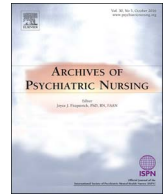


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## Anger and Tolerance Levels of the Inmates in Prison

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Anger is defined by Soykan (2003) as “a highly natural, universal and humane emotional response displayed to unsatisfied requests, undesired results, and unmet expectations (Soykan, 2003).” In terms of evolutionary psychology, when evolutionary past of organisms combines with the human nature, anger helps people to survive and makes adaptive responses easier; especially in the face of danger, it causes fight-or-flight response (Bahrami, Mazaheri, & Hasanzadeh, 2016). Anger is a functional, normal emotion for a person; however, it may cause behaviors such as aggression, creating distress for the person and others, (Robertson, Daffern, & Bucks, 2012), avoidance and withdrawal (Ayup, Nasir, Abdul Kadir, & Mohamed, 2016; Kroner & Reddon, 1992). According to one definition, anger is an emotional situation that forms a basis for hate and aggression (Bahrami et al., 2016). It is possible that anger can contribute to annoying behaviors and behavioral difficulties in prison environments. It was reported that anger has a primary role in the severity of hostility and retaliation (Ünver, Yuce, Bayram, & Bilgel, 2013) and can lead to interpersonal violence resulting sometimes with violence (Ramirez, Jeglic, & Calkins, 2015).

Anger arises under varied internal and external conditions. Frustration, being hard done-by, physical injury or sprain, being subjected to harassment or violence, disappointment and threats are among factors causing anger (Kıran, 2012). When people perceive events and other people around them as a threat to themselves, the level of tension felt increases and tolerance levels decrease. As a natural consequence of this, the reaction displayed is anger and aggression (Yazgan, 2007).

Tolerance, generally, means the ability to tolerate or endure stress, burden, pain, pressure without suffering any damage (Kaleli, 2013). Tolerance is defined as bearing internal tension with the help of inner powers (Ersanlı, 2014). Frustration is a period during which the feelings of anger and aggression dominate. In this respect, people's tolerance levels are associated with the extent to which they can endure the tension experienced resulting from this frustration (Akkoç-Şener, 2011).

Studies examining the relationship between violence, aggression and committal behaviors, and anger have revealed that anger is mostly an initiator of aggressive behavior, even if it is not automatically exhibited by aggression and violence (Ersen et al., 2011).

It was reported that anger is associated with being imprisoned, with

problems about discipline, aggression, and violence (Howells et al., 2008). However, some studies have reported that compared to society in general, convicts, and compared to people committing other types of crime, those committing a violent crime had higher levels of anger in scores (Görgülü & Cankurtaran Öntaş, 2013; Howells et al., 2005). One study stated that organized convicts were angry and depressive before crime (Cantürk & Cantürk, 2004). It was reported that convicts have serious difficulties in managing anger and that they mostly express this feeling as physical aggression in the shape of an outburst without considering its possible results (Petkova, Nikolov, & Panov, 2005)

All this information leads to the conclusion that there is an intense relationship between anger, tolerance, violence, and crime. In Turkey, although some studies have examined types of anger expression (Ersen et al., 2011) and the mental characteristics of convicts who have committed a crime (Ünver et al., 2013), there are no studies discussing the relationship between anger and the tolerance levels of imprisoned convicts. It is believed that this study is important to determine convicts' anger and tolerance levels and that it will be a guide for education programs to be implemented to confront this problem (anger management education/education for increasing tolerance of indulgence).

In the light of this purpose, answers were sought for the following questions:

1. What are the anger and tolerance levels of imprisoned convicts?
2. What are factors that affect anger and tolerance levels of imprisoned convicts?

## Materials and Methods

### Study Design and Purpose

This was a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted to determine anger and tolerance levels of imprisoned convicts.

### The Place Where This Study Was Conducted

This study was conducted with convicts in Balıkesir Burhaniye T-Type Closed Prison. Prisons in Turkey are classified as A, B, C, D, E, F, H, K, L, M, R, and T types according to their capacity, size, and safety

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levels. D- and F-Type prisons are high security. (<http://www.cte.adalet.gov.tr/index.html>, Accessed: 20 January 2017). This penal institution, where the present study was conducted, has 91 rooms of 8 persons (18 single rooms, 2 observation rooms, 1 disabled room, 8 rooms of 3 and 2 transient rooms). Although the Burhaniye T-Type Closed Prison has a capacity of 532, because the current number has increased, its capacity has increased to 922 with the capacity to further increase. (<http://www.burhaniyettkacik.adalet.gov.tr>, Accessed: 11 April 2017). During the period when this study was conducted, 1050 convicts were in the prison. People committing ordinary crimes or crimes of terror are in the T-Type prison. Those who did not wish participate in the study, who did not complete the forms, and who had a history of a psychiatric disorder (444 individuals) were excluded from the study.

### Participants

The population of this study comprised convicts in Balıkesir Burhaniye T-Type Closed Prison between 15.01.2015 and 15.04.2015. This study did not select a study sample, it aimed to reach the entire population. The study sample therefore included all convicts (506 people) who agreed to participate in the present study, did not have a history of psychiatric disease. After providing the necessary explanation, the researcher delivered data collection tools to all wards and collected them 15 to 20 min later. The researcher helped illiterate convicts to complete the questionnaires.

### Data Collection Tools

Study data were collected using the Personal Information Form, Tolerance Scale, and State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI).

- Personal Information Form:** This form queries sociodemographic data such as age, gender, educational level, the place where participants lived longest, and questions about being in prison (type of crime, duration) (Ozdemir, 2009; Ayan, 2013; Kızılkaya, 2014).
- Tolerance Scale:** This 11-item scale was developed by Ersanli and is calculated using scores obtained from 1 to 5 items, except for the 3rd item which is reverse scored. Higher scores indicate that the participant has higher levels of tolerance. The internal consistency coefficient of the Tolerance Scale was 0.84 (Ersanli, 2014). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale to be 0.87 for the present study.
- State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI):** The validity and reliability analysis of this 34-item Likert-type scale was performed by Ozer in 1994. This scale has 2 sub-dimensions: anger and anger style. There are 10 questions about anger (the maximum possible score of this sub-dimension is 40, and the minimum is 10), and 24 questions about anger style. Anger style was examined under three sub-dimensions: "anger-in" (8 questions), "anger-out" (8 questions) and "anger gotten under control" (8 questions). The highest possible score on each three sub-dimensions is 32, the lowest is 8. Ozer determined that the Cronbach's alpha values of the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory of the anger-out scale, of the anger-in scale were between 0.67 and 0.92, 0.80 and 0.90, 0.69 and 0.91, 0.58 and 0.76, respectively. While high scores obtained from the Trait Anger Subscale indicate high level of anger, high scores obtained from the anger control subscale indicate that anger is controlled, high scores obtained from the anger-out subscale indicate that anger is easily expressed and high scores obtained from the anger-in subscale indicate that anger is suppressed (Özer, 1994).

The present study determined the Cronbach's alpha values in the sample group to be 0.86, 0.82, 0.77, and 0.71 for the state anger state sub-dimension, the anger management sub-dimension, the anger-out sub-dimension, and the anger-in sub-dimension, respectively.

### Procedures

#### Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained the necessary permission (dated 30.12.2015 and numbered 5115) from the Ministry of Justice to conduct the study in the relevant institution and obtained ethical committee consent (dated 01.07.2016, numbered 94025189-050.04-191) from the Balıkesir University Medical School, Department of Ethical Committee. The researcher also informed participants about the study and received their written consents.

#### Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed using SPSS 18 software. This study used percentages, means, *t*-test, and one-way ANOVA analyses.  $p < 0.05$  was accepted as a statistically significance limit.

#### Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted in one institution, which is among the study limitations. Thus, it is not possible to generalize these study results. In the institution, approximately 48% of prisoners were reached. For that reason, sampling cannot be generalized. Moreover, this study was not assessed by being conducted in different institutions according to the characteristic of open/closed prison. Some participants did not report which crime they committed; therefore, this study could not make a comparison based on this characteristic. Therefore, it is suggested that further studies be conducted by taking these deficiencies into consideration, and in different institutions. Another limitation of this study is that it was conducted only in a closed prison.

### Results

Table 1 shows sociodemographic features of participants. A large majority (94.1%) of participants were male, and 58.1% had children. Based on participants' educational level, 55.9% were primary school graduates. Of participants; 70.6% were self-employed before being imprisoned, 44.3% lived longest in a province center before being

**Table 1**  
Sociodemographic features of participants.

Sociodemographic features	n	%
Gender		
Male	476	94.1
Female	30	5.9
Having children		
Yes	294	58.1
No	212	41.9
Educational level		
Literate	76	15.0
Primary school graduate	283	55.9
High school graduate	112	52.1
Bachelor's degree or above	35	6.9
Participants' profession before imprisonment		
Not working	97	19.2
Retired	11	2.2
Officer	7	1.4
Farmer	34	6.7
Self-employed	357	70.6
The place where participants had lived longest before imprisonment		
Village	61	12.1
Town/district	221	43.7
Province center	224	44.3
Having been imprisoned previously		
Yes	342	67.6
No	164	32.4
Total	506	100

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