



Research Article/Özgün Araştırma

Views and attitudes about violence against women: a village example

Kadına yönelik şiddet ile ilgili görüş ve tutumlar: bir köy örneği

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**Abstract**

**Aim:** The aim of this descriptive study was to explore views and attitudes of married men and women aged ≥18 years about violence to women and to identify the affecting factors.

**Materials and Methods:** Study data were gathered by contacting 220 participants between July 2019 and January 2020. To explore socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, "Information Request Form" and "İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale" were employed in the study.

**Results:** According to participants' general average scores of İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale" (81.35±24.12); this score was found to be under 90; which meant that they were not against violence against women and affirmed it. It was understood in the study that as educational status increased, so did negative attitudes of violence against women ( $p<0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** It was concluded that participants were not opposed to "violence against women and confirmed it."

**Keywords:** Violence Against Women; Woman; Attitude.

**Öz**

**Amaç:** Bu araştırmanın amacı, 18 yaş üstü evli erkek ve kadınların kadına yönelik şiddet ile ilgili görüş, tutumları ve etkileyen faktörleri belirlemektir.

**Gereç ve Yöntem:** Araştırmanın verileri Temmuz 2019-Ocak 2020 tarihleri arasında araştırmaya katılmayı kabul eden 220 kişiye ulaşılarak toplanmıştır. Araştırmada katılımcıların sosyo-demografik özellikleri belirlemek üzere "Kişisel Bilgi Formu" ve "İSKEBE Kadına Yönelik Şiddet Tutum Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır.

**Bulgular:** Katılımcıların "İSKEBE Kadına Yönelik Şiddet Tutum Ölçeği" genel puan ortalamasının (81,35±24,12) 90 puanın altında olduğu; kadına şiddete karşı olmadıkları, olumlu yaklaştıkları belirlenmiştir. Araştırmada eğitim düzeyi arttıkça kadına yönelik şiddete karşı olumsuz tutumun arttığı saptanmıştır ( $p<0,05$ ).

**Sonuç:** Bu araştırmada katılımcıların tamamının "kadına şiddete karşı olmadıkları, olumlu yaklaştıkları" belirlenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kadına Yönelik Şiddet; Kadın; Tutum.

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## Introduction

Violence against women is still the most important problem of us all over the world. Violence, no matter what type it is, brings fear and insecurity to the lives of women and prevents them from using their basic rights and freedoms. Rate of violence against women, regarded as a serious human right violation and women health problem, has gradually been increasing in our country as well as in the world. It was reported in the "Violence against Women and World Reality 2014 Research Report", conducted all over the world, one in three women aged >15 years (nearly 62 million) were subjected to violence and 8% of them suffered from physical and sexual violence in the last two months. In the same report, it was identified that rate of women who were subjected to physical violence in any part of their lives was by 36% in Türkiye. Also; according to the "Research on Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey 2014 Report", conducted in our country; the rate of women who were subjected to violence for any reason was found to be 36%. It was reported that the rate of violence was 35% in urban areas while it was 37.5% in rural areas.<sup>1-3</sup>

Violence to women is classified into physical violence, verbal or psychological violence, sexual and economic violence. As a result of the violence women go through, they face fatal and non-fatal health problems. Main non-fatal health problems are physical and psychological health problems. Women subjected to violence present such medical conditions as physical injuries, bruises, bone fractures, brain damages, depression, feeling of insufficiency and incompetence, difficulties in emotional relations, sleep disorders, dissatisfaction with life, irregular menstrual cycles, irritability, etc.<sup>4,5</sup> All segments of society play a key role in minimizing health effects of violence, preventing its existence and taking preventive measures. Lately; male role and male cooperation in eliminating sexual violence have been a crucial part of the movement to end violence against women. It is essential to end social gender discrimination and to activate those interventions to improve

women's status in society in order to eliminate violence emerging in all periods of women life. Besides, all individuals—regardless of their gender—should be informed and aware of violence against women and the relevant rights/services and women's access to these services should be made possible and—most importantly— it is very important for both genders to acquire correct attitudes and awareness in order to help solve the problem.

## Material and Methods

### Research design

The aim of this descriptive study was to explore views and attitudes of married men and women aged  $\geq 18$  years about violence to women and to identify the affecting factors. The study was done in the village of a province in the mediterranean region, Turkey.

### Population and sample

The population of the study included all the village residents who were married and aged  $\geq 18$  years. According to official documents 2019, the number of those who lived in the village where the study took place and were married was around 500. The sample size was calculated to be 217 using a sample calculation formula in universe-known situations.<sup>6</sup> However, in order to prevent data loss and increase the validity of the research, 220 women who volunteered to participate in the research were included in the research. Study data were gathered by contacting 220 participants between July 2019 and January 2020. Study data were collected by the researchers with a face-to-face interview technique. Interviews took averagely 45 minutes.

### Data collection

To explore socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, "Information Request Form" and "İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale" were employed in the study.

### Information request form

The form, developed by the researcher, included 15 questions.<sup>1-6</sup> In the form; there were questions about personal socio-demographic characteristics.

## İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale

The scale, developed by Kanbay et al.<sup>7</sup> in 2017, is consisted of two factors that can be named and collected and 30 items. The scale items have a 5-point Likert format with the following coding: I strongly agree 1, I agree 2, I am neutral 3, I disagree 4, and I strongly disagree 5. 1<sup>st</sup> Factor: Physical attitudes (sexual and physical violence): There are 16 items in the 1<sup>st</sup> factor (3, 4, 8, 9,10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 25, 26, 28 and 30). 2<sup>nd</sup> Factor: Identity attitudes (Psychological and economic violence): There are 16 items in the 2<sup>nd</sup> factor (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 27 and 29). In the scale, 5<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> items are reverse-scored.

Total scale score is obtained by summing points of two factors. The lowest score of the first factor is 16 whereas the highest score is 80. The lowest score of the second factor is 14 whereas the highest score is 70. High scores demonstrate negative attitudes towards violence against women (the participant disapproves of violence against women) but low scores demonstrate positive attitudes towards violence against women (the participant approves of violence against women). After the necessary calculations, it may be suggested that participants with a score of >90 are opposed to violence to women but those with a score of <90 are not opposed to violence to women. These values are the cut-off values of the scale. Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.80 for the lowest total score is 30 whereas the highest total score is 150. the first factor and 0.83 for the second factor and total Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.86.<sup>7</sup> In the current study; it was found that Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.95 for the first factor (Physical attitudes), 0.93 for the second factor (Identity attitudes) and 0.96 for total scale.

### Statistical analysis

Normality of the data was assessed using SPSS-22 statistical package program with Shapiro-Wilk test, histogram and Q-Q graphics. The significance level was accepted as  $p < 0.05$  for normality test. For the descriptive statistics; numbers and

percentages were used. To compare differences between two groups, Mann-Whitney *U* test was employed whereas to compare differences between more than two groups, Kruskal Wallis test was used. Results were considered significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

### The ethical aspect of research

Official permission to undertake the study was obtained from the district governorship to which the village belonged. Besides, the ethical suitability of the research was approved by Ethical Committee of University with the decision (27.06.2019-1/01). Official permission to administer the scale was also obtained from the authors via e-mail. Before collecting the data; the study conformed to the principles of the declaration of Helsinki. The Principles set out by the Declaration of Helsinki and national and local ethical guidelines for research were also followed. The study conformed to the principles of the declaration of Helsinki and the participants were explained that participation was voluntary, were assured of confidentiality and their responses would be used only for scientific purposes and their verbal informed consents were obtained.

### Results

Average age was  $34.07 \pm 8.61$  years, 59.1% of the participants were women, 38.2% of them had 1-3 children, 56.8% of them had primary-secondary school graduation, 57.7% of them had moderate income, 89.5% of them resided in villages-towns and 78.6% lived in nuclear families (Table 1).

In the study, it was found that 60.5% of the participants did not have knowledge about current legal processes/services of violence against women and 52.7% of them witnessed violence against women. Besides, 8.2% of the participants became subjected to violence and 61.4% of them did not want to interfere with violent actions against women (Table 2).

According to participants' general average scores of İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale ( $81.35 \pm 24.12$ ); this score was found to be under 90; which meant that they were not against violence against women and affirmed it. When distribution of İSKEBE

Violence against Women Attitude Scale subscale average scores was evaluated; it was noted that participants approved violence against women under the titles of “physical

attitudes” (11.94±5.23) and “identity attitudes” (6.52±2.30) and affirmed the violence (Table 3).

**Table 1.** Participants’ descriptive characteristics (n=220)

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Mean ±SD</b>	
Age	34.07±8.61	
	n	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	130	59.1
Male	90	40.9
<b>Number of Children</b>		
0	44	20.0
1-3	84	38.2
3-5	68	30.9
≥5	24	10.9
<b>Educational Status</b>		
Literate	64	29.1
Primary School-Secondary School	125	56.8
High School	21	9.5
Higher Education (University)	10	4.5
<b>Income Level</b>		
Not Satisfactory	45	20.5
Moderate	127	57.7
Satisfactory	48	21.8
<b>Place of Longest Residence</b>		
Urban	23	10.5
Rural	197	89.5
<b>Family Type</b>		
Nuclear Family	173	78.6
Extended Family	47	21.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 2.** Distribution of participants’ some views/experiences of violence (n=220)

<b>Views/Experiences of Violence</b>	n	%
<b>Knowledge About Current Legal Processes/Services of Violence Against Women</b>		
Yes	87	39.5
No	133	60.5
<b>Witnessing Violence Against Women</b>		
Yes	116	52.7
No	104	47.3
<b>Being Subjected to any Kind of Violence</b>		
Yes	18	8.2
No	202	91.8
<b>Reacting Against/Interfering with Violence Against Women</b>		
Yes	64	29.1
No	135	61.4
Uncertain	21	9.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3.** Participants' average scores of İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale

Subscales	Mean ±SD	Min	Max	İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale Min-Max values
<b>İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale</b>				
Physical Attitudes (Sexual and Physical Violence)	49.82±15.49	21	80	16-80
Identity Attitudes (Psychological and Economic Violence)	31.53±10.67	14	59	14-70
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>81.35± 24.12</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>30-150</b>

*m: means*

*SD: Standard deviation*

Table 4 demonstrated comparisons of participants' average scores of İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale according to some of their personal characteristics. Accordingly; a statistically significant difference existed between İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale total average score and educational status, place of longest residence and family type ( $p<0.05$ ) (Table 4). It was understood in the study that as educational status increased, so did negative attitudes of violence against women (the participants disapproved of violence against women). Likewise, those living in city centers and living with nuclear families were identified to be against violence against women (The participants disapproved of violence against women) ( $p<0.05$ ) (Table 4). Also; in the study it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference between gender, number of children and income level and İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale total average score ( $p>0.05$ ) (Table 4).

It was seen that those having knowledge about current legal processes/services of violence against women had higher İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale total average score as compared to those not having knowledge about current legal processes/services of violence against women ( $93.66\pm 23.65$ ) and the difference was statistically significant; which meant that they had a negative attitude against violence against women (the participants disapproved of violence against women) ( $p<0.05$ ) (Table5).

Besides; İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale total average score

( $72.25\pm 24.99$ ) of those who suffered from violence in any part of their lives was lower than those who did not suffer from violence ( $82.55\pm 24.50$ ) and the difference was statistically significant ( $p<0.05$ ) (Table 5). Accordingly; it was noted that those who suffered from violence had positive attitudes about violence against women and did not disapprove of it.

İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale total average score of the participants who wanted to react against/interfere with violence against women was higher and statistically significant; which meant that they had negative attitudes against violence against women (the participants disapproved of violence against women) ( $p<0.05$ ) (Table 5).

## Discussion

Today; violence against women; which breaks women's basic human rights and freedoms, is considered to be as an epidemic whose rate and prevalence have been increasing day by day both in our country and across the world.<sup>8-10</sup> Social views, opinions and attitudes of violence play a crucial role in combating all types of violence. It is very important to emphasize behavior patterns that reject violence against women and object to violence in terms of social transformation behaviors. In addition to reinforcing women about violence against women; it is necessary that men be made aware of it.<sup>11</sup> From this point of view; this study was planned to explore factors that affected views and attitudes of both genders about violence to women.

In the study, it was found that more than half of the participants (52.7%) witnessed

violence against women and 61.4% of them did not want to react against/interfere with violence behaviors witnessed. Similar to the finding of the current study, other studies in the relevant literature reported that rate of

witnessing violence varied from 15.2% and 44.7%.<sup>12-17</sup> High level of witnessing violence against women shows graveness and prevalence of violence in the society.

**Table 4.** Participants' average scores of İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale according to their personal characteristics (n=220)

Personal Characteristics	n	%	İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale Mean ±SD
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	130	59.1	81.60±25.27
Male	90	40.9	80.98±22.48
<i>Test</i>			* U:-0.696 <i>p</i> >0.05
<b>Number of Children</b>			
0	44	20	85.15±23.89
1-3	84	38.2	83.02±26.90
3-5	68	30.9	79.76±19.75
≥5	24	10.9	72.83±24.39
<i>Test</i>			**X <sup>2</sup> K-W=3.293 <i>p</i> >0.05
<b>Educational Status</b>			
Literate	64	29.1	70.31±20.88
Primary School-Secondary School	125	56.8	80.80±21.48
High School	21	9.5	105.90±21.44
Higher Education (University)	10	4.5	107.30±26.50
<i>Test</i>			**X <sup>2</sup> K-W=40.080 <i>p</i> <0.01
<b>Income Level</b>			
Not Satisfactory	45	20.5	77.48±26.65
Moderate	127	57.7	80.05±22.42
Satisfactory	48	21.8	88.41±25.06
<i>Test</i>			**X <sup>2</sup> K-W=5.89 <i>p</i> >0.05
<b>Place of Longest Residence</b>			
Urban	23	10.5	107.56±22.42
Rural	197	89.5	78.29±22.64
<i>Test</i>			* U: -5.073 <i>p</i> <0.01
<b>Family Type</b>			
Nuclear Family	173	78.6	83.59±24.92
Extended Family	47	21.4	73.10±18.93
<i>Test</i>			* U: -2.477 <i>p</i> <0.05

\*Mann Whitney U

\*\*Kruskal Wallis

SD: Standard deviation

In the study, 8.2% of the participants stated that they became subjected to violence in any period of their lives. In the relevant literature; it is suggested that each violence behavior is interwoven with one another and an act of violence feeds the other. Besides, mostly it is possible that when a kind of violence occurs so does the other. As a conclusion; it is seen

that each violence behavior triggers the other progressively once it has occurred.<sup>17</sup> Similar to our study findings; other relevant studies too reported that prevalence of being subjected to violence continues with different rates in every period of life –since childhood-. In our country; it is reported that physical violence is seen in 30% of the families while

verbal violence in 53% and 46% of the children suffer from physical violence.<sup>18</sup>

**Table 5.** Participants' average scores of İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale according to some of their views/experiences of violence (n=220)

Characteristics	n	İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale Mean ±SD
<b>Knowledge About Current Legal Processes/Services of Violence Against Women</b>		
Yes	87	93.66±23.65
No	133	73.30±23.87
<i>Test</i>		* U: -6.065 <b>p&lt;0.01</b>
<b>Witnessing Violence Against Women</b>		
Yes	116	83.60±25.71
No	104	79.45±22.19
<i>Test</i>		* U: - 0.737 <b>p&gt;0.05</b>
<b>Being Subjected to any Kind of Violence</b>		
Yes	18	72.25±24.99
No	202	82.55±24.50
<i>Test</i>		* U: - 2.339 <b>p&lt;0.05</b>
<b>Reacting Against/Interfering with Violence Against Women</b>		
Yes	64	106.90±17.92
No	135	69.79±16.97
Uncertain	21	77.80±17.86
<i>Test</i>		**X <sup>2</sup> K-W=9.021 <b>p&lt;0.01</b>

\*Mann Whitney U

\*\*Kruskal Wallis

SD: Standard deviation

On the other hand; in the study, it was identified that more than half of the participants (60.5%) did not have any knowledge about current legal processes/services of violence against women. In our country, there are different studies done by relevant institutions that work on establishing and providing necessary service models in order to fight against every kind of violence. In Türkiye, official institutions and organizations to fight against violence against women are Violence Monitoring and Preventing Centers, Women's Guest Houses, Social Service Centers and ALO 183 Social Support Hotline; Police Department for Fighting against Domestic Violence and Violence against Women under Ministry of Internal Affairs, Provincial Governorships and District Governorships, ALO 155 Police Emergency Line and Law Enforcement Forces, Gendarmerie Department for Fighting against Domestic Violence and Child Abuse under General Commandership of

Gendarmerie, ALO 156 Gendarmerie Emergency Line and centers for women consulting under municipalities. It is very important that all social segments be informed of these institutions and organizations, their operations and the existing support and help services.<sup>19</sup>

Participants' general average score of İSKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale was found to be under 90 (81.35±24.12); in other words, this meant that they were not against violence to women and affirmed it. It is an alarming situation for the participants to demonstrate these attitudes towards violence against women that deprive them of social and economic life, cause them to suffer from physical and psychological health problems and maybe more importantly violence induced disabilities and mortalities. Similar to our study findings; in literature, the study of Başkale and Sözer<sup>20</sup> reported that 91.4% of the women were of the opinion that

violence is sometimes necessary and may be excused when it is not severe and when there is a valid reason. In another study, it was established that attitudes of women about domestic violence is at a moderate level.<sup>21</sup> In the study of Naçar et al.<sup>22</sup>, it was stated that 52.1% of the participants approved domestic violence. The studies of Tayyab et al.<sup>23</sup> and Başkale and Sözer<sup>20</sup> argued that both women and men tended to justify violence. In the study of Schuler and İslam<sup>24</sup> done in a rural area of Bangladesh it was reported that 84% of the women and 92% of the men state that violence against women can be justified.

It is suggested that such variables as gender, educational status, profession, place of residence, income level, gender roles and culture are effective upon attitudes about violence against women.<sup>25-27</sup> In the current study, too, it was seen that as participants' educational status increased so did negative attitudes about violence against women (the participant disapproves of violence against women). Besides, it was noted that living in city centers and nuclear family were associated with negative attitudes about violence against women, too (the participant disapproves of violence against women). In the study of Altıntop and Adana<sup>28</sup>, too, it was found that those that had under primary school degrees and lived in villages demonstrated more positive attitudes about violence against women. Boyacıoğlu<sup>29</sup>, Rodolfo et al.<sup>30</sup> and Kapan and Yanikkerem<sup>31</sup> pointed out in their studies that place of residence was a crucial variable in violence against women. Study findings of the current study concurred with the findings of the literature.

In this study, it was found that the participants that had knowledge about current legal processes/services of violence against women and those that wanted to interfere with violence showed negative attitudes against violence; to put it another way; they were against violence to women. According to this finding; it is very important to inform all individuals and make them aware of violence against women. Therefore; all individuals – regardless of their gender- should be informed and aware of violence against women and a

change of mentality should be created; which is very important. In particular; awareness-raising campaigns and consciousness-raising campaigns by public institutions, NGOs and media organizations and educational programs make significant contributions to preventing this problem.

Essential legal regulations and reforms have been made in our country against violence against women. On the other hand; enforcing these legal regulations and reforms and providing prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services to both violence-victims and violence-makers are also very important. In this sense, one of the concrete examples -National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women (2016-2020)- has been prepared and implemented in our country. This action plan is consisted of key steps such as reviewing/updating educational curriculums of formal education and non-formal education –from preschool to higher education-, changing the constitution and basic relevant laws and distribution and publication of visual-auditory-printed materials.<sup>32</sup>

### **Study limitation**

Although this study is one of the rare studies in which opinions and attitudes about violence against women are evaluated, it was conducted only with a certain number of people living in a village. In this study; except for the scale, there is no detailed data about individuals' knowledge of the types of violence (physical, verbal, sexual violence, etc.). This situation can be counted as the limitation of this study. Therefore, the findings of the study can be generalized only for this group.

### **Conclusion**

Individuals' attitudes about violence to women, a widespread and sad reality in our country, are affected by many factors. Therefore, to assess views and attitudes of all members of the society about violence against women and to raise correct awareness and to create correct attitudes according to the findings obtained are highly essential.



The current study was undertaken in a small village in a rural region. However, it should be kept in mind that transformation takes place from local to global and to know the needs of the local makes the transformation of misconceptions in society easy and improves the global. Therefore; it is clear that each academic study on this issue raises awareness in people about violence to women and yields important clues to interpret variables that affect their violence perceptions. In the current study, it was concluded that participants were not opposed to “violence against women and confirmed it.” Therefore, this negative attitude towards violence to women, one of the most serious and widest human right violations over the world that waits for a solution, is very striking.

Likewise, it was understood in the study that such demographic factors as educational status, place of residence and family type influence one’s opinions and attitudes of violence. However; it was understood that having knowledge about current legal processes/services of violence against women, being subjected to any kind of violence and wanting to react against/to interfere with violence affected people’s opinions and attitudes against violence against women, too. In this sense; it is recommended that;

- awareness-raising educations for violence against women be integrated with formal education and non-formal education starting from preschool education,

- the number of relevant studies to utilize different research techniques be increased and the effects of different variables upon attitudes of violence against women be investigated,

With the findings explored by the current study; an educational program to quickly be implemented by researchers was planned so that the participants could acquire awareness about violence against women. Thus; important study findings on violence to women will not remain as a theory but be put into practice.

### **Ethics Committee Approval**

Ethics Committee approval was obtained from Ethics Board (approval no: (27.06.2019-1/01). This study was continued in accordance with the Helsinki Principles Declaration.

### **Informed Consent**

The study conformed to the principles of the declaration of Helsinki and the participants were explained that participation was voluntary, were assured of confidentiality and their responses would be used only for scientific purposes and their verbal informed consents were obtained.

### **Author Contributions**

Study design: R.E; Data collection: R.E; Data analysis: R.E; Manuscript preparation: R.E.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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### **Statements**

This study has not been presented in any National or International Meeting.

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