

## Gender Differences in Students' Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women

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### Abstract

**Aim:** This study was conducted as a descriptive study with the aim of determining the views and attitudes of university students about domestic violence against women.

**Method:** The research was carried out between May and June 2018. The population of the research consisted of students studying at faculties and colleges within a university, and the sample consisted of 2453 students who agreed to participate in the study. The first part of the questionnaire, which was prepared by the researchers as a result of the literature review, consists of questions containing information about the introductory characteristics of the students; The second part consists of 34 questions about attitudes towards violence against women. Chi-square test was applied to examine the relationship between the variables.

**Results:** Considering the results obtained from the findings, it was determined that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of female and male students towards economic, sexual, verbal, and physical violence against women ( $p < 0,05$ ). While women exhibited a more egalitarian attitude towards gender equality, male students displayed a traditional attitude. It was stated by 77,9% of the students that they did not experience violence from their families and 79,5% of them stated that they did not witness violence between their families.

**Conclusion:** Knowing the attitudes of university students towards violence against women can contribute to the development of violence against women policies.

**Keywords:** Gender, sexual violence, violence against women.

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### Özgün Araştırma Makalesi (Original Research Article)

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*ETHICAL STATEMENT: Ethical approval was granted by the University's Ethics Committee (Decision no: 21.03.2017 2017/5), and written permission was obtained from the deans of faculties to conduct the research. Informed consent was obtained from the students who agreed to participate in the research.*

## Öğrencilerin Kadına Şiddete Karşı Tutumlarında Cinsiyet Farklılıkları

### Öz

**Amaç:** Bu çalışma, üniversite öğrencilerinin kadına yönelik aile içi şiddet ile ilgili görüş ve tutumlarının belirlenmesi amacı ile tanımlayıcı olarak yapılmıştır.

**Yöntem:** Araştırma, Mayıs-Haziran 2018 tarihleri arasında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın evrenini, bir üniversitenin bünyesinde bulunan Fakülte ve Yüksekokullarda öğrenim gören öğrenciler, örneklemini ise çalışmaya katılmayı kabul eden 2453 öğrenci oluşturmuştur. Araştırmacılar tarafından literatür değerlendirmesi sonucu hazırlanan anket formunun birinci bölümü, öğrencilerin tanıtıcı özelliklerine ilişkin bilgileri içeren sorulardan; ikinci bölümü ise Kanbay ve arkadaşları (2012) tarafından hazırlanmış olan kadına yönelik şiddet ile ilgili tutumları içeren 34 sorudan oluşmuştur. Araştırmada elde edilen veriler SPSS 22.0 programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Değişkenler arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi için ki - kare testi uygulanmıştır.

**Bulgular:** Bulgulardan elde edilen sonuçlara bakıldığında kadın ve erkek öğrencilerin kadına ekonomik, cinsel, sözlü ve fiziksel şiddete yönelik tutumları arasında anlamlı bir farklılık olduğu belirlenmiştir ( $p < 0,05$ ). Kadınlar cinsiyet eşitliğine karşı daha eşitlikçi bir tutum sergilerken, erkek öğrenciler geleneksel bir tutum sergilemiştir. Öğrencilerin %77,9'u ailelerinden şiddet görmediklerini ve %79,5'i aileleri arasında şiddete tanık olmadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir.

**Sonuç:** Üniversite öğrencilerinin kadına yönelik şiddete yönelik tutumlarının bilinmesi kadına yönelik şiddet politikalarının geliştirilmesine katkı sağlayabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Cinsiyet, cinsel şiddet, kadına yönelik şiddet.

### Introduction

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either result in or have a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation”<sup>1</sup>. Violence is a serious global health problem and human rights violation that negatively affects women's lives all over the world. Globally, prevalence estimates for lifetime experiences of physical or sexual partner violence among women range from 15%–71%<sup>2</sup>. In Turkey research results reveal that 35,5% of women are exposed to physical violence from their husbands at some time in their lives, while 12% are exposed to sexual violence and 43,9% to emotional violence<sup>3</sup>. There are many factors that affect violence against women. These factors are; socioeconomic status, cultural beliefs and values<sup>4</sup>, race and ethnicity, gender and gender norms<sup>5</sup>, occupation, education level and attitudes and beliefs towards violence<sup>6</sup>. The patriarchal social structure in Turkey leads to differences in gender roles between men and women. And as per these roles; women are expected to be passive, quiet, accept

the wishes of their family members or spouse without questioning and men are expected to exhibit a more brash and aggressive attitude<sup>7</sup>. Gender roles create significant, differences and inequalities between men and women. Male practice of physical or psychological violence in conflict situations is also normalized, presenting it as a fundamental requirement of being a man, and thereby justifying violence<sup>8</sup>. Individual attitudes towards domestic violence play an important role in sustaining violence and in individual and social responses to violence. For this reason, creating individual attitude change in preventing domestic violence against women is one of the main objectives of the education system<sup>9</sup>. Undergraduate courses at university are an ideal opportunity to initiate a change in attitudes about domestic violence and equip graduates with a comprehensive understanding of domestic violence<sup>10</sup>. However, the issues of family violence, legal rights of women, and the results of intervention strategies are not comprehensively addressed in the undergraduate curriculum<sup>11</sup>. The determination of young adults' attitudes towards violence who are studying at the university is important in preventing violent behaviors in adulthood, because the conflicts and reactions that occur in relationships that emerge in this period can contribute to the transgenerational transformation of violence against women<sup>12</sup>.

For this reason, this study was carried out to determine the attitudes of female and male students studying at university towards domestic violence against women. Research questions were as follows:

1. Do differences exist in attitudes towards types of violence between female and male students?
2. What are the students' experiences of domestic violence?
3. Is there any difference between the gender attitudes of female and male students toward domestic violence?

## **Material and Methods**

### **Design and Participants**

This was a descriptive and cross-sectional study. The population of the research consists of students (N=11.082) studying at a university. The minimum sample size of the study was determined according to the formula of the frequency of the event in cases with a known population. The frequency of the examined event was accepted as 0,5 in accordance with the related literature. The minimum sample size was 371 students for a deviation of 0,05 and a confidence interval of 95% ( $\alpha = 0,05$ ). The stratified sampling method was used for sample selection. Students were stratified into ten strata based on their department. The number of students randomly selected from each stratum was based on the number of students included in the strata. Voluntary participation in the study was provided by 2.453 participants.

## **Instruments**

A questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. In the first section, there were 12 close-ended questions to determine the sociodemographic characteristics of the students such as sex, age, grade, family income, family type, education and employment status of parents, residential area, and region of residence. In the second section, there were questions to determine attitudes towards domestic violence types developed by Kanbay, et al.<sup>13</sup>. Questions were Likert-type and comprised a total of 34 questions. All statements included I agree, no idea and I don't agree.

## **Procedure**

The study was carried out during May-June 2018. After the first meeting with the faculty dean, decisions were made about when the data could be collected. The appointments for faculties were scheduled after meetings with the faculty dean. Students were given information about the purpose of the study with the permission of the lecturer of the course on the day planned for data collection. After obtaining written consent from willing students, the questionnaire was applied by the researchers. A total of 2453 students were willing to participate in the study and no incentive was given to the participants. Completion of the questionnaire form lasted 15 to 20 min.

## **Ethical Consideration**

Ethical approval was granted by the Kastamonu University's Ethics Committee (Decision no: 21.03.2017 2017/5), and written permission was obtained from the deans of faculties to conduct the research. Informed consent was obtained from the students who agreed to participate in the research.

## **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 statistical software program. Numbers, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to assess descriptive statistics. The data gathered from the groups were compared with the chi-square test. Significance level was taken as ,05.

## **Results**

Of the students participating in the study 55,3% were female; 60,8% were between 21-24 years old, fathers of 26,8% were high school graduates, mothers of 42,7% were primary school graduates; 32,5% had three siblings, and 70,2% lived with core family. The families of 52,8% had low income and 31,5% lived in the Black Sea Region (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Descriptive characteristics of the students (n=2453)

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	1357	55,3
Male	1096	44,7
<b>Age</b>		
20 and under	817	33,3
21-24	1492	60,8
25-28	111	4,5
29 and over	33	1,4
<b>Father's education</b>		
Literate	129	5,3
Primary school	790	32,2
Middle School	485	19,8
High school	658	26,8
University	391	15,9
<b>Mother's education</b>		
Literate	465	19,0
Primary school	1047	42,7
Middle School	472	19,2
High school	332	13,5
University	137	5,6
<b>Family type</b>		
Core family	640	26,1
Extended family	1722	70,2
Broken family	91	3,7

<b>Income status</b>		
Low	1295	52,8
Moderate	975	39,7
High	183	7,5
<b>Number of siblings</b>		
1	118	4,8
2	777	31,7
3	796	32,5
4	417	17,0
5 and over	345	14,0
<b>Region of Residence</b>		
Black Sea	772	31,5
Mediterranean	219	8,9
Central Anatolia	587	23,9
Eastern Anatolia	127	5,2
Aegean	190	7,8
Marmara	401	16,3
Southeastern Anatolia	157	6,4

There was a significant difference between students' attitudes towards economic violence and sex. Only 8,5% of female students and 23,6% of male students stated that they agreed with the view that "Women do not need to work and earn Money". It was found that 6,7% of female students and over half of male students (61,6%) stated that they agreed with the statement "A man's main task in the house is breadwinning". Of female students 16,3% and half of the male students (49,7%) stated that they agree with the statement "If the man does not want it, the woman should not work". Moreover, more than half of the female students (54,4%) and 32,6% of male students stated that they agreed that "The woman should be able to spend her money as she wishes". It was determined that only 8,9% of female students and 24,6% of male students agreed with the statement "It is not right for the woman to earn more money than her husband" (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Students' attitudes towards economic violence (n=2453)

Attitudes Towards Economic Violence		Female		Male		p
		n	%	n	%	
Women don't have to work and earn money	Disagree	1181	87,0	736	67,2	X <sup>2</sup> =142,109 p=0,000
	No idea	60	4,4	101	9,2	
	I agree	116	8,5	259	23,6	
A man's main task in the house is breadwinning	Disagree	774	57,0	368	33,6	X <sup>2</sup> =152,424 p=0,000
	No idea	85	6,3	53	4,8	
	I agree	498	36,7	675	61,6	
If the man does not want it, the woman should not work	Disagree	1028	75,8	459	41,9	X <sup>2</sup> =332,041 p=0,000
	No idea	108	8,0	92	8,4	
	I agree	221	16,3	545	49,7	
The woman should be able to spend her money as she wishes	Disagree	519	38,2	667	60,9	X <sup>2</sup> =129,287 p=0,000
	No idea	100	7,4	72	6,6	
	I agree	738	54,4	357	32,6	
It is not right for the woman to earn more money than her husband	Disagree	1137	83,8	723	66,0	X <sup>2</sup> =122,625 p=0,000
	No idea	99	7,3	103	9,4	
	I agree	121	8,9	270	24,6	

There was a significant difference between students' attitudes towards sexual violence and sex. Of female students 14,5% and 34,1% of male students agreed with the statement that “Wearing sexy clothing is a reason for women to be harassed”. It was found that 6,9% of female students and 25,4% of male students agreed that “Even if the woman does not want to have intercourse with her husband, it is her duty”. Of female students 7,7% and 21,7% of male students agreed with the statement “It is normal to be abused if a woman is outside late”. It was determined that few female students (2,9%) and 16,3% of male students stated that they agreed that “It is the woman's fault if they are sexually assaulted” (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Students' attitudes towards sexual violence (n=2453)

Attitudes towards Sexual Violence		Female		Male		p
		n	%	n	%	
Wearing sexy clothing is a reason for a woman to be harassed.	Disagree	1046	77,1	628	57,3	X <sup>2</sup> =134,922 p=0,000
	No idea	114	8,4	94	8,6	
	I agree	197	14,5	374	34,1	
Even if the woman does not want to have intercourse with her husband, it is her duty	Disagree	1143	84,2	649	59,2	X <sup>2</sup> =210,994 p=0,000
	No idea	121	8,9	169	15,4	
	I agree	93	6,9	278	25,4	
It is normal to be abused if a woman is outside late.	Disagree	1170	86,2	750	68,4	X <sup>2</sup> =120,599 p=0,000
	No idea	82	6,0	108	9,9	
	I agree	105	7,7	238	21,7	
It is the woman's fault if they are sexually assaulted.	Disagree	1214	89,5	798	72,8	X <sup>2</sup> =149,309 p=0,000
	No idea	103	7,6	119	10,9	
	I agree	40	2,9	179	16,3	

A significant difference was found between students' attitudes towards verbal and physical violence and sex. In this study it was found that very few (3,7%) of the female students and 16,8% of the male students stated that they agreed with the statement "If a woman does not listen to advice, beating her can solve the problem". A small number of female students (3,9%) and 20,1% of male students agreed that "In some cases, it would be okay to slap a woman". It was found that very few female students (1,9%) and 13,0% of male students stated that they agreed with the statement "It is excusable that an alcoholic man beats his wife". A small number of female students (5,4%) and 15,1% of male students agree with the statement that "Girls should definitely marry whoever their parents want" (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Students' attitudes towards verbal and physical violence (n=2453)

Attitudes towards Verbal and Physical Violence		Female		Male		p
		n	%	n	%	
If a woman does not listen to advice. beating her can solve the problem	Disagree	1255	92,5	851	77,6	X <sup>2</sup> =128,638 p=0,000
	No idea	52	3,8	61	5,6	
	I agree	50	3,7	184	16,8	
If there is a problem with marriage. having a child can solve the problem	Disagree	1102	81,2	635	57,9	X <sup>2</sup> =180,071 p=0,000
	No idea	130	9,6	151	13,8	
	I agree	125	9,2	310	28,3	
In some cases, it would be okay to slap a woman	Disagree	1262	93,0	781	71,3	X <sup>2</sup> =210,520 p=0,000
	No idea	42	3,1	95	8,7	
	I agree	53	3,9	220	20,1	
Violence is normal due to anger at the time of the discussion	Disagree	1199	88,4	749	68,3	X <sup>2</sup> =170,338 p=0,000
	No idea	75	5,5	87	7,9	
	I agree	83	6,1	260	23,7	
It is excusable that an alcoholic man beats his wife	Disagree	1282	94,5	894	81,6	X <sup>2</sup> =124,023 p=0,000
	No idea	49	3,6	60	5,5	
	I agree	26	1,9	142	13,0	
If the woman does not listen to advice, she must be forced to under pressure	Disagree	1199	88,4	657	59,9	X <sup>2</sup> =295,573 p=0,000
	No idea	73	5,4	91	8,3	
	I agree	85	6,3	348	31,8	
Girls should marry whoever their parents want	Disagree	1241	91,5	854	77,9	X <sup>2</sup> =90,078 p=0,000
	No idea	43	3,2	76	6,9	
	I agree	73	5,4	166	15,1	
Women and men should not discuss	Disagree	1080	79,6	683	62,3	

	No idea	98	7,2	88	8,0	X <sup>2</sup> =105,655 p=0,000
	I agree	179	13,2	325	29,7	
Small discussions are a part of marriage.	Disagree	464	34,2	254	23,2	X <sup>2</sup> =47,159 p=0,000
	No idea	149	11,0	93	8,5	
	I agree	744	54,8	749	68,3	
In some cases, it is normal to shout at a woman.	Disagree	1139	83,9	604	55,1	X <sup>2</sup> =258,630 p=0,000
	No idea	71	5,2	93	8,5	
	I agree	147	10,8	399	36,4	

There was a significant correlation found between students' attitudes to social gender equality and gender. Almost all female students (98,1%) and 94,5% of male students stated that they agreed that "the existence of violence against women is a situation that bothers me". It was found that the majority of female students (95,3%) and 87,1% of male students agreed with the statement "Domestic violence is an important public health problem". A small number of female students (15,8%) and nearly half of male students (48,1%) agreed with the statement "spare the rod and spoil the child is a very realistic proverb". A few female students 3,7% and 23,2% of male students agreed with the statement that "It is normal for me that a man might love or beat his wife". It was found that 39,1% of female students and the majority of male students (70,9%) agreed with the statement "The woman should get permission from her husband when she goes somewhere". A small number of female students (5,4%) and 22,8% of male students agreed with the statement "Men do not have to do housework" (Table 5).

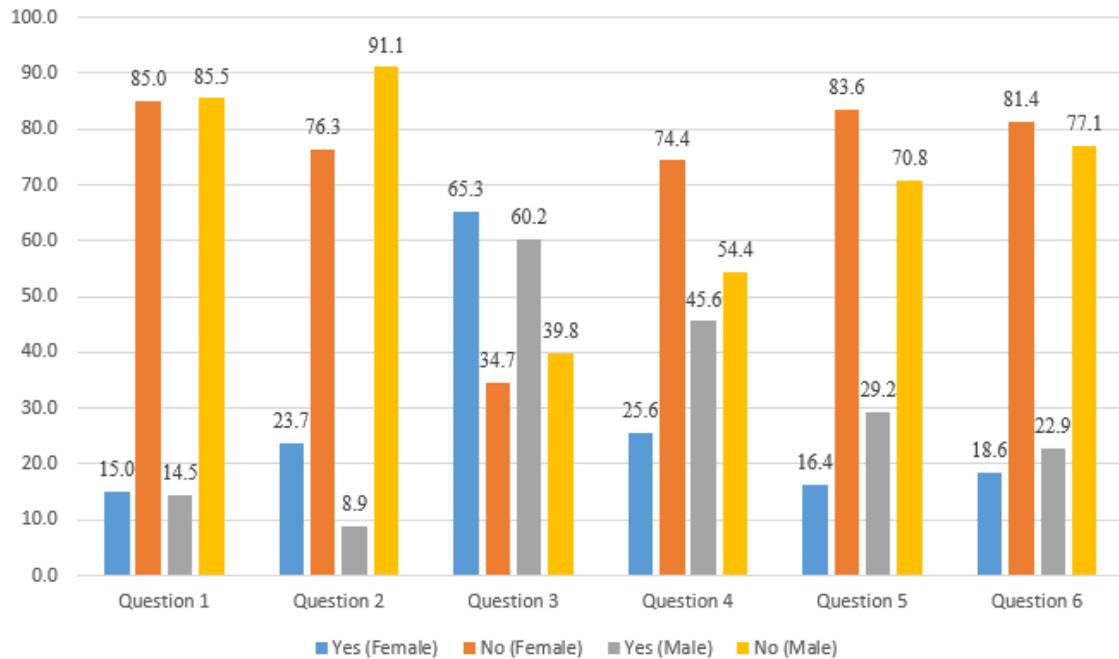
**Table 5.** Students' attitudes towards gender equality (n=2453)

Attitudes towards Gender Equality		Female		Male		p
		n	%	n	%	
The existence of violence against women is a situation that bothers me	Disagree	19	1,4	43	3,9	X <sup>2</sup> =22,710 p=0,000
	No idea	7	0,5	17	1,6	
	I agree	1331	98,1	1036	94,5	
Domestic violence is an important public health problem	Disagree	51	3,8	115	10,5	

	No idea	13	1,0	26	2,4	$X^2=52,654$ $p=0,000$
	I agree	1293	95,3	955	87,1	
Spare the rod and spoil the child is a very realistic proverb	Disagree	1012	74,6	449	41,0	$X^2=324,447$ $p=0,000$
	No idea	130	9,6	120	10,9	
	I agree	215	15,8	527	48,1	
In some cases, violence can be a solution.	Disagree	1069	78,8	539	49,2	$X^2=276,727$ $p=0,000$
	No idea	123	9,1	115	10,5	
	I agree	165	12,2	442	40,3	
A woman who is exposed to violence should not share this situation with others	Disagree	1178	86,8	748	68,2	$X^2=125,432$ $p=0,000$
	No idea	50	3,7	117	10,7	
	I agree	129	9,5	231	21,1	
There may be valid reasons for men to use violence against women	Disagree	1214	89,5	699	63,8	$X^2=242,999$ $p=0,000$
	No idea	54	4,0	89	8,1	
	I agree	89	6,6	308	28,1	
The woman must be under the control of the man	Disagree	1161	85,6	536	48,9	$X^2=423,848$ $p=0,000$
	No idea	82	6,0	91	8,3	
	I agree	114	8,4	469	42,8	
It is normal for me that a man might love or beat his wife	Disagree	1286	94,8	765	69,8	$X^2=276,601$ $p=0,000$
	No idea	21	1,5	77	7,0	
	I agree	50	3,7	254	23,2	
I do not disapprove of the idea that women can work at all types of businesses	Disagree	898	66,2	426	38,9	$X^2=186,443$ $p=0,000$
	No idea	90	6,6	99	9,0	
	I agree	369	27,2	571	52,1	
The woman must come home before her husband	Disagree	900	66,3	415	37,9	$X^2=217,062$ $p=0,000$
	No idea	124	9,1	110	10,0	

	I agree	333	24,5	571	52,1	
Men should be educated more than women	Disagree	1040	76,6	725	66,1	X <sup>2</sup> =34,010 p=0,000
	No idea	76	5,6	101	9,2	
	I agree	241	17,8	270	24,6	
The woman should get permission from her husband when she goes somewhere	Disagree	731	53,9	267	24,4	X <sup>2</sup> =249,627 p=0,000
	No idea	95	7,0	52	4,7	
	I agree	531	39,1	777	70,9	
I believe in equality between women and men	Disagree	402	29,6	426	38,9	X <sup>2</sup> =24,814 p=0,000
	No idea	61	4,5	54	4,9	
	I agree	894	65,9	616	56,2	
Childcare is the primary task of women rather than men	Disagree	692	51,0	289	26,4	X <sup>2</sup> =156,689 p=0,000
	No idea	79	5,8	72	6,6	
	I agree	586	43,2	735	67,1	
Men do not need to do housework	Disagree	1254	92,4	768	70,1	X <sup>2</sup> =209,744 p=0,000
	No idea	30	2,2	78	7,1	
	I agree	73	5,4	250	22,8	

It was determined that the majority of the students (85% of women and 85,5% of men) participating in the study did not participate in a training program about violence against women. While 83,6% of female students stated that they were not exposed to violence from their parents, the rate for male students was 70,8%. Most of the students (81,4% of females and 77,1% of males) stated that they did not witness violence among their parents (Graphic 1).

**Graphic 1.** Students' answers about women and violence by gender

Question 1: Have you previously participated in a training program about violence against women?

Question 2: If you had a choice, would you want to be of the opposite sex?

Question 3: If you had a choice, would you want your children to be female?

Question 4: Have you ever used violence against someone for any reason?

Question 5: Have you ever experienced violence from your parents during your life?

Question 6: Have you witnessed violence between parents during your life?

## Discussion

Violence against women is a serious abuse of human rights and an important public health problem in Turkey, as it is around the world<sup>14</sup>. The prevalence of domestic violence varies markedly between and within countries, with higher rates tending to occur in developing countries<sup>15</sup>. Given high prevalence rates, there is a need to understand attitudes that affect increased risk of violence in university students. This paper fills an important research gap by identifying attitudes of male and female students that affect domestic violence. Economic violence is defined as the use of economic resources and money as sanctions and threats<sup>16</sup>. Attitudes, beliefs and practices that lead to economic violence are often deeply entrenched and closely

related to cultural, social, and religious norms of a society<sup>17</sup>. In this study, it was determined that female students were more egalitarian than male students according to attitudes about economic violence ( $p < 0,05$ ). In light of these findings, it can be said that cultural factors and cultural acceptance of men's superiority and dominance over women play an important role in the patriarchal social structure in Turkey and encourage the men to gain control, power, and domination over women.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines sexual violence as “any sexual act or an attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments, or advances, acts to traffic or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim in any setting, including but not limited to home and work”<sup>1</sup>. Sexual violence is a negative and traumatic life event with widespread psychological and sociological effects on the victim irrespective of gender<sup>18</sup>. In this study, findings indicated statistically significant differences between female and male students in terms of attitudes to sexual violence ( $p \leq 0,05$ ). About one in four male students had a negative attitude towards sexual violence. In a study conducted by Nayak et al., they reported that male students from four different countries (India, Japan, Kuwait, United States) have least positive attitudes about sexual violence, similar to our study<sup>19</sup>.

Violence against women is often a result of unequal power equations, both real and perceived, between men and women and is also strongly influenced by cultural factors and values<sup>20</sup>. In our study male students were more likely than female students to agree with attitudes supportive of physical and physiological violence against women ( $p < 0,05$ ). In a study conducted in South Asia, it was determined that male students who have traditional gender role attitudes support violence against women<sup>21</sup>. Previous research indicates that traditional gender role attitudes were associated with an increased risk of violence among male students than female students, similar to our study<sup>22</sup>.

Education and training are vital to change students' attitudes toward violence. In Turkey, domestic violence subject is not found in the curriculum of faculties. Students are often unable to access this training. In this study, it was determined that most of the students (F:85%, M:85,5%) did not receive any domestic violence education (Graphic 1). In previous studies with students, it was also emphasized that domestic violence training is inadequate and should be improved in universities<sup>23-26</sup>. This findings show parallelism with the results across the world. According to the findings 45,6 percent of male students and 14,5 percent of female students have committed violence for any reason. A previous study conducted by Baker and Stith stated that 31,8% of male students and 41,4% of female students committed violence toward their partners at least once in the past year<sup>27</sup>. While most students stated that they were not exposed to violence from their parents (F:83,6%, M:70,8%), most of the students (F:81,4%; M:77,1%) stated that they did not witness violence among parents (Graphic 1). Sears, et al. stated that in the USA, 43% of teenage

boys and 51% of teenage girls between 12 and 18 years have physically, psychologically, or sexually abused their partners<sup>28</sup>.

Violence is one way to create and enforce gender hierarchy and punish transgressions, to resolve relationship conflicts, and to seek resolution of the crisis in masculinity by providing a sense of power<sup>29</sup>. Data from the present study show that although the majority of male students have an egalitarian gender attitude, about a quarter have a traditional attitude. Female students reported much more positive gender attitude differences between female and male students in terms of attitudes to gender roles ( $p < 0,05$ ). This result can be explained due to students' perspectives about attitudes to gender differing from region to region and being somewhat dependent on the culture of the family they live with. Also, students may not have the ability to filter cultural factors that affect gender attitudes. Higher education, according to studies, strengthens liberal standards and reduces acceptance of violence as a means of settling disagreements<sup>30</sup>. University is an important impact on awareness of violence. Education, can reduce ignorance, develop moral ideals, and improve character. Education is also a tool that strengthens brains and improves a person's sense of what is right and wrong, enabling females to reject abuse<sup>31</sup>. Individuals' acceptance of intimate partner violence can be used to evaluate a society's progress toward gender equality by measuring its social, cultural, and behavioral transformation<sup>32</sup>. Therefore, the responses of the students on this subject are important.

The strengths of the study are the large sample size selected with the random sampling method.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, attitudes toward domestic violence were different between female and male students. It was determined that gender attitudes were also different between male and female students. Male students have traditional attitudes, while female students have more equitable attitudes. It was detected that most of the students did not receive any training about violence. One of the remarkable results was that about half of male students had acted violently toward someone at some point in their lives. Most of the students were not exposed to violence in their families and did not witness violence among their families.

In line with these results, in order to increase the awareness and consciousness level of university students, issues such as violence against women and gender should be added to the curriculum content, events such as conferences and seminars should be organized on these issues and these activities should be repeated at certain periods. In addition, due to the limited number of studies on the subject in our country, studies with different sample groups and different variables will contribute to the literature.

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### **Limitations of the Study**

Since the research was conducted with university students studying at a university, the results obtained can only be generalized for these students. Another limitation of this study is it did not investigate the psychological, social, or cultural aspects (ethnicity, beliefs, and norms, for example) of students. So, violence can be changed with these parameters. Although the number of female and male students is close to each other, the lower number of male students is another limitation of our study, as it may affect the results.

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