

DETERMINING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS DATING VIOLENCE

Ayşe DOST

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Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to determine the attitudes of university students towards dating violence. The study was conducted with 432 students studying at a health sciences school of a foundation university in the spring semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. Data were collected using the "personal information form" and the "Dating Violence Attitude Scale" form. It was determined that 7.9% of the students were exposed to psychological violence and 3.7% of them were exposed to physical violence. Students' emotional violence sub-dimension score 27.03 ± 4.58 , sexual violence sub-dimension score 33.03 ± 3.57 , general violence sub-dimension score 24.38 ± 2.96 , physical violence sub-dimension score 23.81 ± 3.24 , economic violence sub-dimension score was 21.13 ± 3.49 , and the scale total score was 129.38 ± 11.14 points. It was determined that the mean rank of the emotional violence sub-dimension of the students who stated that they lived in the village was higher, and the mean rank of the sexual violence sub-dimension of the students who stated that their current dating relationship was 3 years or more ($p < 0.05$). In the study, it was determined that students' attitudes towards dating violence were not supportive, and there is a need for the development of programs to prevent dating violence and experimental studies to be carried out.

Keywords: Attitude, Students, Violence.

ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN FLÖRT ŞİDDETİNE YÖNELİK TUTUMLARININ BELİRLENMESİ

Özet

Bu çalışmada üniversite öğrencilerinin flört şiddetine yönelik tutumlarının belirlenmesi hedeflenmiştir. Çalışma, 2020-2021 öğretim yılı bahar döneminde bir vakıf üniversitesinin sağlık bilimleri yüksekokulu'nda öğrenim gören 432 öğrenci ile yürütüldü. Veriler "kişisel bilgi formu" ve "Flört Şiddeti Tutum Ölçeği" formu kullanılarak toplandı. Öğrencilerin %7,9'unun psikolojik şiddete maruz kaldığı ve %3,7'sinin fiziksel şiddete maruz kaldığı saptanmıştır. Öğrencilerin duygusal şiddet alt boyutu puanı 27.03 ± 4.58 , cinsel şiddet alt boyutu puanı 33.03 ± 3.57 , genel şiddet alt boyutu puanı 24.38 ± 2.96 , fiziksel şiddet alt boyutu puanı 23.81 ± 3.24 , ekonomik şiddet alt boyutu puanı 21.13 ± 3.49 olup, ölçek toplam puanı 129.38 ± 11.14 puan olarak tespit edilmiştir. Köyde yaşadığını belirten öğrencilerin duygusal şiddet alt boyutu sıra ortalamalarının daha yüksek olduğu ve mevcut flört ilişkisi yılının 3 yıl ve üzerinde olduğunu belirten öğrencilerin cinsel şiddet alt boyutu sıra ortalamalarının daha yüksek olduğu tespit edildi ($p < 0,05$). Araştırmada öğrencilerin flört şiddetine yönelik tutumlarının destekleyici yönde olmadığı belirlenmiş olup, flört şiddetini önleyici programlarının geliştirilmesine ve yapılacak deneysel çalışmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Öğrenciler, Şiddet, Tutum.

1. Introduction

Dating violence encompasses behavior between current or former close partners, which may include physical or sexual violence, as well as emotional or psychological abuse (1). Dating violence is a serious public health problem at the global level, with differences in its nature and occurrence (2). Globally, 30% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner (3). A systematic review of the global prevalence of dating violence concluded that almost 1 in 4 femicides was committed by an intimate partner (4). Teen dating violence has a profound impact on health, opportunities and well-being throughout life. Unhealthy relationships can start early and last a lifetime. Teens often think that certain behaviors, such as teasing and name-calling, are a "normal" part of a relationship, but these behaviors can turn into abuse or serious forms of violence. Many young people do not report such unhealthy behaviors and avoid seeking help because they are afraid or ashamed (5). When the studies in the literature are examined, it is seen that the incidence of problems such as decreased self-confidence, shame and guilt feelings, anger outbursts, anxiety disorders, depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorders, unwanted pregnancies and miscarriages, sexually transmitted diseases increase in victims of dating violence (6-11).

Due to the widespread nature and negative consequences of dating violence, WHO strongly recommends that all healthcare professionals receive both undergraduate and in-service dating violence training (12). However, although there are studies on violence in our country, the number of studies on dating violence is low (13-18).

Dating violence is a phenomenon that can have physical and psychological damages and can affect the future relationships and family life of young adults, and it is important to determine the attitudes of young adults towards dating violence and related factors. Based on this information, this study was conducted to determine the attitudes of university students towards dating violence.

Research questions:

- What is the level of university students' attitudes towards dating violence?
- Is there a statistically significant difference between the sociodemographic characteristics of university students and their attitudes towards dating violence?

2. Method

Research Design: This study is a descriptive type study.

Research Participants: The population of the research consists of students studying at the health sciences school of a foundation university in the academic year of 2020-2021 (n=2022). The sample size was determined as 323 students, taking into account the "sample size table with 95% reliability and ± 0.05 margin of error", and the sample of the study consisted of 432 students from the universe who volunteered to participate in the research.

Data Collection Tools: Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of two parts, "Personal Information Form" and "Dating Violence Attitude Scale".

"Personal Information Form": Prepared by researchers a form consisting of 13 questions. "Age, gender, income status, place of residence, place of childhood, educational status of parents, presence of mental illness, presence of romantic relationship, duration of relationship, employment status, exposure to physical violence in dating relationship, exposure to psychological violence, sexual violence exposure to violence"

"Dating Violence Attitude Scale": It is a scale developed by Terzioğlu et al. (2016), aiming to determine individuals' attitudes towards violence in dating relationships. The scale consists of five sub-dimensions and 28 items: "sexual violence, emotional violence, general violence, economic

violence and physical violence". The scale is a five-point Likert type and the highest possible score for each item in the scale is 5 and the lowest score is 1. As the score obtained from the scale increases, it is stated that the participants have a negative attitude towards dating violence (16). The Cronbach-alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as 0.91, and it was determined as 0.75 in this study.

Data Collection: The data were collected through google forms, and the response time for the data collection form takes approximately "10-15 minutes".

Analysis of Data: Statistical analyzes were made using the "SPSS 22.0 package program". Number, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used as descriptive tests. Significance level was taken as $p < 0.05$. The "Kolmogorov Smirnov test" was used to examine whether the numerical variables showed normal distribution. It was determined that the data did not show normal distribution ($p = 0.00$). Difference analyzes between sociodemographic data and scale scores were evaluated with "Mann Whitney U" and "Kruskal Wallis test".

Ethical Considerations: Ethics committee approval (E-10840098-772.02-965) was obtained from "Istanbul Medipol University Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee" before the study, and the study was conducted in accordance with the "Helsinki Declaration principles". Volunteer consent was obtained from the students through google forms.

3. Results

In the study, 77.1% of the students were "women" and 76.6% were in the "19-21 age range". The mothers of 69.9% of the students were "primary school graduates", the fathers of 57.9% were "primary education graduates", and 66.2% of them stated that they lived in a "metropolitan city". It was determined that 94.4% of them did not "work in any job". Only 1.4% of the students were found to have "a mental illness". When the students were asked about their current romantic relationship, 37.3% stated that they had a relationship. When the cases of exposure to violence in dating violence are evaluated; It was determined that 7.9% of them were "exposed to psychological violence" and 3.7% were "exposed to physical violence" (Table 1).

Table 1. Personal Characteristics of Students

Variables	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Women	333	77,1
Men	99	22,9
Age		
18 years and under	29	6,7
19-21 years	331	76,14
22-24 years old	63	0,6
over 24 years old	9	2,1
Mother education level		
No reading or writing	27	6,3
Primary education	302	69,9
High school	87	20,1
Associate degree	3	0,7
Licence	13	3
Father's education level		
No reading or writing	3	0,7
Primary education	250	57,9
High school	153	35,4
associate degree	3	0,7
Licence	23	5,3
Living place		
Village	21	4,9
Town	11	2,5
City	114	26,4
Metropolitan	286	66,2

Income status		
Income less than expenses	140	32,4
Income equals expense	257	59,5
Income more than expenses	35	8,1
Working status		
Yes	24	5,6
No	408	94,4
Presence of mental illness		
Yes	6	1,4
No	426	98,6
Existing romantic relationship presence		
Yes	161	37,3
No	271	62,7
Relationship status		
I have no relationship	271	62,7
0-1 years	59	13,7
1-2 years	34	7,9
3 years and above	68	15,7
Exposure to psychological violence in a dating relationship		
Yes	34	7,9
No	398	92,1
Exposure to physical violence in a dating relationship		
Yes	16	3,7
No	416	96,3
Exposure to sexual violence in a dating relationship		
Yes	-	-
No	432	100

When the mean scores of “Dating Violence Attitude Scale” and its sub-dimensions are examined; students' emotional violence sub-dimension score 27.03 ± 4.58 , sexual violence sub-dimension score 33.03 ± 3.57 , general violence sub-dimension score 24.38 ± 2.96 , physical violence sub-dimension score 23.81 ± 3.24 , economic violence sub-dimension score was 21.13 ± 3.49 , and the scale total score was 129.38 ± 11.14 points (Table 2).

Table 2. Dating Violence Attitude Scale Total and Sub-dimensions Mean Scores

Sub-dimensions	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Emotional violence	12	39	27,03	4,58
Sexual violece	19	35	33,03	3,57
General violence	11	34	24,38	2,96
Physical violence	9	35	23,81	3,24
Economic violence	7	25	21,13	3,49
Total	90	157	129,38	11,14

When the Dating Violence Attitude Scale mean rank of the students according to their sociodemographic characteristics was evaluated, no statistically significant difference was observed ($p > 0.05$). It was determined that there was a significant difference between the mean rank of the emotional violence sub-dimension according to the place where the students lived and the mean rank of the sexual violence sub-dimension according to the year of their current romantic relationship ($p < 0.05$). It was determined that the mean rank of the emotional violence sub-dimension of the students who stated that they lived in the village was significantly lower than the others ($KW = 8.763$, $p = 0.033$). It was determined that the mean rank of the sexual violence sub-dimension of the students who stated that their current dating relationship was 3 years or more was significantly higher than the others ($KW = 6.313$, $p = 0.043$).

4. Discussion

In order for individuals in the society to establish and maintain healthy relationships, it is very important to educate them to be sensitive to violence from an early age and to raise awareness. The period in which the research was conducted is a developmentally important period. Therefore, the negativities to be experienced in this period may have permanent effects on the future lives of the students. Since dating violence is mostly experienced in adolescence and is accepted as a determinant of violence in adulthood, it should be considered as a serious problem. For a conscious and healthy future, dating violence should be considered as an important problem among the types of violence. In this study, it was aimed to determine the attitudes of university students towards dating violence.

In the study, when students' exposure to dating violence is evaluated; It was determined that 7.9% of them were "exposed to psychological violence" and 3.7% were "exposed to physical violence". In the study of Cangür et al. (2021) , 19% of the students reported that they were exposed to violence in their dating relationships, and 14.6% of them used violence in their dating relationships (19). In the study of Alan Dikmen et al. (2018) and Aba (2008), it was determined that university students were mostly exposed to psychological violence in dating (20,21)

Umana et al. (2014) stated that in parallel with the findings of their study and other similar research findings, university students experience psychological dating violence more commonly (22). In studies conducted with university students in our country, the rate of dating violence was found to be "11-45% (23,24). Unfortunately, it is thought that male students use emotional violence by feeling the need for control due to their desire to hold power. It is thought that the reason why the rates of violence found in this study are lower than many studies in the literature may be due to the differences arising from the "methods of defining, questioning and evaluating dating violence" and cultural differences.

In the study, the students' "Dating Violence Attitude Scale" and sub-dimensions rank averages were found to be quite high, and it was determined that the students' attitudes towards dating violence were "not supportive". Similarly, in the study conducted by Terzioğlu et al. (2016) , it was found that their attitudes towards dating violence were not supportive (16). Similarly, in the study conducted by Öztürk et al. (2021) with students studying in health sciences, it was concluded that students did not support dating violence (25). Although it is stated in most of the studies that "men inflict more violence on women" and "women experience more victimization", some studies emphasize that men are also exposed to violence. In these studies, it is stated that dating violence is bidirectional, individuals can be both the perpetrator and the victim of violence (26,27). There are also data showing that women use violence more than men no difference was observed.

The acceptance level of emotional violence of the students who stated that they lived in the village was found to be higher than the other students. In the study conducted by Kaya Sakarya (2013) on university students, the acceptance levels of inter-couple violence of students living in villages were found to be significantly higher than those of students living in other settlements (town, district, province) (28). Similarly, Spencer (2000), states that students living in villages are more likely to be exposed to violence. It is thought that the inexperience of the dating relationship, the family structure and the experiences of the individuals they take as role models may be effective in the more positive attitudes of young adults who live in the village towards dating violence (29).

5. Conclusion

As a result, it was determined in the study that university students' attitudes towards dating violence were "not supportive". As a result of this study, it was not possible to make causal explanations. For this reason, conducting studies focusing on causality relations will be illuminating in terms of both explaining violence and pioneering prevention and intervention-oriented studies. In

addition, units that provide health services to university students should integrate the issue of dating violence into their health promotion programs.

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