

Support of Syrian Refugees: The Roles of Descriptive and Injunctive Norms, Perception of Threat, and Negative Emotions

Authors : Senay Yitmen

Abstract : This research investigated individual's support and helping intentions towards Syrian refugees in Turkey. This is examined in relation to perceived threat and negative emotions, and also to the perceptions of whether one's intimate social network (family and friends) considers Syrians a threat (descriptive network norm) and whether this network morally supports Syrian refugees (injunctive norms). A questionnaire study was conducted among Turkish participants (n= 565) and the results showed that perception of threat was associated with negative emotions which, in turn, were related to less support of Syrian refugees. Additionally, descriptive norms moderated the relationship between perceived threat and negative emotions towards Syrian refugees. Furthermore, injunctive norms moderated the relationship between negative emotions and support to Syrian refugees. Specifically, the findings indicate that perceived threat is associated with less support of Syrian refugees through negative emotions when descriptive norms are weak and injunctive norms are strong. Injunctive norms appear to trigger a dilemma over the decision to conform or not to conform: when one has negative emotions as a result of perceived threat, it becomes more difficult to conform to the moral obligation of injunctive norms which is associated with less support of Syrian refugees. Hence, these findings demonstrate that both descriptive and injunctive norms are important and play different roles in individual's support of Syrian refugees.

Keywords : descriptive norms, emotions, injunctive norms, the perception of threat

Conference Title : ICRFM 2019 : International Conference on Refugee and Forced Migration

Conference Location : Dublin, Ireland

Conference Dates : February 14-15, 2019