

**MASCULINITY IDEOLOGY AND THREAT TO MANHOOD
AS PRECURSORS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN
TURKEY¹**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the effect of masculinity ideology (MI) and the threat to manhood (TM) on violence against women (VAW) in Turkey by testing two mediational models. The data is collected from a community sample by using quantitative research methods. The first model tests the effect of MI on attitudes towards VAW through TM. A second model employs the data of men in a relationship and tests the effect of MI on the actual perpetration of violence through TM and attitudes towards VAW. Endorsement of MI predicts tolerant attitudes towards VAW through perceived TM. These tolerant attitudes towards VAW, in turn, predict its actual perpetration. We discuss the implications of these results from a social psychological perspective regarding how the broader ideologies of patriarchy and masculinity trickle down to individual level violence towards one's partner.

Keywords: Masculinity ideology, precarious manhood, threat, manhood, violence against women, male role norms

**TÜRKİYE'DE KADINA YÖNELİK ŞİDDETİN ÖNCÜLLERİ
OLARAK ERKEKLİK İDEOLOJİSİ VE ERKEKLİĞE
YÖNELİK TEHDİT**

ÖZET

Bu çalışma erkeklik ideolojisi ve erkekliğe yönelik tehdit algısının Türkiye'de kadına yönelik şiddet üzerindeki etkisini iki aracı modeli test ederek araştırmaktadır. Araştırmanın verileri niceliksel araştırma yöntemleriyle toplum örnekleminde elde edilmiştir. İlk aracı model, erkeklik ideolojisinin kadına yönelik şiddete dair tutumlar üzerindeki etkisini erkekliğe tehdit algısı üzerinden test etmektedir. Özellikle ilişkisi olan erkeklerin verisine dayanan ikinci aracı model ise, erkeklik ideolojisinin romantik ilişkilerde kadına yönelik şiddetin sıklığı üzerindeki etkisini hem erkekliğe tehdidi hem de kadına yönelik şiddete dair tutumları aracı değişken olarak ele alarak test etmektedir. Buna göre, erkeklik ideolojisini daha fazla içselleştiren erkekler, erkeklik statülerine yönelik daha fazla tehdit algılamakta ve

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artan tehdit yoluyla kadına yönelik şiddeti daha fazla meşrulaştırmaktadırlar. Gerçek şiddet davranışlarına bakıldığında, erkeklik ideolojisini içselleştiren erkeklerin kadına şiddete yönelik daha olumlu tutumlar içinde olduğu ve bu meşru tutumlar aracılığıyla da ilişkilerinde daha sık şiddete başvurdukları görülmektedir. Araştırmanın sonuçları, ataerki ve erkeklik gibi sınırları geniş ideolojilerin kadınlara yönelik bireysel şiddete nasıl sirayet ettiğini sosyal psikolojik perspektiften tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Erkeklik ideolojisi, kırılğan erkeklik, tehdit, erkeklik statüsü, kadına yönelik şiddet, erkek rol normları

INTRODUCTION

During the trial regarding the femicide of the Turkish singer Değer Deniz, the perpetrator defended himself as “his masculinity being humiliated” (Hürriyet, 2015) and took a reduced sentence because of unjust provocation (Girit, 2015). News mostly cover men’s violence against women (hereafter VAW) because of unemployment stress or insult to manhood, thus covertly justifying the use of violence. VAW is widely considered to be a physical manifestation of patriarchal attitudes and masculinity ideology (e.g., traditional prescriptions and proscriptions about being a man). Research has shown that the endorsement of masculinity ideology pervades such incidents manifesting itself in the motivations for, the acts of, and the justification of VAW (Groes-Green, 2009; Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002; Thompson & Pleck, 1986).

The nationally representative study in Turkey reveal that 34 % of married women are physically abused by men at least once in their lives (Arat & Altınay, 2007). In another study conducted with 6287 women across the country, results show that a significant portion has experienced physical violence such as punching (48%), pushing or man-handling (37.8%), slapping (35.4%), beating (52.4%), and extreme psychological violence such as being threatened with a knife or a gun (70.8%) (HÜNEE, 2015). At least one in ten women feels unable to act freely without the permission of their husbands, which points to the role of psychological violence in relationships throughout the country (Arat & Altınay, 2007). Men use violence as a tool to maintain their authority and power over women, which is termed hegemonic masculinity ideology (Bolak-Boratav, Okman-Fişek, & Eslen-Ziya, 2017; Çelik, 2017; Moore et al., 2008; Pleck, 1995).

Despite the apparent relationship between masculinity and violence in Turkey, it is surprising that there is little research conducted on the situational factors creating a threat to manhood. Existing Turkish studies mainly focused on the risk factors of VAW such as violence history, poverty, age-gap, religious motivations, psychological aspects such as men’s anger or alcohol problems (Page & İnce, 2008) and women’s coping

mechanisms in the face of violence (Kandemirci, 2014). However, they overlooked the masculinity ideology as a potential motivator of this violence. Aiming to expand the perspective about why Turkish men endorse VAW, the primary purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between endorsement of masculinity ideology, perceived threat to manhood and VAW in Turkish culture. In doing this, we use both attitudinal and behavioral reflections of VAW as our dependent variables. Hence, we first test the role of endorsement of masculinity ideology on attitudes towards VAW with the mediatory role of a (perceived) threat to manhood including all male participants in our sample. Second, we test the role of endorsement of masculinity ideology on behavioral indicators of VAW (i.e., psychological and physical violence) with the mediation of both perceived threat to manhood and attitudes towards VAW (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The behavioral self-measures of VAW require having a romantic partner in the past year; thus, we only include men in a relationship in this second model. Compared to the existing literature on male VAW in Turkey, the current study also aims to underline the importance of perceived threat to manhood, which results from the precarious status of manhood (Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

Masculinity and Violence in Turkey

Turkey is a patriarchal country where honor culture and male-dominated social systems dominate social life (Sakallı-Uğurlu & Akbaş, 2013). This sociocultural environment reflects on men's definitions of masculinity where they focus on maintaining power and status. Accordingly, men, regardless of their socioeconomic status and education, define masculinity as having power, money, authority over women, and a predisposition to violence (Sancar, 2009). In the same vein, a nationally representative study shows that Turkish men maintain their hierarchical status in their romantic relationship by designating themselves as the decision-making authority. Over 50% of men believe that their wives should ask for their permission for any activity outside the home (N = 2000) (Bolak-Boratav et al., 2017).

The means of achieving manhood status and power vary according to culture. In Turkey, for example, a man must complete four processes to be regarded as a man: circumcision, military service, employment, and marriage (Bolak-Boratav et al., 2017; Selek, 2008). Masculinity also intertwines with the concept of honor (Sakallı-Uğurlu & Akbaş, 2013). In line with this, women must show purity and unquestionable loyalty to their husbands, boyfriends, and families; this, in turn, secures men's dominance and authority in their relationships. Failure to live up to these expectations constitutes an extreme threat to manhood and honor, which -in extreme cases, has to be cleansed with blood; resulting in severe physical violence or the murder of women. Such cases are commonly labeled as honor killings

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(Arat & Altınay, 2007). In Turkish culture, violence against women is often excused when people see the abuse as a response to threats to a man's honor and status in the society (Ceylan, 2016). Turkish men who defend male-dominant social systems in surveys also show higher levels of hostile sexism (i.e., negative reflections of one's prejudice towards genders), and believe that physical violence against women is admissible (Sakallı, 2001).

Studies focusing on Turkish masculinities point that Turkish men are vigilant about specific situations that can pose a potential threat to their masculinity. These include humiliation in front of friends, financial problems as a breadwinner, sexual dysfunction, and disclosure of emotions (Bolak-Borataş et al., 2017, p. 356). Although those studies help to list some situations as threats to manhood status, they do not provide the extent to which men feel threatened in each situation. To fill this gap, we measure men's threat perceptions in specific imagined situations where people violate masculine gender norms. We ask them the extent to which they would feel uncomfortable or threatened by these situations. Besides, many of the studies focusing on manhood status and masculinity ideology in Turkey employ a sociological perspective, relying heavily on qualitative data (e.g., in-depth interviews). However, the current study quantifies individual endorsement of masculinity and VAW hence focusing on the relationship (process) at the social psychological level of analysis.

Masculinity obliges some anxiety due to its fragile nature in the eyes of an (real or imagined) audience. One's manhood can be questioned and scrutinized by others according to various gauges, such as a man's femininity (Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, & Wasti, 2009), unemployment (Michniewicz, Vandello & Bosson, 2014), or being dominated by a woman (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987; Franchina, Eisler, & Moore, 2001). These kinds of prescriptions become visible in the form of gender-related threats towards manhood, which in turn provoke men to use violence to regain their lost social status (Adjei, 2016). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the endorsement of masculinity ideology and perceived threat to manhood will strengthen the path towards VAW. That is, men's endorsement of masculinity ideology and their vigilance about gender-related threats will be related to their attitudes towards and frequency of enacting VAW. Research highlighting masculinity as a potential cause of violence dates back to the 1970s in Western literature (e.g., Pleck, 1976; Pleck & Sawyer, 1974) but its arrival to Turkey seems somewhat delayed (Atay, 2004). Hence the current study also contributes to this literature by underlining the importance of endorsement of masculinity ideology as the beginning and violent behavior as the ending points in this process within a traditionally patriarchal and understudied culture.

Attitudes Regarding Violence against Women

Many studies demonstrate that (supportive) attitudes toward VAW play a vital role on the perpetration of violence (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Ortabağ, Özdemir, Bebiş, & Ceylan, 2014; Yigzaw, Berhane, Deyessa, & Kaba, 2010). Accordingly, supportive attitudes towards VAW are conceptualized as blaming the victim for provocation; believing that they benefit from violence; and justifying or minimizing the impact of violence (Arat & Altınay, 2007; Haj-Yahia, Sousa, Alnabilsy, & Elias, 2015). These kinds of permissive attitudes towards VAW constitute a kind of incubation for the future practice of VAW (Malamuth, 1986; Nayak, Byrne, Martin, & Abraham, 2003), which are retrospectively observable on the attitudes of male perpetrators of VAW. Accordingly, they see violence as a legitimate response to women's provocation (Weldon & Gilchrist, 2012), disobedience (Whiting, Parker, & Houghtaling, 2014; HÜNEE, 2015) to gain social status (Próspero, 2008).

However, these attitudes do not form in a vacuum; instead, they tend to occupy a space within a broader societal web of ideologies formed in male-dominant social structures around the world. For instance, in Ethiopia, it is documented that people associate wife-beating with male love and caring. Furthermore, they accept it as an unquestionably natural response to women's infidelity to their partners (Yigzaw et al., 2010). A similar pattern occurs in different countries, as well. Research establishes that patriarchal ideologies and popular support for existing gender norms encourage favorable attitudes towards VAW. For example, people increasingly support VAW as their endorsement of traditional patriarchal ideology increase in Brazil (Glick, Sakalli-Ugurlu, Ferreira, & Aguiar de Souza, 2002) and Turkey (Sakalli, 2001). Turkish police officers (Gölge, Sanal, Yavuz, & Aslanoğlu-Çetin, 2016), Palestinian physicians (Haj-Yahia et al., 2015), Jordanian men (Haj-Yahia, 2005), and Turkish medical students (Haj-Yahia & Uysal, 2008) are also more tolerant of physical and verbal abuse of women, and stronger patriarchal values seem to play an important role. Justification or minimization of VAW among participants measures the leniency towards violence. This leniency seems to follow masculinity ideology, where men defend the traditional patriarchal assumptions. Masculinity ideology values men's dominance, toughness, anti-femininity, and women's subordination, and is a driving force for male aggression and violence (Haj-Yahia, Sousa, Alnabilsy, & Elias, 2015; Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002). In this study, we posit that attitudes towards VAW constitute a pathway bridging masculinity ideology and perceived threat with the actual perpetration of violence.

Endorsement of (Hegemonic) Masculinity Ideology

Masculinity researchers suggest that violence and aggression are the byproducts of male socialization under the pressure of meeting up the hegemonic masculinity standards. Connell (1995) describes hegemonic masculinity as an idealized form of masculinity, which guarantees male dominance over women and adds that there are multiple forms of masculinities. Different masculinities harbor different ideologies behind, and the hegemonic form of masculinity is the one reflecting the most dominant ideology in the society. Masculinity ideology refers to how male role norms prescribe and proscribe men on how (and how not) to behave, appear, feel, or think in order for people to respect them “like real men” (Thompson & Bennett, 2015; Thompson & Pleck, 1986). For example, a man is expected to protect his family, provide for his children, have freedom (Gilmore, 1990); as well as avoid feminine actions, hold a social status above women, achieve success, appear confident, and show aggression. People take these as the indicators of manliness (Brannon, 1976). Adherence to these male role norms assesses the extent to which masculinity ideology is internalized (Thompson & Pleck, 1986).

Studies show that endorsement of masculinity ideology is related with physical, psychological, and sexual violence against women on both individual and societal level (Groes-Green, 2009; Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002; Thompson & Pleck, 1986). Followers of masculinity ideology show more hostile attitudes towards women (Gallagher & Parrott, 2011) and this is a vital risk factor for VAW (for a review, see Moore & Stuart, 2005). These cases attest to the significant function of violence as a means of preserving the dominant status of men over women (Connell, 1995), especially in response to a challenge to their gender roles in the eyes of others (Franchina, Eisler, & Moore, 2001; Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Hence, it may not be the masculinity ideology resulting in violence per se, but rather its premises constituting the basis for a threat perception, which is triggered when men fail to measure up to the norms dictated by this masculinity ideology (Adjei, 2016). Adding to this existing relationship, we suggest that individual threat perception reported by men in culturally gendered situations could be an essential mediator between endorsing masculinity ideology and VAW in Turkey.

Perceived Threat to Manhood

Although the flow of historical events and various social circumstances shape the specific requirements of being a man, a man is always forced to prove himself as upholding his dominance under the patriarchal gender system. For example, in some communities, a man may have to kill an animal or engage in a duel for a woman in order to become a real man

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(Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). This proof-based social structure of manhood still exists in modern cultures, but it takes on different forms. Manhood is precarious in so far as it can easily be lost in the face of social or individual threats targeting it (Vandello et al., 2008). Many people believe that losing manhood is somewhat akin to losing status, which is contingent upon social situations, such as losing a job (Vandello et al., 2008; Michniewicz, Vandello, & Bosson, 2014).

Previous research indicates that men react quickly to any social threat to their manhood by using violence. Violence, as inherent to male role norms (Mahalik et al., 2003; Messerschmidt, 1993; Thompson & Pleck, 1986), is used as the best available and most direct tool to reclaim manhood status, and attest it to others (Bosson et al., 2009; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2001). Many studies have pointed to the precarious nature of manhood and its various manifestations as a trigger for VAW when such an already-precarious status is facing uncertainty. Certain social conditions (or their absence) can thus create threats to different aspects of manhood. These include gender identity (Babl, 1979; Ezzell, 2012; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2001); public gaze (Bosson et al., 2009); flattered self-esteem (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996); status (in)consistency (Straus & Gelles, 1986); dominance over women (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987; Franchina, Eisler & Moore, 2001); male honor (Vandello & Cohen, 2003, 2008); and being (un)employed (Groes-Green, 2009; Macmillan & Kruttschnitt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 1993; Orme, Dominelli, & Mullender, 2000; Sancar, 2009; Sukhu, 2013). Although these studies provide evidence for manhood-related threat sources, each indicates individual threat targets rather than providing a comprehensive source of threats. In this study, therefore, we compile threat situations where men can forecast the level of threat they may perceive in several hypothetical events.

Adherence to masculinity ideology (i.e., endorsing male role norms) makes certain situations very stressful for men (Gallagher & Parrott, 2011). These include earning less money, being less educated, or showing less intelligence than a woman. Although hegemonic masculinity ideology predicts men's aggression towards women, it is not the sole predictor. The men adhering to higher levels of masculinity ideology show greater aggression when they report higher levels of gender role stress (Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002). Typically, such masculine gender role stress may later serve as justification for using VAW as a means to compensate for lost prestige (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987). Men who perpetrate VAW often indicate that at the root of their issue lie social anxieties about being perceived as weak when they are unable to fulfill the masculine requirements of their society. VAW can thus be considered as a reconstruction tool used to make up for their insecure place and their emasculation by third parties

(Adjei, 2016). In this vein, men often do not see violence as problematic in the face of a perceived threat to their sexual and relational protector role (Vandello & Cohen, 2003; Vandello & Cohen, 2008), such as when a woman bypasses her husband's authority by not asking permission for specific actions (Franchina et al., 2001), or begins earning more than him (Anderson, 1997).

Although it sounds similar to the threat to manhood, masculine gender role stress indicates the subjective observation of physiological arousal in the face of some gender role violations (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987; Jakupcak et al., 2002). However, we conceptualize threat perception especially by benefitting from the idea that some gender-related situations may not expose threat themselves; instead, their perception makes those situations threatening. Therefore, we asked level of discomfort they would feel in the face of culture-based gendered situations violating gender role expectations. It is also very consistent with the assumptions of precarious manhood theory (Vandello et al., 2008) that manhood is not a permanent status, men perceive threat because they feel that they can lose their manhood status in the eyes of others. In addition to that, endorsing different levels of masculinity ideology may evoke different levels of vigilance on men, where they may perceive different cultural situations threatening their status.

The Present Study

The findings of past studies focusing on manhood threat support the view that men use violence and aggression to reclaim a lost sense of manhood, which is hard-won. In this study, therefore, we explore the association between men's endorsement of masculinity ideology, their perceptions of manhood threat, and violence against women (attitudes and perpetration) in two mediated models.

In the first model, we hypothesize that endorsement of masculinity ideology would predict lenient attitudes towards VAW both directly and indirectly through manhood threat. In other words, men with a more extreme endorsement masculinity ideology will show more vigilance to such threats, and this will predict more tolerant attitudes towards VAW. In the second model, endorsement of masculinity ideology is expected to predict the perpetration of physical and psychological violence indirectly through a threat to manhood and attitudes towards VAW. Accordingly, we expect that the stronger endorsement of masculinity ideology will predict higher threat perception and, in turn, more tolerant attitudes towards VAW. Ultimately, this will also predict more frequent (real-life) perpetration of actual physical and psychological violence towards an intimate partner among men in a relationship.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

We collected data from 307 Turkish men through a web-based survey site. Their ages ranged between 17 and 66 ($M = 27.88$, $SD = 8.09$). Among them, 65.1% were university-educated, 23.8% were post-graduate, 10% were high school graduates, and 1% were primary and secondary school graduates. Regarding relationship status, 42% had no current relationship, 31.6% had a current relationship, 19.2% were married, 4.2% were engaged, and 2% were “other.” Also, 62.5 % currently lived in metropolitan areas, 20.2 % in smaller cities, and 16.3 % in towns and villages. We followed the ethical standards of APA throughout the study.

Materials

Endorsement of masculinity ideology. We used the Male Role Norms Scale to measure masculinity ideology endorsement (Thompson & Pleck, 1986; Turkish adaptation: Lease, Çiftçi, Demir, & Boyraz, 2009). The scale has 26-items with three sub-scales that refer to ($\alpha = .90$, 11 items; e.g., “A man should always think everything out coolly and logically have rational reasons for everything he does”), *anti-femininity* ($\alpha = .87$, 7 items; e.g., “If I heard about a man who was a hairdresser and a gourmet cook, I might wonder how masculine he was”) and *toughness* ($\alpha = .65$, 8 items; e.g., “Fists are sometimes the only way to get out of a bad situation”). The ratings vary between 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*) Likert-type scale on which higher mean scores indicated a stronger endorsement of masculinity ideology. We used the overall mean score for simplicity reasons.

Perceived threat to manhood (PTM). We measured perceptions of threat to manhood with a 45-item scale constructed in Turkish. It measures the possible discomfort that men may report in a variety of social situations where a threat to manhood may be sensed (Türkoğlu, 2013b). It represents manhood threat in five domains: *threat from subordination to women* ($\alpha = .92$, 15 items, e.g., “Having a wife/girlfriend who is better educated than you”), *threat to protector role* ($\alpha = .92$, 9 items, e.g., “Having your wife/girlfriend stay out late at night”), *threat to decision maker role* ($\alpha = .84$, 8 items, e.g., “Having your wife/girlfriend not respect your decisions”), *threat to breadwinner role* ($\alpha = .79$, 8 items, e.g., “Not having a regular income”) and *threat to tough image* ($\alpha = .80$, 5 items, e.g., “Showing affection to your wife/girlfriend in public”). Participants rated how uncomfortable they would feel if they experienced these hypothetical situations on a scale ranging from 1 (*extremely comfortable*) to 7 (*extremely uncomfortable*). Higher scores showed higher levels of threat perceptions. Although this scale has five different subscales, we computed a single mean score of all the items, again for simplicity reasons.

Attitudes towards violence against women. We measured attitudes towards VAW with a 22-item scale. It has three subscales: *justifiability of violence* ($\alpha = .90$, 10 items, e.g., “Some actions of women deserve violence.”), *functionality of violence* ($\alpha = .87$, 6 items, e.g., “Sometimes, men should be able to engage in physical violence against their wives.”), and *consequences of violence* ($\alpha = .65$, 6 items, e.g., “A man should be arrested if he engages in violence against women.”) (Ercan, 2009). The participants rated the items on a scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*) with higher mean scores reflecting more lenient attitudes about VAW. As with the previous ones, we averaged the scores from all items and used them as a single composite variable.

Real-life perpetration of violence against women. We measured men’s real-life violence by taking the frequencies of engaging in physical and psychological violence against a partner in a heterosexual romantic relationship. The 20 items from the Turkish version of Conflict Tactics Scale 2 (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996; Turkish adaptation: Aba, 2008) measured violence perpetration. There were two subscales: *psychological violence* ($\alpha = .81$, 8 items, e.g., “I shouted or yelled at my partner”) and *physical violence* ($\alpha = .95$, 12 items, e.g., “I punched or hit my partner with something that could hurt”). We measured each with 8 and 12 items, respectively. Participants rated how frequently they resorted to violence with their partners in the past year, on a frequency scale including 0 (*never*), 1 (*once*), 2 (*twice*), 3 (*3-5 times*), 4 (*6-10 times*), 5 (*11-20 times*), 6 (*more than 20 times*), 7 (*not in the past year*). Higher mean scores indicate more frequent violent behavior towards a partner. Scores of 7 (not in the past year) were re-coded as 0 (*never*) to prevent misleading results regarding the past year. A pre-requisite for participants to answer these questions was to being in a relationship within the past year. Therefore, we only included men who were in a heterosexual romantic relationship in the second model.

Demographic information. Participants were then asked to indicate their gender, age, education, relationship status, and the city they lived in a demographic information form.

RESULTS

Data Analysis

We present two models: one set of results for the whole sample with *attitudes* as the outcome, and another set of results for men in a relationship in the last year with real-life *perpetration* as the outcome (for the Conflict Tactics Scale to be applicable). We conduct our analysis by using IBM Statistics SPSS Software, version 24. Missing data are handled by list-wise deletion during the analyses. The analysis satisfactorily meets the

assumptions of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, and homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices.

Preliminary Analyses

Table 1 shows that men's support for VAW rises significantly and positively as their endorsement of masculinity ideology and the degree to which they perceive threat to manhood increase. To illustrate, stronger endorsement of masculinity ideology is positively correlated with lenient attitudes towards VAW ($r = .38, p < .01$) and perceived threat to manhood ($r = .58, p < .01$). Similarly, higher perceived threat to manhood correlates positively with lenient attitudes towards VAW ($r = .35, p < .01$). The results also show that stronger endorsement of masculinity ideology ($r = .22, p < .01$), threat perception ($r = .24, p < .01$), and lenient attitudes towards VAW ($r = .35, p < .01$) are positively correlated with physical violence. The attitudes of *men in a relationship* also correlate positively with the use of psychological violence ($r = .25, p < .01$) while endorsement of masculinity ideology and perceived threat do not.

A series of independent samples t-tests are conducted to compare single men and men in a relationship (MIR). The results show that these groups are quite comparable, and there are no significant differences except for actual perpetration of *psychological* violence. Accordingly, men in a relationship ($M = 1.07, SD = .89$) engage in psychological violence more than single men ($M = .78, SD = .97$), $t(305) = 2.71, p < .05$. Single men and men in a relationship do not differ from each other on masculinity ideology ($M_{single} = 3.53, SD_{single} = .91$; $M_{MIR} = 3.62, SD_{MIR} = .92$) with $t(305) = .83, p = .41$; perceived threat ($M_{single} = 4.23, SD_{single} = .86$; $M_{MIR} = 4.24, SD_{MIR} = .95$) with $t(305) = .02, p = .98$; attitudes towards VAW ($M_{single} = 1.98, SD_{single} = .86$; $M_{MIR} = 1.94, SD_{MIR} = .95$) with $t(300) = -.37, p = .71$; or physical violence perpetration ($M_{single} = .18, SD_{single} = .71$; $M_{MIR} = .13, SD_{MIR} = .35$) with $t(305) = -.80, p = .42$.

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Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Pearson Correlation Coefficients, and Cronbach's Alphas of Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	Cronbach's α
<i>Whole sample (N = 307)</i>								
1. Masculinity ideology	1					3.57	.91	.89
2. Perceived threat	.58**	1				4.23	.91	.94
3. Attitudes towards VAW	.38**	.35**	1			1.95	.91	.91
4. Physical Violence	.15**	.08	.32**	1		.15	.53	.95
5. Psychological Violence	.14*	.12*	.27**	.53**	1	.94	.93	.81
<i>Men in a Relationship (N = 176)</i>								
1. Masculinity ideology	1					3.61	.92	.88
2. Perceived threat	.56**	1				4.23	.95	.94
3. Attitudes towards VAW	.37**	.32**	1			1.94	.94	.92
4. Physical Violence	.22**	.24**	.35**	1		.13	.34	.85
5. Psychological Violence	.12	.14	.25**	.32**	1	1.06	.89	.77

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

The Mediatory Role of Perceived Threat on Attitudes towards VAW (Model 1)

Although the outcome variables in the second model (i.e., physical and psychological violence) reflect the frequencies of violent behavior in men with a relationship, attitudes towards VAW reflect the responses of the whole sample (single men and men in a relationship). Therefore, we test the effect of masculinity ideology on attitudes towards VAW with the perceived threat to manhood as the mediator, using a bias-corrected bootstrapping analysis, Model 4 with 5000 resamples as suggested by Hayes (2013). The analyses reveal that all direct and indirect effects are significant (see Figure 1).

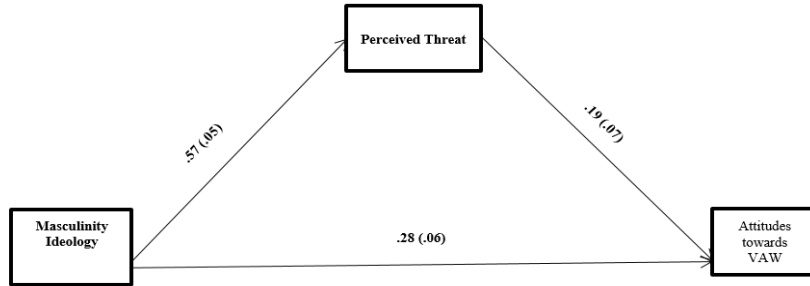


Figure 1. Model 1; the mediatory effect of threat on attitudes towards violence against women. All the direct and indirect effects are significant at $p < .05$; $N = 302$

Masculinity ideology directly predicts both threat ($B = .57, SE = .05, p < .001$) and attitudes toward VAW ($B = .28, SE = .06, p < .001$). Furthermore, perceived threat to manhood directly predicts attitudes towards VAW ($B = .19, SE = .07, p < .001$). The indirect effect of masculinity ideology through perceived threat to manhood is also significant ($B = .11, SE = .05$), as its 95% confidence interval excludes zero [.0057, .1982]. This model explains 17% of the variance in attitudes towards VAW, $F(2, 299) = 30.62, p < .001$. Accordingly, men who strongly endorse masculinity ideology tend to perceive more threat to their manhood. Increased threat perception, in turn, predicts more favorable attitudes towards VAW.

The Mediatory Role of Perceived Threat and Attitudes on Violence Perpetration (Model 2)

We then examine the process by which endorsement of masculinity ideology predicts violence *perpetration* through perceived threat to manhood and attitudes towards VAW. In this model, we only include men who have current romantic relationship within the last year to see frequency of violent behavior within the last year. We employ the same procedure described above with Model 6 of PROCESS Macro, where masculinity ideology is the predictor; perceived threat to manhood and attitudes towards VAW are mediators; and physical and psychological violence against women as outcome variables (see Figure 2).

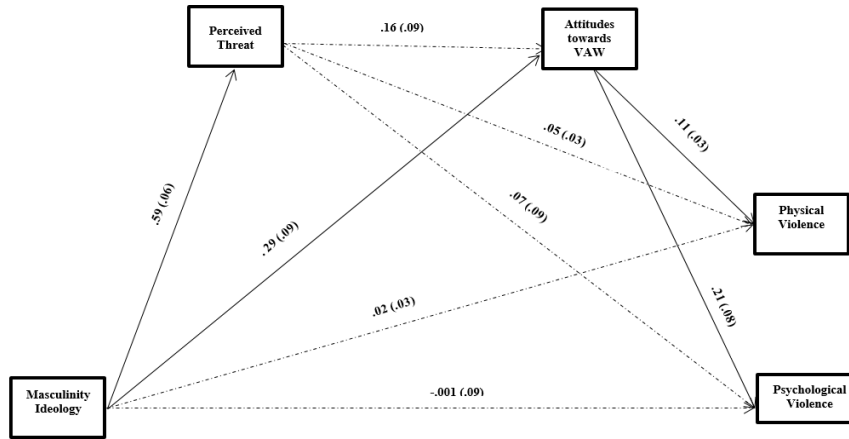


Figure 2. Model 2; mediatory effect of perceived threat to manhood and attitudes towards VAW on using violence. The dashed paths are non-significant. (N = 169)

For *physical violence* perpetration, masculinity ideology ($B = .02$, $SE = .03$, $p = .61$) and threat ($B = .05$, $SE = .03$, $p = .16$) have no direct effect, but attitudes towards VAW does have a significant direct effect ($B = .11$, $SE = .03$, $p < .001$). Masculinity ideology, however, predicts both threat ($B = .58$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$) and attitudes toward VAW ($B = .29$, $SE = .09$, $p < .001$). The first indirect effect of masculinity ideology through threat ($B = .03$, $SE = .02$, 95 % CI [-0.0116, 0.0679]), and the second one through both threat and attitudes ($B = .01$, $SE = .01$, 95 % CI [-0.0031, 0.0307]) are not significant. Yet, the indirect effect of masculinity ideology through attitudes towards VAW is significant with $B = .03$, $SE = .01$ and the 95% bias corrected CI = [0.01, 0.07]. The direct and indirect effects together explain 14% of variance in physical violence perpetration, $F(3, 171) = 9.41$, $p < .001$. Accordingly, men who endorse masculinity ideology demonstrated more lenient attitudes towards VAW; and consequently, report more frequent use of physical violence against their partners within the past year.

Regarding *psychological violence* perpetration, the results are similar. Masculinity ideology predicts perceived threat ($B = .59$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$) and attitudes towards VAW ($B = .29$, $SE = .09$, $p < .001$) while it has no direct effect on psychological violence perpetration ($B = -.001$, $SE = .09$, $p = .99$). Perceived threat neither predicted attitudes towards VAW ($B = .16$, $SE = .09$, $p = .07$), nor perpetration of psychological violence ($B = .07$, $SE = .09$, $p = .44$). Analyses reveal that the indirect effect of masculinity ideology through threat ($B = .04$, $SE = .05$, 95% CI [-0.0617, 0.1450]), and through threat and attitudes ($B = .02$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [-0.051, 0.0753]) are not

significant –because their 95% CIs include zero. However, the effect of masculinity ideology through attitudes towards VAW is significant ($B = .06$, $SE = .03$) with a 95% CI from .01 to .14. Similar to the results on physical violence, men with a stronger endorsement of masculinity ideology show more lenient attitudes towards VAW. These attitudes, in turn, result in more frequent use of psychological violence towards their partners.

DISCUSSION

The current study shows how endorsing masculinity ideology and perceiving manhood threat predicts attitudes towards VAW and the actual behaviors of VAW in two separate models. The first model, where the outcome variable is attitudes towards VAW, shows that endorsement of masculinity ideology both directly and indirectly predicts attitudes towards VAW through perceived threat. In the second model, endorsement of masculinity ideology indirectly predicts physical and psychological violence perpetration through lenient attitudes towards VAW. In line with the existing literature on manhood threat and VAW, the current study also shows that traditional masculinity ideology predicts manhood threat. It teases out the various situations in which men may perceive a threat to their manhood, which in turn may motivate them to hold violence-condoning attitudes. One of the main contributions this study makes is the individual level measurement of manhood threat, instead of experimentally manipulating it as a situational variable (see Vandello & Bosson, 2013 for the experimental threat manipulations) in predicting attitudes towards VAW.

Previous studies show that support for patriarchy (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Sakallı, 2001) and sexism (Sakallı, 2001) is predictive of attitudes that support VAW. Our contribution is that we show men's adherence to masculinity ideology and their feelings of threat are the precursors of more lenient attitudes towards VAW. Previous studies conducted in Turkey deal with the individual characteristics of the victims (the women) or the offenders (men) (Kandemirci, 2014; Page & İnce, 2008). However, it is especially important to show how men strive to prove themselves and regulate their social relations in accordance with the societal prescriptions.

First, men who internalize masculinity ideology are likely to perceive higher levels of threat to their manhood, and this perceived threat constitutes the indirect path towards more permissive attitudes towards VAW. This finding fits well with the previous research about the role of masculinity that high endorsers of masculinity ideology feel higher levels of gender role stress (Gallagher & Parrott, 2011; Jacupcak et al., 2002). Masculinity ideology is rooted in status, anti-femininity, and toughness; and endorsing it means accepting that masculinity constructs itself with socially acquired and approved means. Thus, normalizing the socially demanding

nature of masculinity can elicit the feeling of threat and evoke excessive vigilance for gender-threatening situations.

Considering that Turkey is an honor culture (Sakallı-Uğurlu & Akbaş, 2013) in which men can lose their manhood status when their reputation is disparaged, men can rationalize the use of VAW (in the form of attitudes) as an easy tool to save face. Hence, it is not surprising to find that masculinity ideology predicts lenient attitudes towards VAW. This finding shows that having a strong belief in traditional masculinity ideology evokes positive attitudes regarding use of VAW. As masculinity ideology mostly reflects patriarchal ideology, the previous studies examining the ideology-attitude relationship support this finding (Glick et al., 2002; Haj-Yahia et al., 2005, 2015; Haj-Yahia & Uysal, 2008; Gölge et al., 2016). For example, Turkish university students favored using VAW to the extent that they believed in a patriarchal structure (Sakallı, 2001). Besides supporting this direct relationship between masculinity ideology and lenient attitudes towards VAW, we also show that men's threat perception in the case of different social situations (e.g., earning less than their wives or failing to ask for permission related to household issues) could act as excuses for holding lenient attitudes towards using VAW.

This study also reveals that different domains of manhood can act as sources of threat. For example, the domain of "subordination to women" highlights the social situations in which a wife, a girlfriend, or a female co-worker is more successful, earns more, or is smarter than the man. Hence, she becomes threatening because "being a man" seems to depend on being able to show that the man is superior in these areas. A man's socialization into this idealized masculinity teaches him to be completely detached from the feminine, and even to regard femininity with a degree of scorn (Miedzian, 1991; Onur & Koyuncu, 2004). Thus, it becomes difficult to tolerate the idea of being surpassed by a woman (who is supposed to be subordinate), and this could, in turn, strengthen the idea that VAW is excusable to show the woman "who the boss is." Conversely, a man's ordained role is the provider, breadwinner, protector, and the decision-maker; and this role places a physical and moral responsibility on him to protect these resources from threats. The idealized vision of Turkish masculinity, in which manhood is achieved through employment, forming a family, and the ability to maintain and protect that family is also parallel to the idea that men need to defend their manhood (Sancar, 2009; Sakallı-Uğurlu, Türkoğlu, & Kuzlak, 2018).

The second model, in which the outcome variables are the perpetration of physical and psychological violence, demonstrates that masculinity ideology predicts violence perpetration solely through attitudes towards VAW. Contrary to our expectations, masculinity ideology or

manhood threat does not predict physical or psychological violence. However, previous studies report that the firm believers of masculinity ideology resort to violence when they feel their gender status at risk (Jacupcak et al., 2002), or that threat to manhood may lead to more sumptuous displays of aggression (Bosson et al., 2009; Vandello et al., 2008). We may argue that our (lack of) similar results may have been a side effect of the sample: their education levels are quite high compared to the Turkish population. Related to that Atkinson et al. (2005) showed that as husband's education level increased, likelihood of wife-abuse decreases (Atkinson, Greenstein, & Lang, 2005, p. 1143, Table 2, Model 2). They also showed that egalitarian husbands are not affected (or felt threat) by their wives' relatively high income. Therefore, we can safely speculate that educated and egalitarian men may not feel discomfort from situations such as a partner earning more. Also, social desirability may have been a factor in having prevented them from displaying actual violence of a higher frequency. With this in mind, these findings should be further replicated, using a larger, more heterogeneous and more representative sample. On the other hand, the hypothetical situations that may threaten manhood status in our scale (i.e., Perceived Threat to Manhood Scale) may not fit their real-life situations when they use violence against their partners.

However, masculinity ideology does indirectly predict physical and psychological violence perpetration through attitudes towards VAW. Accordingly, men with stronger support for masculinity ideology engage in physical and psychological violence with greater ease, having normalized the issue. These findings fall in line with a United Nations report showing that men's support for gender inequality in Bangladesh correlated positively with the use of violence against women in daily life. The normalization of women's second-class status in a given culture enables men to channel their anger easier onto them as a powerless group (Naved, Huque, Farah, & Shuvra, 2011). This result also highlights the impact attitudes and beliefs regarding VAW have on the actual perpetration of violence, in the sense that men can resort to violence if they already have the notion that they can abuse women. The existing literature supports this claim because it states that men are inclined to excuse violence against women especially in patriarchal (Sakallı, 2001, Kandiyoti, 1995) and honor cultures (Sakallı-Uğurlu & Akbaş, 2013). Studies from Turkey and other patriarchal countries also support our result that men who are already perpetrators of VAW have strong positive attitudes related to enacting VAW (Douki et al., 2003; Gharaibeh, Abu-Baker, & Aji, 2012; Ortabag et al., 2014).

The national-level social policies aim to target improvement for women by providing shelters, surveillance, conscious-raising, providing employment to the victimized women (Turkish Grand National Assembly

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[TBMM], 2015). These policies, however, undermine the motivators of this violence hidden in the social norms and social construction of masculinity in patriarchal societies. As such, this study points to at least some of the motivators behind VAW; namely masculinity ideology, perceptions of threat to manhood, and tolerant attitudes towards VAW.

In terms of the limitations of the current study, the first point as we mentioned above is our sample. The literature suggests that VAW is comparatively lower in higher-educated men (Messerschmidt, 1993), who also may be more prone to impression management in these negative behaviors. Second, while mapping the territory of manhood, we may have fallen short of including some of its domains when describing the discomfort situations (i.e., subordination to women, breadwinner status, protector role, decision-maker role, and tough image). Hence, it is crucial the results are replicated in different samples and cultural contexts.

Conclusions and Research Implications

This study highlights the socially constructed motivations of men and the precarious nature of manhood, which bolster men's power claims and their struggle to bear society's masculinity ideals. Furthermore, it emphasizes that VAW is not merely a problem for couples limited to the private realm but is more of a problem that is symptomatic of gender systems built on masculinity ideology. Crucially, the patriarchal social system victimizes men as well as women, by encumbering them with an overbearing load concerning their role in society and ties their existence to the ability to uphold such burdens (Connell, 1995). The third generation of masculinity studies is attempting to deconstruct the mechanism of patriarchy and include men in the fight against it, with the hope for real change.

In this sense, future studies, which examine whether such attitudes act as the gatekeepers to behavior in other cultures, could also result in greater understanding. As these results reveal, there is much to be gained from drawing attention to the role of beliefs and attitudes regarding VAW; and the findings suggest that social policies and gender socialization should evolve with gender-equal representation so that the precariousness of manhood can be diminished, thereby lowering the risk factor of violence for women.

Conflict of Interest

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were by the ethical standards of the institutional and national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent

We obtained informed consent from all individual participants included in the study.

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