy	How would they feel if it happened to them?	It is normal if Barış (bully) was not able to put himself in his position (victim)	0.06 (0.18)	0.07 (0.21)	0.81	.368	.002
Harm	It will hurt his feelings	It is not harmful	0.43 (0.42)	0.26 (0.35)	59.79	<.001	.103
Prescriptive norms	Because you are not supposed to bully	Everyone should be cautious about foreigners	0.16 (0.32)	0.07 (0.19)	32.29	<.001	.059

Note. Example responses were translated from Turkish to English.

new peer in the story to sit. The age and gender of the hypothetical outgroup member were matched to that of the participant. As the social distance scores in houses and desks were strongly correlated ($r = .83, p < .001$), a composite score was created by averaging two distance scores. The composite desired distance score is ranging from 1 to 7, with higher scores representing greater social distance toward the Syrian refugees. People want to become more physically distant from various stigmatized groups so that desired social distance is used as a measure of discriminatory tendencies toward outgroups (Berger et al., 2015).

Prejudice. To assess intergroup attitudes, we adapted the Multiple-Response Racial Attitude measure (Aboud, 2003). Participants were presented with 12 traits, 6 positive (nice, likable, clean, good), and 6 negative (ugly, bad, dirty, unpleasant). Participants were asked to rate each adjective for the targeted outgroup (Syrians) with a five-point scale (1 = not at all to 5 = a lot). Negative and positive attitudes scores were created by averaging items in each domain (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$ for the negative attitudes subscale and $.82$ for the positive attitudes subscale). Then, a composite score was created by subtracting the composite score of positive attitudes from the composite score of negative attitudes with higher scores representing greater prejudice toward Syrian refugees in Turkey (ranging from -4 to 4). This measure was

previously used to measure older children and adolescents' prejudice (Gönültaş et al., 2020; Rutland et al., 2005).

Social-cognitive correlates. Empathy toward victim. Adolescents' empathy toward victims of bullying was assessed via the Empathy for Victimization Scale (Kärnä et al., 2011; Pöyhönen et al., 2008). This scale consists of seven items rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*) (e.g., I can understand how being bullied make someone feel bad; Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$). The composite score was calculated by averaging the scores, with higher scores indicating higher levels of empathy toward victimized peers of bullying.

Theory of mind. A modified version of the Strange Stories task was used to examine adolescents' ToM abilities (Devine & Hughes, 2016; White et al., 2009). Earlier studies showed that children and adolescents were more likely to attribute mental states to ingroup members compared to outgroup members (Gönültaş et al., 2020). Thus, we adapted the stories by creating matched outgroup target context. To do that we used two mindreading stories (white lie and deception) to depict Syrian characters. The stories were identical to the original stories except for the characters' group membership and the context. After each story, participants answered a question requiring causal inference about the target's mental state.

Participants' responses were coded on a 0–2 scale (2 = correct answer with mental state attribution; 1 = correct information without attributing mental states and 0 = false answer). Participants' responses were scored separately by two coders. Inter-rater reliability (based on 25% of responses) was Cohen's $\kappa = .96$. Participants' accuracy scores were averaged and the total ToM performance ranged between 0 and 2.

Data Analysis Strategy

Statistical analyses include descriptive statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations, and ranges), mixed repeated-measures ANOVAs, bivariate correlations, and hierarchical regression. First, three separate mixed repeated-measures ANOVAs were used to examine group mean differences in acceptability judgments, bystander responses, and reasoning by the school district and school group. Mixed-design analysis is appropriate to explore the interaction between within-subjects factors (different types of bullying stories) and between-subjects factors (school group and school district) on the dependent variable. Second, to examine the relationship between outcome variables and correlates, bivariate Pearson correlations analysis was conducted. Lastly, we conducted a multivariate regression analysis to investigate intergroup-related and social-cognitive factors as possible correlates of adolescents' acceptability judgments and bystander responses to intergroup bias-based bullying. This data analytic approach was chosen to be able to account for the correlations between our dependent variables (Bjärehed et al., 2020; see Table 2). All analyses were performed in SPSS.

RESULTS

Missing Data and Preliminary Analysis

Table 1 presents the means, *SDs*, ranges, and correlations between outcome variables and correlates. We used pairwise deletion to handle missing data. Missing value percentages for variables ranged from 0.2% (acceptability judgments) to 9.2% (intergroup contact). We also performed Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test demonstrating that missing values were completely at random ($\chi^2 = 290.82$, *df* (210), $p = .467$). Thus, the pairwise deletion method was used to minimize the loss of cases. This approach might present some issues including using different data sets for different analyses. However, as our MCAR analysis showed

that missing values were completely at random the pairwise deletion technique would be less biased in our study. Further, we also calculated the Intraclass correlation coefficient to examine measures of variance explained by the schools (as students were nested within schools). Results from the fully unconditional models indicated that there was not sufficient between school variability across outcomes for further analyses ($\tau_{00} = 0.18$, $z = 0.80$, $p = .2119$; $\tau_{00} = 0.25$, $z = 0.88$, $p = .1902$; $\tau_{00} = 0.18$, $z = 0.81$, $p = .2089$; $\tau_{00} = 0.23$, $z = 0.92$, $p = .1793$; and $\tau_{00} = 0.08$, $z = 0.57$, $p = .2835$).

To examine whether participants' demographic characteristics, social-cognitive factors, and intergroup attitudes depend on the school district (lower contact and higher contact with Syrian refugees), we first conducted ANOVAs. Accordingly, no differences were found in participants' age, ToM ability, and empathy across school districts. Further, adolescents in schools where Syrian refugees mostly live in the district reported higher levels of intergroup contact compared to adolescents in schools with low contact. Adolescents in schools with low contact were more likely to report prejudicial attitudes and social distance compared to adolescents in schools with high contact with Syrian refugees (see Supplementary Analysis for the means and exact values). Based on these findings, the school district was used in all analyses as a possible factor. Gender was dropped from the analyses, as we did not find gender differences in adolescents' acceptability judgments and their bystander responses.

Acceptability Judgments by School Group and School District

To test H1, H1a, and H1b (differences in adolescents' acceptability judgments by the school district and school group) we ran a 2 (story type: intergroup bias-based bullying and intragroup interpersonal bullying) \times 2 (school group: middle school and high school) \times 2 (school district: lower contact and higher contact with Syrian refugees) mixed ANOVA (with Bonferroni corrections). Our within-group variable was story type and our between-group variables were school group and school district. Results showed a main effect of story type on adolescents' acceptability judgments ($F(1, 573) = 12.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .022$) with a small effect size. Overall, adolescents judged all bullying as wrong, but evaluated intragroup interpersonal bullying as less acceptable ($M = 1.34$; $SD = 0.69$) than intergroup bias-based bullying ($M = 1.62$;

TABLE 2
Descriptive statistics and correlations between outcome variables and predictors

Variables	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Acceptability of intragroup B (1-6)	1.32 (.66)	1									
2. Explicit challenge intragroup B (1-6)	4.64 (1.15)	-.36**	1								
3. Explicit support intragroup B (1-6)	1.52 (.92)	.45**	-.40**	1							
4. Acceptability of intergroup B (1-6)	1.60 (1.16)	.27**	-.33**	.35**	1						
5. Explicit challenge intergroup B (1-6)	4.50 (1.35)	-.21**	.56**	-.29**	-.44**	1					
6. Explicit support intergroup B (1-6)	1.66 (1.13)	.23**	-.31**	.49**	.58**	-.45**	1				
7. ToM (0-2)	1.36 (.48)	-.13**	.20**	-.23**	-.07	.17**	-.17**	1			
8. Empathy (1-5)	3.82 (.86)	-.30**	.29**	-.34**	-.28**	.29**	-.32**	.19**	1		
9. Intergroup contact (1-4)	2.01 (.57)	-.12**	-.02	.05	-.05	-.15**	-.09	-.05	.04	1	
10. Prejudice (-4-4)	.13 (1.61)	.17**	-.15**	.16**	.31**	-.15**	.22**	-.02	-.13*	-.11*	1
11. Desired Social Distance (1-7)	3.49 (2.12)	.24**	-.19**	.21**	.38**	-.23**	.26**	-.09*	-.25*	-.11*	-.41*

Note. Intergroup B = intergroup bias-based bullying and intragroup B = intragroup interpersonal bullying. Means and SDs are unadjusted values.

$SD = 1.20$) regardless of school districts. Although no significant interactions were found between acceptability and school contact, there was a between-subjects effect of school contact ($F(1, 573) = 22.00, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .037$) with a small effect size. More specifically, main effect of school contact showed that adolescents in schools with higher contact judged bullying as less acceptable ($M = 1.33; SD = .98$) compared to adolescents in lower contact schools ($M = 1.63; SD = 1.20$) regardless of bullying types.

Reasoning by School Group and School District

To test for differences in participants' reasoning regarding their acceptability judgments (H2 and H2a), a mixed model 14 (Reasoning in intragroup interpersonal and intergroup bias-based Bullying: Fairness, Refugee Status, Personality Characteristics, Discrimination, Empathy, Harm and Prescriptive Norms) \times 2 (school group: middle school and high school) \times 2 (school district: lower contact with Syrian refugees and higher contact with Syrian refugees) ANOVA was run for proportional use of each code (with Bonferroni corrections). Results showed a significant main effect of reasoning ($F(13, 515) = 95.60, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .157$). Pairwise comparisons showed that participants were more likely to attribute fairness, refugee status, and discrimination in intergroup bias-based bullying compared to intragroup interpersonal bullying. Further, participants were more likely to attribute personality characteristics, harm, and prescriptive norms in intragroup interpersonal bullying scenarios compared to intergroup bias-based bullying (see Table 1 for the means, SD , and F statistics for the pairwise comparisons).

Bystander Responses by School Group and School District

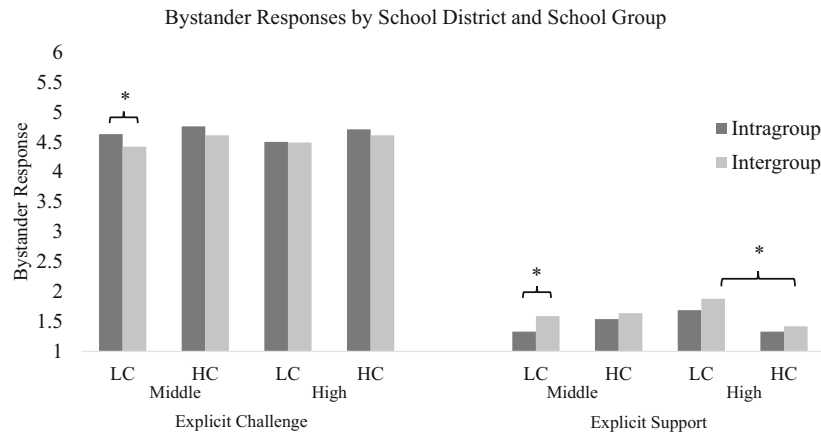
To test H3, H3a, and H3b (differences in adolescents' bystander responses by school district and age) we ran a similar four (bystander responses: explicit challenge in intragroup interpersonal bullying, explicit challenge in intergroup bias-based bullying, explicit support in intragroup interpersonal bullying, explicit support in intergroup bias-based bullying) \times 2 (school group: middle school and high school) \times 2 (school district: lower contact and higher contact with Syrian refugees) mixed ANOVA (with Bonferroni corrections).

Results showed that there was a main effect of bystander response ($F(3, 539) = 1031.09, p < .001,$

$\eta_p^2 = .657$). Accordingly, adolescents were more likely to report that they would support the bully in intergroup bias-based bullying compared to intragroup interpersonal bullying ($p < .001$). However, no differences were found in bystander responses in terms of explicit challenge across two stories ($p = .328$). Further, results showed that adolescents were more likely to report challenging behavior compared to supporting behavior in both stories ($ps < .001$). The findings also revealed a significant three-way interaction between bystander responses, school district, and school groups ($F(3, 539) = 5.03, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .009$) (see Figure 1 for differences). Our pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni corrections showed some of the bystander responses differ based on school district and age. More specifically, middle school students in lower contact were less likely to challenge the bully in intergroup bias-based bullying compared to intragroup interpersonal bullying ($p = .004$). Similarly, results documented that middle school students in lower contact districts were more likely to support the bully in intergroup bias-based bullying compared to intragroup interpersonal bullying ($p = .016$). Further, our pairwise comparison with Bonferroni corrections based on school group demonstrated that high school students in higher contact districts were less likely to support the bully in intergroup bias-based bullying compared to high school students in lower contact districts ($p = .003$). Lastly, adolescents were more likely to show explicit challenge responses compared to explicit support across school groups ($ps < .001$) and school districts ($ps < .001$).

Correlates of Acceptability Judgments and Bystander Responses

H4 and H5 were that social-cognitive factors and intergroup-related factors would be related to adolescents' acceptability judgment and bystander responses in intergroup bias-based bullying (when the victim is Syrian youth). To test those hypotheses, first, we examined correlations between outcome variables and correlates (see Table 3). Then, the multivariate multiple regressions was conducted to examine correlates of bystander judgments and responses to intergroup bias-based bullying as intergroup-related factors are conceptually meaningful to explore in the intergroup context. However, for explanatory purposes, we have also conducted the same multivariate multiple regression analysis for the bystander responses to intragroup interpersonal bullying.



Note. LC = Lower Contact; HC= Higher Contact; **p* < .05.

FIGURE 1 Bystander responses by school district and school group. Note. HC, higher contact; LC, lower contact. **p* < .05

TABLE 3
Multivariate multiple regression for acceptability judgments, explicit challenge, and explicit support

Variables	Acceptability			Explicit challenge			Explicit support		
	B	t	p	B	t	p	B	t	p
School group	.12	0.85	.398	-.06	-0.35	.724	.22	1.50	.135
School district	.44	2.55	.011*	-.01	-0.05	.957	-.48	-2.75	.006**
Empathy	-.32	-5.24	<.001***	.41	5.55	<.001***	-.44	-6.96	<.001***
ToM	-.20	-1.71	.088	.31	2.21	.028*	-.28	-2.41	.016*
Intergroup contact	.12	1.05	.296	-.01	-0.04	.966	.14	1.29	.197
Desired social distance	.15	5.56	<.001***	-.07	-0.217	.031*	.05	1.74	.082
Prejudice	.11	3.03	.003**	-.06	-0.1.30	.195	.11	3.10	.002**
Adjusted R ²	.246			.118			.206		

Note. **p* < .05; ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001

School group (middle school and high school) was added in the first step as previous research has documented age-related differences in responses to bullying. The school district (lower contact to Syrian refugee and higher contact to Syrian refugee) was also added in the first step because results ANOVA tests revealed that there were significant differences between adolescents from low and higher contact districts in terms of intergroup related factors (see Supplementary Analysis). In the second step, empathy and ToM were added because they were related to bystander responses in intragroup interpersonal bullying (Caravita et al., 2010; Gönültaş et al., 2019) but were not previously tested in the context of intergroup bias-based bullying. At the last step, intergroup related variables (i.e., intergroup contact, social distance, and prejudice) were added to examine the possible interplay between them in predicting the acceptability judgments and

bystander responses as previous studies showed that intergroup related factors might shape adolescents' behaviors and attitudes toward targeted outgroups (e.g., Palmer et al., 2017). The third model was presented for all three outcomes.

For the acceptability of intergroup bias-based bullying, the third model explained 25% of the variance when all predictors entered into the model (see Table 3). Findings showed that adolescents in lower contact districts were more likely to see intergroup bias-based bullying as acceptable (*B* = 0.44, *p* = .011). Further, adolescents with higher empathy toward victimized youth evaluated intergroup bias-based bullying as less acceptable (*B* = -.32, *p* < .001). With regard to intergroup factors, adolescents who have higher desired social distance (*B* = .15, *p* < .001) and prejudicial attitudes (*B* = .11, *p* = .003) toward Syrian refugees were more likely to perceive intergroup bias-based bullying as more acceptable.

Regarding participants' expectation that they would explicitly challenge the bully (on behalf of the victim) in intergroup bias-based bullying, the final model explained 12% of the variance. Accordingly, participants with higher ToM ($B = .31$, $p = .028$) and empathy toward victims ($B = .41$, $p < .001$) were more likely to report that they would explicitly challenge the bully in intergroup bias-based bullying controlling for school group and school district. Further, adolescents who reported desired social distance toward Syrian refugees were less likely to challenge the bully when they witnessed bullying of a Syrian youth ($B = -.07$, $p = .031$; see Table 3).

The multivariate regression analysis revealed that the final model explained 21% of the variance in explicit support to bully in intergroup bias-based bullying. Adolescents in higher contact districts were less likely to report that they would explicitly support intergroup bias-based bullying ($B = -.48$, $p = .006$). Further, adolescents with higher empathy ($B = -.44$, $p < .001$) and ToM ($B = -.28$, $p = .016$) were less likely to report that they would explicitly support the bully in intergroup bias-based bullying. With regard to intergroup-related factors, adolescents with higher prejudice toward Syrian refugees ($B = .11$, $p = .002$) were more likely to report that they would explicitly support the bully (see Table 3).

Explanatory Analyses for Intragroup Interpersonal Bullying

We conducted the same multivariate regression analysis for the outcome measures in intragroup interpersonal bullying. With regard to acceptability judgments regarding intragroup interpersonal

bullying, only school district and empathy were significant factors. Accordingly, participants in lower contact districts were more likely to evaluate intragroup interpersonal bullying as acceptable ($B = .39$, $p = .001$) while participants with higher empathy toward victimized youth evaluated intergroup bias-based bullying as less acceptable ($B = -.19$, $p < .001$; see Table 4).

Multivariate analysis also showed that participants with higher empathy toward victim ($B = .40$, $p < .001$) and higher ToM ($B = .35$, $p = .006$) were more likely to report that they would explicitly challenge the bully in intragroup interpersonal bullying (see Table 4).

Lastly, results showed that participants with higher empathy toward victim ($B = -.32$, $p < .001$) and higher ToM ($B = -.25$, $p = .009$) were less likely to report explicit support of the bully while participants with higher prejudice ($B = .08$, $p = .005$) were more likely to report that they would explicitly support the bully in intragroup interpersonal bullying (see Table 4).

DISCUSSION

Considering the growing evidence that Syrian youth in Turkey are experiencing prejudicial treatment in schools (Demir & Özgül, 2019), it is important to extend antibullying efforts for Syrian refugee youth in school settings. One critical piece in improving antibullying efforts is understanding bystanders' judgments and their willingness to intervene in intergroup bias-based bullying. Thus, we investigated whether bystander responses might vary as a function of different types of bullying (intragroup interpersonal bullying and intergroup bias-based bullying) and whether

TABLE 4
Multivariate multiple regression for acceptability judgments, explicit challenge and explicit support in intragroup interpersonal bullying

Variables	Acceptability			Explicit challenge			Explicit support		
	B	t	p	B	t	p	B	t	p
School group	-.02	-0.18	.855	.11	0.75	.724	.08	0.73	.468
School district	.39	3.83	.001**	-.14	-0.79	.430	.27	1.81	.071
Empathy	-.19	-5.35	<.001***	.40	7.27	<.001***	-.32	-6.51	<.001***
ToM	-.10	-1.36	.744	.35	2.78	.006**	-.25	-2.63	.009**
Intergroup contact	-.02	-0.33	.296	-.14	-1.23	.219	.16	1.80	.071
Desired social distance	.04	2.48	.013*	-.03	-1.07	.282	.03	1.14	.254
Prejudice	.003	0.13	.855	-.05	-1.38	.167	.08	2.81	.005**
Adjusted R ²	.168			0.131			.179		

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

intergroup-related and social-cognitive factors were related to bystander responses to intergroup bias-based bullying. In so doing, we aim to contribute to the scarce bystander responses literature on adolescents' attitudes toward intergroup bias-based bullying of refugees in high intergroup tension contexts.

Acceptability Judgments and Reasoning

It is important to note that adolescents were likely to evaluate bullying as unacceptable (all means were below the mid-point), that they would explicitly challenge the bully (all means were above the mid-point), and that they would not explicitly support the bully (all means were below the mid-point) regardless of bullying contexts.

This is in line with previous literature, which showed that children and adolescents are more likely to evaluate bias-based social transgressions (e.g., ethnic or gender based) as unacceptable based on the principles of fairness and equality (Killen et al., 2007; Mulvey & Killen, 2015; Rutland & Killen, 2015). For example, Killen et al. (2007) showed that, on average, children, and adolescents evaluated race-based exclusion as wrong due to moral reasons when they heard about an exclusion story in which European-American peers excluded an African-American peers. However, in our study we still found significant variations in mean differences in adolescents' judgments and responses based on bullying type (intragroup interpersonal and intergroup bias-based). One methodological difference between two studies is that in Killen et al.'s (2007) study participants read only about intergroup social exclusion (but not intragroup social exclusion). More recent studies, for example, Cooley et al. (2019) showed that 9- to 14-year-olds European-American children and adolescents evaluated same-race inclusion as more likely compared to interracial inclusion documenting importance of group membership to decision making in the hypothetical intergroup social contexts (Cooley et al., 2019). They also found that African-American children's and adolescents' perceptions about possibility of inclusion did not differ across same-race or interracial inclusion. Further, African-American children and adolescents were more likely to evaluate all forms of exclusion as to be more wrong compared to their European-American counterparts (Cooley et al., 2019). Future research should also extend our research by examining Syrian refugee children's and adolescents' judgments and responses to different types of bullying.

In line with our hypothesis regarding the school district and age-based differences in acceptability judgments (H1), findings showed that adolescents judged intergroup bias-based bullying (when the Syrian refugee peer was bullied because of refugee status) as more acceptable than intragroup interpersonal bullying (when Turkish victim was bullied due to the shyness). These results are similar to earlier studies, which showed that group-related factors shape adolescents' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward outgroups in high intergroup tension context including immigrants in different countries (Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2021; Palmer & Abbott, 2018; Palmer et al., 2022). For example, by drawing from the SRD, Palmer et al. (2022) also showed that Cypriot participants were more likely to show prosocial bystander responses when Cypriot victims were excluded compared with when non-Cypriot victims were excluded. These can be applied to the refugee context as well considering the current negative climate around refugees globally. Antirefugee sentiments are unfortunately expected to be on the rise as Turkey is a country that will continue to face a refugee influx evidenced by the fact that thousands of Afghan people had to flee due to the escalating war in Afghanistan. This high intergroup tension might influence when and why group processes become more salient for children and adolescents' judgments and behaviors. Overall, some intergroup contexts might lead individuals to being more responsive and prosocial when their ingroup member is victimized compared to their outgroup members.

Contrary to our expectations (H1a and H1b), we did not find a significant interaction between acceptability and school district (lower contact and higher contact). More specifically, adolescents in schools with higher contact were more likely to evaluate both intergroup bias-based and intragroup interpersonal bullying as less acceptable compared to adolescents in schools with lower contact. This is an interesting finding, as it suggests that opportunities for intergroup contact, more generally, may foster awareness of the importance of treating others equitably and fairly, regardless of the type of peer aggression. However, one might speculate that higher contact schools may have fostered antibullying school norms in ways that are different from the lower contact schools. However, the higher contact schools in this study were not implementing any specific antibullying intervention program. Despite not having a specific antibullying curriculum, it is possible that informal education is

occurring in the higher contact schools related to the negative effects of bullying and social exclusion because of the school demographics. This informal education might include natural and spontaneous discussions with teachers and parents about diversity, daily interethnic interactions with peers, etc. While this finding is intriguing, future research will need to further explore what might account for this pattern.

With regard to reasoning, as we expected (H2 and H2a, differences based on school group and school district), adolescents' reasoning regarding acceptability judgments differed between stories: adolescents reasoned more about fairness, refugee status, and discriminatory acts for the intergroup bias-based bullying, while they attributed harm and prescriptive norms more for intragroup interpersonal bullying. Our reasoning data provide novel insight into how adolescents approach intergroup bias-based bullying of their Syrian refugee peers: they attend carefully to moral issues around discrimination as well as acknowledge their Syrian peers' unique experiences as refugees when evaluating victimization of Syrian refugees. For example, one of our participants responded as follows: "It is not right to bully a Syrian classmate because they are more sensitive as they moved here to escape from the war by experiencing bad things."

This suggests that youth do differentiate between different types of bullying. Further, our findings suggest that antibullying efforts might draw on the reasoning that adolescents use when thinking about bullying to shape discussions around bullying. Specifically, antibullying efforts might discuss the discriminatory nature of intergroup bias-based bullying and create antibullying norms that comprehensively address both intergroup bias-based and intragroup interpersonal bullying.

Bystander Responses

With regard to adolescents' likelihood of different types of bystander responses to intragroup interpersonal and intergroup bias-based bullying, our hypothesis (H3, H3a, and H3b, school district and age-related differences in bystander responses) was supported only for explicit support, but not for the explicit challenge. Specifically, we found that adolescents were more likely to expect that they would explicitly support the bully in intergroup bias-based bullying compared to intragroup interpersonal bullying. It is plausible that when the victim is an outgroup member, and the bully is an

ingroup member, adolescents might be more supportive of the bully given their shared group membership. This is in line with earlier studies documenting a higher likelihood of showing passive responses toward bullying of outgroup members compared to ingroup members (Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2021a). Contrary to our expectation, no significant overall differences were observed in adolescents' explicit challenge across intragroup and intergroup bias-based bullying. However, middle school students in lower contact districts were less likely to challenge the bully in intergroup bias-based bullying compared to intragroup interpersonal bullying, while no significant difference was found in higher contact schools. This suggests that opportunities for positive intergroup contact may help younger adolescents to recognize the importance of speaking up on behalf of outgroup victims.

Social-cognitive and Intergroup-related Factors of Bystanders' Judgments and Responses

Our findings revealed that several social-cognitive variables were correlates of adolescents' acceptability judgments and bystander responses to intergroup bias-based bullying (H4). More specifically, the higher adolescents' empathy toward victimized youth was, the more likely adolescents were to see bullying as unacceptable, and the less likely they were to expect that they would explicitly support the bully. Further, they were more likely to report that they would challenge the bully explicitly. In line with our hypothesis (H4, ToM, and empathy as significant correlates) and previous studies, our findings highlight the role of ToM in bystanders' challenging and supporting responses. These findings extend the results of earlier studies that examine the possible role of ToM and empathy in predicting bystander responses in intragroup interpersonal bullying to intergroup bias-based bullying contexts (Barchia & Bussey, 2011; Caravita et al., 2010). Our findings are also in line with a recent intervention study that aimed to increase the social inclusion of Syrian refugees into schools in Turkey by increasing perspective taking and empathy in both Turkish children and Syrian refugee children aged between 8 and 12 years (Alan et al., 2020). They showed that an educational curriculum that involves perspective-taking and empathy increases children's prosocial behavior toward outgroups (Syrian and Turkish) and decreases social exclusion of Syrian refugee children and intergroup aggression (Alan et al., 2020).

In line with the earlier research drawing on the SRD perspective (Rutland et al., 2010) and our hypothesis (H5, intergroup-related factors as significant correlates), this study showed that intergroup factors shape bystanders' acceptability judgments and responses to intergroup bias-based bullying. Adolescents with higher desired social distance and prejudice judged intergroup bias-based bullying as more acceptable. As we expected, adolescents with high prejudice and desired social distance toward Syrian refugees reported that they were more likely to engage in explicit support of the bully and less likely to engage in explicit challenges of bullying. These results underline the necessity of intervention studies that aim to decrease negative attitudes toward Syrian refugees to create an inclusive school climate. This is especially important considering the results of earlier work, which showed that one of the common challenges that young Syrian refugees face in schools is prejudice experienced in their daily interactions with Turkish students (Demir & Özgül, 2019). Contrary to our expectation, the self-report intergroup contact was not found as a significant factor in adolescents' judgments and bystander responses. This is contradicting with prior studies from adult literature, which showed that engaging in contact with Syrians increases Turkish young adults' prosocial attitudes toward Syrian refugees (Bağcı et al., 2018). One potential reason might be related to how we measured the contact with Syrian refugees. We evaluated adolescents' intergroup contact with Syrian refugees in terms of quantitative aspects. However, we did not have any information about the qualitative aspect of the contact (whether it is negative or not). Further, although we targeted schools in districts with high and lower contact with Syrian refugees and our results confirmed that adolescents in schools with higher contact report more contact compared to adolescents with lower contact, the percentage of Syrian refugees enrolled in these schools is still low. Thus, it is unclear if the possible role of intergroup contact in adolescents' judgments and responses would be more salient in cities closer to the border with Syria, where Turkish adolescents may have even more contact with Syrian refugees, such as Hatay (27% of the city population), Gaziantep (22% of the city population), and Kilis (76% of the city population). Considering the changing demographics of schools in Turkey (in terms of ethnic composition), it is critical and timely to examine how different aspects of intergroup contact can be influential in children's and adolescents' motivation to

intervene in intergroup social conflicts. Overall, this study showed that Turkish adolescents' bystander responses were significantly shaped by the intergroup-related factors, which motivate them to behave differently when they witness the victimization of Syrian refugee youth.

Limitation and Future Directions

Notwithstanding the novel findings of our study, some limitations and future directions for research should be considered.

First, the measures of this study include only self-report measures within a cross-sectional design, which precludes conclusions regarding causality. Future research should examine bystander responses in intergroup and intragroup interpersonal bullying contexts through longitudinal/cross sequential studies to provide a more comprehensive developmental picture with causality patterns.

Second, we used hypothetical scenarios to be able to examine differences in bystanders' acceptability judgments and responses across different types of bullying. However, for future research, it is also important to investigate adolescents' actual bystander responses in the case of intergroup bias-based bullying through different methodologies including observations, peer nominations, and behavioral measurement.

Third, we manipulated both the victim's ethnic background and the reason for bullying in the intergroup bias-based bullying story. But future studies might consider examining intergroup bias-based bullying that targets the victims for reasons unrelated to his or her group membership (e.g., Syrian youth is bullied because of shyness, Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2021a). Thus, a fully crossed design would be ideal to capture any possible role of group membership on bystander judgments (intergroup bias-based bullying: Syrian victim-Turkish bully and Turkish victim-Syrian bully; intragroup interpersonal bullying: Turkish victim-Turkish bully and Syrian victim-Syrian bully). Further, future studies might explore judgments and responses to bullying of an ingroup victim who moved from another city and an outgroup victim who moved from another country. In a similar vein, future studies should also examine correlates of bystanders' reasoning and attributions when the reason for bullying was not explicitly told to the participants.

Fourth, we only evaluated bystander responses to social aggression to be able to have more

variance in participants' responses as physical bullying is perceived as less acceptable and more severe. However, bystander responses might differ between different types of bullying. Thus, future studies should examine bystander responses to different types of bullying (e.g., cyberbullying, physical bullying) both in intergroup and intragroup contexts.

Fifth, we only investigated different types of explicit bystander responses, as our intergroup-related measures were explicit. However, adolescents can challenge or support the bully in implicit or indirect ways as well. Future research can examine bystander responses from a wider perspective by considering both implicit and explicit ways of challenging and supporting responses.

Sixth, we did not randomize the order of measures to avoid priming participants in terms of intergroup attitudes toward Syrian refugees. However, this might also cause issues related to order effects as all participants read intragroup interpersonal and intergroup bias-based bullying in the same order.

Lastly, in this study, we only examined the Turkish adolescents' bystander responses and their attitudes toward their Syrian peers. However, creating an inclusive school climate and society (in general) is not a one-way street. Thus, it is also important to examine Syrian refugee adolescents' perspectives toward social conflicts in schools and societies in future research. This is especially important, given that some recent findings suggest that some Syrian refugees are both victims and bullies (Yilmaz, 2020).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Overall, the findings of this study provide novel insights into how intergroup-related and social-cognitive factors might shape bystander responses to intergroup bias-based bullying of Syrian refugees. Overall, intergroup-related and social-cognitive factors may play a key role in bystander responses and may be an important target for intervention programs aiming to promote bystanders' active responses as important actors in bullying incidents. Understanding the role of these factors is important as this may reveal key areas for intervention both to reduce bullying in general and to foster assertive bystander intervention to halt bullying, which does occur. This is an especially timely and important issue based on the evidence demonstrating increasing negative interactions between Turkish and Syrian youth in

schools. Moreover, considering the increase in Syrian refugees in Turkey in recent years, new programs for an inclusive education system should be developed to create inclusive classrooms and an increasing sense of belonging, which can be particularly poignant for refugees who have been displaced from their homes (İçduygu, 2015). Thus, our findings set a stage for future research in examining bystander responses to intergroup bias-based bullying in informing antibullying programs to ensure just and fair treatment of all youth.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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