



The Impact of Violence Against Women on Women's Daily Lives in Türkiye

Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Şiddetin Kadınların Günlük Yaşamlarına Etkisi

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of the current situation of violence against women in Türkiye on women's daily lives and women's perceptions and evaluations of the current situation. The study was conducted through interviews with semi-structured questions with 15 female university students aged between 20-25. Firstly, it was concluded that the current situation of violence against women affects the participants' feelings, behaviors, family, and dating relationships in their daily lives. Secondly, their perceptions of violence against women, their evaluations of policies and sanctions, and their suggestions for combating violence against women were shed light.

Keywords: *violence against women, Türkiye, daily life, fear, insecurity.*

Öz

Bu çalışmada, Türkiye'de kadına yönelik şiddetin mevcut durumunun kadınların günlük yaşamlarına etkisini ve kadınların mevcut duruma ilişkin algı ve değerlendirmeleri incelenmektedir. Araştırma, yaşları 20-25 arasında değişen 15 üniversiteli kadın öğrenciyle yarı yapılandırılmış sorularla yapılan görüşmeler yoluyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Öncelikle, kadına yönelik şiddetin mevcut durumunun katılımcıların günlük yaşamlarındaki duygu, davranış, aile ve flört ilişkilerini etkilediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. İkinci olarak, katılımcıların kadına yönelik şiddete ilişkin algılarına, politika ve yaptırımlara ilişkin değerlendirmelerine, kadına yönelik şiddetle mücadelede yönelik önerilerine ışık tutulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *kadına yönelik şiddet, Türkiye, gündelik yaşam, korku, güvensizlik.*

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Introduction

Violence against women is an essential social problem in Türkiye. According to a recent study, 72 percent of the participants stated that one of the biggest problems experienced in society in Türkiye is violence (Sülün & Topçu, 2020). This perception of violence against women can be supported by statistics showing the prevalence of violence in Türkiye. The rate of women who state that they have been exposed to physical violence by their husbands or intimate partners at any point in their lives is 36 percent (Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Çavlin, & Akadlı-Ergöçmen, 2015: 83). Considering the rates of violence against women in intimate relationships, sexual violence is 12 percent, emotional violence is 44 percent, and economic violence is 30 percent (83-97). The rates of violence perpetrated against women by people other than their intimate partners are as follows: physical violence is 14 percent, sexual violence is 2.9 percent, and emotional violence is 22.4 percent (111-113).

It can be claimed that violence against women is an increasing problem in Türkiye and that the policies carried out in the last two decades have been effective. According to the data of the digital monument opened for women who died of violence, 67 women were killed in 2008 and 395 women in 2022 (Anitsayac). We Will Stop Femicide Platform (KCDP) also reported that femicides increased continuously from 2010 to 2022, with the only exception being the year 2011, when the Istanbul Convention was signed (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu 2023). With the JDP (Justice and Development Party) period, which came to power in 2002 and is still in power in 2023, the gender regime of the government plays an essential role in escalating violence against women. The discourses that there is no belief in gender equality, the integration of women's policies into the family, the implementation of policies that encourage marriage and childbirth to strengthen the family, and the drawing of acceptable femininity frameworks that will establish and maintain these families provide clues about the JDP's gender regime (Erkmén, 2020: 77-92). These policies have uncontrollable consequences for the increase in violence against women (Özkazanç, 2013: 246) and cause the legitimation of violence in society by opening up to debate whether the women subjected to violence deserve it. The traces of contradictions between JDP's legal regulations on violence against women and the gender regime it carries out can be traced through the Istanbul Convention. Although Türkiye was the first country to ratify the Istanbul Convention in 2011, it has been reported by GREVIO that it has severe shortcomings in preventing violence, monitoring, punishing perpetrators, providing support machinery, and ensuring gender equality (GREVIO, 2018). It can be argued that with Türkiye's withdrawal from the Convention in July 2021, the JDP's contradictions in combating violence against women came to an end against this struggle. The message of withdrawing even from the already unimplemented Convention is that violence against women is not an urgent problem within conservative, anti-gender policies, as evidenced by the increasing data on violence against women. It is clear that this situation has

vital consequences for women who are exposed to violence. However, the increase in violence against women and femicide and the deficiencies in both the production of adequate policies for these situations and their prevention, in other words, how the current status of violence against women in Türkiye affects women's daily lives is another critical problem that needs to be investigated. Therefore, the next section will reveal how this subject is studied in the literature and what gap it aims to fill, especially in the literature in Türkiye.

The impact of violence against women on women's daily lives: a review of literature

Violence against women is a widely studied subject. It is seen that the prominent studies in the literature focus on the causes, consequences, and how to prevent violence against women. In Türkiye, it can be claimed that studies on violence against women focus on issues such as determining the rates of violence (Basar & Demirci, 2018; Erden & Akdur, 2018; Sakallı et al., 2017; Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Çavlin, & Akadlı-Ergöçmen, 2015), revealing the factors affecting violence (Alkan & Tekmanlı, 2021; Duran & Tepehan Eraslan, 2019; Tekkaş Kerman & Betrus, 2020; Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Çavlin, & Akadlı-Ergöçmen, 2015), analyzing the impact of implemented policies (Bilim ve Aydınlanma Akademisi, 2021; Güneş & Ezikoğlu, 2023; Kara et al., 2014; Sahin, 2022; Uçan et al., 2023), and measuring perceptions and thoughts about violence (Deniz, 2022; Gursoy et al., 2016; Kardam & Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, 2011; Ortabag et al., 2014; Sönmez, 2021; Yılmaz et al., 2022). When these studies measuring perceptions and thoughts are examined in terms of the connections that can be established with this study, it is seen that the studies of Gursoy et al., Yılmaz et al. and Sönmez investigated the views of university students on violence against women and whether they approved or disapproved of it, the study of Deniz investigated the opinions of 25 men and women living in Istanbul, white-collar individuals, regarding violence against women, the sources and reasons of violence, and the studies of Ortabag et al. and Kardam & Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu examined the perspectives and perceptions of men regarding violence against women. However, these studies are not perception and opinion studies conducted on how violence against women affects daily life. On the other hand, in line with this study, it is seen that the majority of the literature on violence against women and its effects on women's daily lives consists of studies conducted with women subjected to violence. In addition to studies examining the coping and safety strategies of women exposed to violence (Wood et al., 2019; Waldrop & Resick, 2004), there are also studies offering security strategies for women who are or are likely to be subjected to violence (McFarlane et al., 2002; WHO, 2016). In the literature in Türkiye, there are studies that reveal strategies for coping with violence against women and examine the factors affecting these strategies. (Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Çavlin, & Akadlı-Ergöçmen, 2015; Karaman & Doğan, 2023). Furthermore, thanks to studies in which the daily experiences of women exposed to violence are conveyed, the needs and demands of women are revealed, and deficiencies and

suggestions regarding institutions and organizations that are effective in combating violence are put forward (Sakallı et al., 2017; Esenyalı Kadın Dayanışma Derneği, 2021).

One of the issues addressed by studies on the impact of violence against women on daily life is how it affects women's quality of life. In these studies, the majority of the sample consists of women who have been subjected to violence. However, these studies are very crucial in terms of indicating that violence is a part of daily life for women and that it affects their feelings in the direction of fear and insecurity and their behavior in line with restrictive practices (Draucker, 1997; Rodrigues Garcia Palhoni et al., 2014). Although Nieder, Muck & Kärtner's (2019) research reached similar results, they did not select their sample specifically from women who were subjected to violence, as in this study. By conducting interviews with university student women, they revealed how sexual violence affected their lives.

Another field of study in which the impact of violence against women on daily life can be examined is called "fear of crime" in the literature (Keane, 1998; Stanko, 1995). Notwithstanding, there are studies on women's fear of crime in Türkiye (Çardak, 2012; Gündoğdu & Metintaş, 2022; Öztürk, 2015; Tandoğan & Şimşek İlhan, 2016), no research study has been observed examining the issue's connection with violence against women. The main point revealed by the studies on women's fear of crime is that they show that women have developed security measures and self-restriction practices, as will be demonstrated in this study. However, these studies in the literature are about how the fear of crime affects women's daily lives or what coping strategies are developed by women who have been subjected to violence. This study has no presupposition for developing any emotion or behavior. Perhaps the only presupposition accepted at the starting point of the study is that violence against women is increasing in Türkiye. However, this information was not conveyed to the participants, on the contrary, an attempt was made to reveal a picture of how they perceived the current situation, how they were/or were not affected by the current situation, and how it was reflected in their daily lives. Therefore, this study wishes to fill the gap in the literature on Türkiye on this subject.

Method

This study was conducted through face-to-face interviews with 15 female participants. The participants of the study were determined with the first fifteen women who applied voluntarily after the announcement of the research to be conducted. The participants were between 20 and 25 years old and all were students at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences of Karabük University. Most women came from outside Karabük to study at the university; most lived in dormitories or student houses. None of them were married, but eight of the women had relationships. All of the participants were given color names to hide their identities. Accordingly, the list of participants is as follows:

Given Name	Age	Accomadation	Relationship status
Blue	22	Dormitory	In a relationship

Purple	23	Dormitory	Single
Red	23	Parents family home	In a relationship
White	23	Student shared apartment	Single
Yellow	25	Student shared apartment	In a relationship
Green	20	Dormitory	Single
Pink	21	Student shared apartment	In a relationship
Black	21	Dormitory	Single
Orange	23	Dormitory	Single
Brown	22	Dormitory	Single
Grey	23	Student shared apartment	Single
Navy	25	Dormitory	In a relationship
Lilac	23	Dormitory	In a relationship
Turquoise	22	Parents family home	In a relationship
Gold	21	Dormitory	In a relationship

These characteristics of the participants also show the limitations of the study. This study does not provide generalizable information because it does not include women of different ages, locations, and educational status. Additionally, their income was not considered since the participants were university students. The results may be different for women from diverse economic incomes and classes. Finally, eight participating women were in dating relationships, but none were married. Additional data could have been obtained if this study had been conducted with married women. However, although qualitative research has its limitations due to its nature, it was preferred in this study because it offers the opportunity to obtain in-depth information.

The data collection process was initiated with the permission of the Karabük University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee. The data were collected between March and April 2022. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and held in an empty meeting room in the Faculty so the participants would not experience transportation difficulties and be comfortable. At the beginning of each interview, the participants were informed about the research, their permission was requested for audio recording of the interviews, and they were asked to sign the voluntary consent form.

In the study, qualitative research was conducted, and the data were analyzed by thematic analysis. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with semi-structured questions and were audio-recorded. Audio recordings of all interviews were transcribed. Text is coded based on data, not in a predetermined coding framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 83). In other words, the coding of the data was carried out using the inductive method. In the second step, repetitive patterns were identified and abstract categories were determined by reading the texts over and over again. The expressions coded in the texts of the interviewees were coded based on their frequency, how they made sense of the questions, and what they emphasized. The coded texts were brought together, and themes were formed in the context of their relationality.

A thematic map for the analysis was created by reviewing the themes (87). Finally, in order to prepare the research report, the themes were named, and the quotations that would exemplify the selected ones. While the research aimed at the effects of violence against women on women's daily lives, since it was determined that there were important outputs regarding women's perception and evaluation, sub-themes were created under these two headings.

Results

The effect of the current situation of violence against women on women's daily life

The answers given by the participants about the effects of violence on their daily lives formed four thematic categories. These categories, created in the light of the data, revealed that violence basically affects their feelings, behaviors, family relationships, and dating relationships in their daily lives. The themes of these categories are named as follows: (a) it can happen to me too, (b) I have to take precautions, (c) be careful, (d) how can I trust a man.

All participants emphasized that they felt the most fear in their daily lives and used the phrase "it can happen to me too" to describe this feeling. The theme of not feeling safe is at the root of their fears and thoughts that they may become victims¹ of violence at any moment. Since insecurity is associated with people, authorities, and places, it has been seen that fear is a dominant emotion permeating all areas of their lives. When talking about fear, the participants frequently used the expressions "we are afraid (with an emphasis on us)" and "men are not afraid". The participants' thoughts that men are not afraid of the consequences of being a perpetrator of violence are seen as a factor that increases their fear, and they express this not as an individual issue but as a collective fear. "We are psychologically affected" is this category's second most used phrase. Participant Pink stated that the news of violence against women and the knowledge of violence is widespread said the following words:

I can't read this kind of news, I can't watch, because when I see it, I usually think about it, I can't focus on anything. I put it in its place and cry, sometimes this mood takes a week for a week.

It is seen that the feeling of sadness shared by the participants is accompanied by anxiety. After they stated that they felt sorry for the women who were victims of violence, they noted that this situation caused them to worry about themselves and the women around them. In short, it has been found that violence against women affects women's emotions in their daily lives with emotions such as fear, insecurity, sadness, and anxiety.

¹ Especially in feminist literature, the term "survivor" is preferred instead of "victim" because of its connotations of being passive and powerless. Although I have this awareness, the reason why I preferred the term victim in this study is that the participants used this language and term in their statements. The reason for continuing with the term victim in the discussion section of the study is both to create conceptual unity and because this term is used in the referenced literature.

When it comes to the effects of violence against women on women's behavior in their daily lives, it is seen that the need to take precautions comes to the fore. Taking precautions occurs in two ways for women: the practice of restraining themselves as an avoidance strategy and the security measures they develop when they are in public spaces. While women restrict their social life, clothing, and freedom of movement so that nothing happens to them, they have expressed that this is not their choice with passive verbs such as "we are restricted" or "we are blocked." Not going out alone, not going out in the evening, not wearing the style and low-cut clothes one wants, shopping in the morning, not staying out until late, not going to friends' houses are the most mentioned restrictions practices. Women restrict themselves in these areas, especially because they associate evening hours, darkness, and secluded streets with being dangerous. They think being outside at these times, and places is perceived as accepting risk. Blue expressed her discomfort with this situation with the following words:

I am a 22-year-old person, so why can't I go out in the evening? Men leave with a wave of their hands until midnight, and we don't have that luxury. We can't go out; if we ask every woman, this is how it is. My university life is about to end, okay, I go out in the mornings, but there is no social activity in the evenings, although there is only one occasional or collective dating. That's why we are affected not only by the women who experience the violence we see on the news but also by ourselves.

The most prominent measure they take in public areas is to inform the people they trust (family or friends) about the places they go. Especially if it is a place they went to for the first time or if they went out in the evening; most women stated that they also sent their location via WhatsApp. Other methods they express include calling her mother while walking home, picking up her father from where she got off the bus, meeting people in crowded places, walking by checking her back, changing her way if someone is disturbing, texting the license plate of the taxi/minibus they get on. In addition, women mentioned taking various security measures in public transport such as buses and minibuses. They stated that they pay attention to where they sit on public transport, pick up the call section of the phone, and get off at most if they are alone. Four women cited² the case of Özgecan Aslan³ as the source of their fear and perception of danger in public transport. "If I am alone on the bus, I feel compelled to get off, and I do. There are cases like Özgecan, who knows what will happen" (Green). As a security precaution, three participants⁴ said they carried pepper spray in their bags, while two⁵ said they kept things such as rasp, lighter and keys. Women who did not want to carry cutting tools expressed that they were afraid of not being able to use them as the reason. Moreover, Blue said she took a karate class to protect herself. Finally, three

² White, Green, Brown, Navy

³ Özgecan Aslan was brutally murdered at the age of 19 for resisting the rape attempt of the driver in the minibus she took to go home (Milliyet, 2021).

⁴ Lilac, Navy, Blue

⁵ Lilac, Grey

women⁶ pointed out that they downloaded the KADES⁷ application on their phones, while seven women⁸ stated that they were aware of the application but had not downloaded it to their phones yet.

The effect of violence against women on women's relations with their families can be thematically under the heading of the warning "be careful." It was observed that when women talked about their families, they spoke of their feelings, the advice they gave, and the restrictive advice and practices they were exposed to. All of the women expressed that their families were significantly affected by the current situation of violence against women; they were afraid and worried. They added that these fears and concerns have increased in recent years. Most participants' families recommend that they take restrictive security measures to be careful. The most frequently mentioned measures are not going out in the evening or alone. When they have to enter the public area, their families warn them to keep them informed, keep their phone on, send their location, and send the vehicle's license plate. In addition, "do not trust anyone" is one of the most common advice women receive. Another thing at the center of the warnings of the participants' families is the house; they point to "women who were killed by being thrown out of windows"⁹ as the source of signs to go to or let anyone into their home.

Some of the families use expressions such as "I trust you" and "you know yourself" while giving advice and warnings. It is generally seen that the role of active intervention and warning comes from their mothers. Only one of the families made an empowering recommendation outside of the restriction.

My father wants us to be strong and doesn't approve marriage before school ends. He states If you encounter such a thing in the future, you say that I am strong, I can divorce you, I will not need your money, etc. (Turquoise)

As for the fourth theme, in which the participants talked about their dating relationships, their thoughts, feelings, and precautions regarding dating also stand out in this theme. It is seen that insecurity is the emotion women share towards dating relationships/men. They stated they had difficulties establishing intimacy and incorporating someone into their lives because they did not trust men. They expressed their concerns that even if they trusted men, their lover might change later, especially when they got married, and that different characteristics might emerge from the one they knew. The fact that the participants think people are not what they seem leads to these concerns. One of the reasons for their uneasy stance towards dating relationships is that

⁶ Yellow, Orange, Grey

⁷ The Women's Support Application (KADES) is an emergency notification/intervention application that can be downloaded to smart phones prepared by the General Directorate of Security. It is an application that allows police teams to come and intervene when women victims of violence press the button in the application with their location information open. (İçişleri, 2018).

⁸ Purple, White, Green, Pink, Black, Navy, Turquoise

⁹ The number of women who die by falling from balconies or windows has increased in Türkiye in recent years. Women being thrown from heights to look like suicide started to appear in the media with the case of Şule Çet, who was killed in this way in 2018 (Cnnturk, 2022).

they observe people around them who have restrictive dating relationships. Some women stated that this insecurity also affected their views on sexuality. In this context, Red explained that she stays away from sexuality,

I can't intimate people, I can't get to the sexual part anyway, even hugging irritates me. You can't see a person's face when you hug, so I can't be sure of the feelings.

It was observed that seven women¹⁰ who did not have a dating relationship stated that they "avoid the dating phase with men and withdraw themselves" with similar sentences. Eight women¹¹ with boyfriends mentioned that they took various precautions because they did not fully trust their lover. The most prominent ones are to show themselves strong and try to see if their lovers will get angry in different situations. They stated that they ended their relationships with angry people and that the relationship with these people was more risky. Navy's precaution was to sign a love contract with her lover.

We've been together for a year, and during our first date, I heard his voice raising a little bit, and I warned him sharply, and we signed something like a love contract between us. There are clauses like he will never raise his voice against me.

Perceptions and evaluations of the participants on violence against women

According to the data obtained from the participants, their perceptions and evaluations of violence against women are divided into four thematic categories. These themes are as follows: a) definitions and sources of violence against women, b) perceptions of the current situation of violence against women, c) evaluation of penalties and policies regarding violence against women, d) views on preventing violence against women, and sanctions against perpetrators.

All of the interviewed women underlined the importance of psychological violence as well as physical violence when describing violence against women. In addition, one of the types of violence that they all recognize is dating violence. In the definitions of violence, five women¹² mentioned economic violence, and one woman¹³ mentioned sexual violence. Women often used words such as suppression, use of force, deprivation, and victimization when describing violence. It was observed that women defined violence as men's show of strength suppression by using their power and trying to establish superiority. Two participants¹⁴ pointed out that men resort to violence to cover up this weakness when they feel weak. It has been found that the most emphasized reasons for the sources of violence against women are lack of education, ignorance, mentality, deterrence, and lack of sanctions. Participants attributed that men do not hesitate to use violence to injustice, social structure, and withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention. Four women¹⁵ drew attention to the fact that women could be killed by a man they did not know. In this context,

¹⁰ Purple, Black, Orange, Brown, Grey, White, Green

¹¹ Blue, Red, Yellow, Pink, Navy, Lilac, Turquoise, Gold

¹² Black, Navy, Purple, Grey, Gold

¹³ Gold

¹⁴ White, Green

¹⁵ Gold, Lilac, Green, Blue

women who refer to the murder of Başak Cengiz¹⁶ stated that men can kill someone even if they want to kill them, and women are easier victims for this. Another issue that draws attention in the depictions of violence by the participants is their concern that "they say she deserved it behind my back." They pointed out that women are easily blamed for going to someone's house, going out in the evening, or dating.

The neighbors came to us on the day of Pınar Gültekin's murder. They said the fault was with the girl; she should not be dating the married man. Nobody cares what happened to that woman. They say what she lived deserved by being labeled as to why she was there. (Gold)

Regarding the participants' perceptions concerning the current situation of violence against women in Türkiye, it is prominent that all women think that violence is very high. They expressed that they are aware of violence against women and femicide daily by hearing from the news, social media, or their environment. As a result of constantly seeing and hearing this news, they conclude that violence is normalized and experienced everywhere. They estimate that many violent incidents are not in the news and that we do not know about.

Today, it's someone else, but tomorrow it could be me too because it's not something that's over, and I think it will always continue; even if we haven't heard it today, it must have happened somewhere. But it does happen. There is always a woman who died who was subjected to violence. (Purple).

While choosing the participants of this study, the condition of being exposed to violence or witnessing violence closely was not sought, but eight of the participants¹⁷ stated that they had been subjected to violence at least once in their lives, five of them¹⁸ had been sexually harassed, and fourteen of them¹⁹ indicated that they had witnessed violence against the women around them. Therefore, it can be said that violence is not a distant event heard only in the news for them. It can be argued that the violence they have experienced or their testimonies have an impact on their perceptions of the prevalence of violence. In addition, it has been found that they see violence not only as a common phenomenon but also as a phenomenon that has increased in recent years. Fourteen participants stated that violence against women has increased in the last few years. Most of the women pointed to the fact that men found more courage and withdrew from the Istanbul Convention which is one of the reasons for this increase besides others.

It is seen that the participants' opinions on the current situation of violence against women are followed by their evaluations of the penalties and policies for violence against women. All women considered the policies and sanctions to combat violence against women inadequate in Türkiye. It is one of the most repeated themes of the feeling of insecurity. The women stated that they did

¹⁶ Başak Cengiz was killed by Can Göktuğ Boz, whom she did not know, while walking on the street in Istanbul in 2021, using a samurai sword. Boz testified that he wanted to kill someone and chose her because the woman could not resist. (Sputniknews, 2021)

¹⁷ Navy, Lilac, Gold, White, Yellow, Pink, Brown, Grey

¹⁸ White, Yellow, Pink, Brown, Grey

¹⁹ Except Turquoise

not trust the justice, the police, and the courts, so they believed they would not be protected. Brown stressed this situation with the following words:

There is nothing to prevent something from happening to me. When I say that he is following me, nothing is done about it, something is not prevented from the beginning. That's why I think I have to protect myself.

Most participants did not believe the police would take the necessary precautions and procedures even if they applied to them in case of violence. The Navy stated that she didn't even download the Kades app because she thought the police wouldn't come and wouldn't do anything. Women also do not trust the enforcement of laws and protective and preventive policies. In this regard, they frequently referred to examples where men who were given a restraining order came and killed women despite this order. Another example given by some participants in this regard is that even women staying in shelters are found and killed by the men they are subjected to violence. While the participants pointed out that the current regulations on violence against women were not implemented, they criticized Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention at this point. Eight women²⁰ said they could not understand why Türkiye withdrew from the Istanbul Convention. Four participants pointed out that the Istanbul Convention was not implemented anyway. Therefore, three of those²¹ who used this expression emphasized that it does not matter whether or not to withdraw from the Convention. In contrast, one²² stressed that it is crucial to stay in the Convention, giving the impression that the state is defending us even if the Convention is not implemented. Ten women²³ reported that withdrawal from the Convention had negative consequences and increased violence against women. Participants stated that withdrawing from the Convention encouraged men to use violence more because men began to think that women were more vulnerable, that the state did not care about violence against women politically, and that they would not be punished if they used violence.

Withdrawing from the Convention benefited the men; they gained more self-confidence, and violence and femicide have increased a lot. Every year, I have to protect myself a little more." (Black)

It has been found that another point criticized by the participants is related to the punishments given to the perpetrators. They stated that not giving the perpetrators the penalties, which they express with concepts such as sufficient and deterrent, does not provide justice or intimidate the men. The most cited example in this regard is remission of sentence for good conduct. In White's words:

When they put on a suit and tie and go to court, they are given a remission of sentence for good behavior, and these men, who are released in a short time, go and do their unfinished business and kill the women.

²⁰ Brown, Purple, Blue, White, Turquoise, Lilac, Green, Pink

²¹ Grey, Navy, Lilac

²² Red

²³ Black, Red, Orange, Navy, Blue, Purple, White, Green, Gold, Brown

As for the last theme obtained from the data, the participants put forward their views on preventing violence against women, empowering women, and sanctions. It is seen that the participants mostly recommend education starting from childhood to prevent violence against women. They also emphasized that children should be educated in a conscious way as well as receiving education. In this context, some participants suggested that women, men, and families should be made aware. Five women²⁴ believed that psychological treatment would also work in preventing violence. While some argued that men prone to violence should receive psychological treatment, two women²⁵ stated that all men should receive psychological support and education before getting married. Some of the participants made suggestions regarding the empowerment of women to combat violence against women. They argued that it is vital for women to stand on their own feet with various supports. In addition, they also stated that women need support and training to stand up to violence, file a criminal complaint, and not be silent in the face of violence. Purple underlined that women should receive support from their families in this regard. Participants who criticize the processes of combating violence against women also offered suggestions in this area. One of these suggestions is that the complaints of women who go to the police and complain about violence should be taken more seriously, evaluated well, and necessary procedures should be implemented. Moreover, effective enforcement of restraining orders is recommended. With regard to the sanctions against perpetrators of violence against women or femicide, it was claimed that the remission of sentence for good conduct should be abolished. Most of the participants stated that the penalties should be aggravated. According to the statements of most of the women, the aggravation of punishments is characterized by concepts such as extreme and frightening sanctions. In fact four women²⁶ stated that the tit-for-tat method should be applied and that men should suffer the same pain. Two women²⁷ put forward that the perpetrators should be sentenced to life imprisonment.

Discussion

The impact of the current situation of violence against women in Türkiye on women's daily lives

According to the data of this research, the current situation of violence against women in Türkiye affects women's feelings, behaviors, family relationships, and dating relationships to varying degrees. According to the data obtained from the participants, the most felt emotions are fear and insecurity. Women's fear of crime is a frequently discussed topic in the literature. According to these studies, women are more afraid of crime and being the victim of crime than men (Madriz, 1997; Keane, 1998; Tandoğan & Şimşek İlhan, 2016; Sur, 2014; Stanko, 1993, 1995; Painter, 1992). There are

²⁴ Turquoise, Grey, Green, Red, Blue

²⁵ Blue, Turquoise

²⁶ Grey, Pink, Green, Blue

²⁷ Lilac, Grey

also studies that investigate women's fear of crime by focusing on sexual harassment and rape. (Condon, Lieber & Maillochon, 2007; Koskela, 1999; Campbell, 2005; Warr, 1985; Dobbs, Waid & Shelley, 2009). While the view that it was a paradox for women to be more afraid despite being less victimized in studies of crime fear was common in the 1970s, after the 1980s, feminist researchers indicated that this fear was not irrational by pointing to the situations of violence experienced by women on a daily basis and often not recorded (Pain, 1997a: 298; Stanko, 1993: 121). Women experience violence daily, such as being followed, being sexually harassed, being rubbed off on public transport, and being insulted, and the existence of sexual and physical violence is the basis of women's fears (Stanko, 1995: 50). In short, in studies revealing women's fear of being a victim of violence, fear, insecurity, and worry are prominent emotions, and it can be claimed that the literature supports this study in this direction. Another result similar to the studies in the literature is that women not only feel fear but also restrict their lives and take security measures. In the data obtained in this study, not going out, not going out in the evening, and not going out alone were frequently repeated restriction practices. It is also frequently found in the literature that women stay at home or restrict their exit to public space by time and place so that nothing happens to them (Madriz, 1997; Nieder, Muck & Kärtner, 2019; Keane, 1998; Sur, 2014; Painter, 1992; Gordon & Riger, 1991; Pain, 1997b). While referring to this situation, Kinsey uses the expression that women live with "a virtual curfew" (Kinsey, 1984). Perceiving secluded places, certain parts of the city, and darkness as dangerous, which leads to staying at home, was emphasized by the participants of this study, and this perception is also seen in other studies. (Condon, Lieber & Maillochon, 2007: 104; Tandoğan & Şimşek İlhan, 2016: 2015; Koskela, 1999: 115). It can be seen as both a method that women use to protect themselves and a strategy not to be exposed to potential victim accusatory discourses by not going out at risky times and places. The rhetoric of "they say they deserved it behind my back" that women pointed out in this study is supported by the prevalence of victim blaming in other studies (Campbell, 2005: 132; Madriz, 1997: 88). However, as Koskela points out when women restrict their access to the public space as a strategy of avoidance, they also unintentionally contribute to the reproduction of the gendered space (1999: 113). As for the security measures mentioned by the participants in this study, precautions such as informing their relatives of their location, being careful about not being alone in public transport, and carrying things such as pepper spray and rasp were prominent. In the studies in the literature, it was observed that women took similar safety precautions (Nieder, Muck & Kärtner, 2019; Sur, 2014; Madriz, 1997). However, these fears, avoidance strategies, and security measures are not an absolute problem experienced by women in every society; their degrees and forms may vary. One of the factors affecting this is the extent to which gender equality in society is achieved (Koskela, 1997: 302). It can be argued that as the asymmetry of vulnerability grows in society, exposure to violence or the threat of it increases, and therefore, the need for fear and security measures of these groups ascends. In addition, as Valentine's study demonstrates,

parental warnings significantly impact public space perception as dangerous, increasing fear and taking security measures (1992). Valentine's study (1992) indicated the practices of families to restrict their daughters, and it is possible to trace a similar situation in the data of this study. This condition has the effect of increasing fear and the need for women to find safety strategies. However, according to the data obtained in this study, families have been more worried in recent years and have warned their daughters frequently to be careful. It can be claimed that this is a result of the increase in violence against women in Türkiye. Although it can be said that the concerns of families have a realistic basis, it can be alleged that restrictive attitudes lead to constant surveillance and control of women, and that violence against women and avoidance of violence are paid by women and increase gender inequality. Lastly, it has been revealed that violence also affects the dating relationships of the participants, that they cannot trust men, that they have difficulty in establishing a dating relationship, or that they develop various strategies to keep themselves safe in their relationships. Recent studies on dating violence in Türkiye reveal the prevalence of dating violence. According to the study conducted by Toplu-Demirtaş et al. with college students, the rate of women exposed to sexual, physical, or psychological dating violence in the previous year is 79.5% (2013: 204). The study conducted by Oflaz et al. with college women in 2023 demonstrates that the rate of psychological violence in the last six months is 92.2% in dating relationships (2023: 2000). These studies in the literature conclude that the women's distrust of men and their attitude towards dating relationships are not irrational but based on information obtained by witnessing, experiencing, or hearing. A frequently discussed issue in the literature is that women perceive strange men as more dangerous even if they are exposed to more violence in intimate partnership (Valentine, 1992: 23-24; Pain, 1997a; Campbell, 2005: 120). The women in this study are aware of violence in intimate partnerships, but intimateness does not change the feeling of strangeness and unexpectedness. It can be argued that they attribute an unreliable meaning to masculinity that can lead to violence at any time.

Perceptions and evaluations of violence against women

When the definitions of violence of the women participating in the study were examined, it was observed that there was awareness about the types of physical and psychological violence included in the scope of violence against women and that there was not enough attention paid to economic and sexual violence. Women defined violence as men's ways of establishing dominance, exerting power, and covering up their weaknesses. These references to women are supported by studies that do not address the relationship between masculinity and violence with an essentialist approach, suggesting that when men's masculinity is under threat, they resort to violence to rebuild it (Bailey & Peterson, 1995; Messerschmidt, 2000; Özkazanç & Yetiş, 2016: 20; Yazar, 2015: 44). Among the causes of violence against women and femicides in Türkiye, the desire of women to divorce/separation is the most common cause (Bilim ve Aydınlanma Akademisi, 2021; Çetin, 2015; Erden & Akdur, 2018; Yıldırım, 2018), and it can be concluded that this desire is characterized as a loss of

sovereignty by men. In this study, women also pointed out the lack of education, patriarchal mentality, lack of sanctions and deterrence, and Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention as the sources of violence. They also expressed their solution suggestions in parallel with these situations that they thought as the source of the problem. The fact that women are frequently recommended education, awareness, adequate precautionary measures and prosecution, and deterrent punishments demonstrates this parallelism. Therefore, it can be claimed that the participating women emphasized the social and political aspects of violence against women. Although five women seemed to have evaluated the issue from an individual psychological perspective by recommending that men receive psychological treatment to prevent violence, none of the participants discussed violence against women on a purely psychological basis. Remarkably, the context of the participants' explanation of the increased violence against women in recent years, such as policies and Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, clearly shows this connection. The problems pointed out by the participants are supported by the results of studies conducted in recent years. Research on violence against women in Türkiye reveals that decreasing education and welfare levels increase the rate of violence (Erden & Akdur, 2018; Tekkaş Kerman & Betrus, 2020; Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Çavlin, & Akadlı-Ergöçmen, 2015). As for measures to prevent violence against women, it has been revealed that law enforcement forces do not take the necessary interventions effectively in response to violations of restraining orders (Sakallı et al., 2017: 34) and that 11% of men who have been given restraining orders in the last ten years have killed women despite this decision (Ay et al., 2021: 36). In addition, the problems experienced by women subjected to violence in law enforcement, which is their first authority, are as follows: complaints are not taken into account, the police try to mediate, women's statements are not taken incompletely or are not processed, women are not directed to the proper authorities, evidence is not collected or is not collected incompletely, they are faced with judgmental attitudes or victim-blaming language, they are mistreated (Gülel, 2021; Sakallı et al., 2017; Uçan et al., 2023). Women who are victims of violence are reluctant to report violence because the laws are not implemented properly (Sakallı et al., 2017: 40) and because of penalty reductions such as good behavior and unjust provocation. As for Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, it was seen in the GREVIO reports that the government in Türkiye did not fulfill its obligations in combating violence against women, even in the Convention. However, considering that the courts rejected women's requests for preventive measures after withdrawing from the Convention (Bursalı, 2021), it can be claimed that this political move had significant consequences for women. All these problems in the combat against violence against women can be seen as the multi-layered consequences of the religious, conservative, sexist, familial gender climate created by the government. In this context, it was observed that the participant women's perceptions and suggestions regarding violence against women contained accurate determinations regarding this climate.

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