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Research Article

## KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR STUDY ON DATING VIOLENCE

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### ABSTRACT

*The main purpose of this study is to examine the perception of dating violence of individuals who differ in terms of age, gender and education level, and to what extent they are aware of the severity of dating they may be exposed to and the impact of this situation on them. The research was conducted via the internet in Turkey. A questionnaire was applied to all participants from all age groups and all education levels above the age of 18. 74% of the participants were women and 26% were men; it is stated that 6% of them had no dating relationship until today. 79.6% of the participants stated that they witnessed the dating violence and 33.5% stated that jealousy is a sign of love. In a question where it is possible to mark more than one option, 63.6% of the participants deemed neglecting, 41.8% of the participants deemed preventing to meet with their family and friends, 23% of the participants deemed forcing to a sexual intercourse in the scope of dating violence. Dating violence is a type of violence that is frequently encountered in daily life, but social and individual awareness is not at a desired level. Our survey, that we had parallel results with the prior surveys, shows that many people perceive the dating period as the previous stage before the relationship. Since, the violence among spouses during relationship, engagement and marriage are not considered in the scope of dating violence, the findings do not provide the exact number of people who are exposed to dating violence.*

**Keywords:** Violence, dating violence, partner, dating period

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation”. (Polat, 2016) However, the most common form of violence is domestic violence against women and children. (Güler, Tel, Tuncay, 2005) It has been reported that the estimated rate of women suffering from physical violence from men worldwide is 25-50%. Research on Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey according to 2009 results, 39% of women are exposed to physical violence, 15% to sexual violence and 44% to emotional violence (Başar, Demirci, 2015). According to the data in the world and Turkey, it can be seen that violence is one of the most important problems in today’s society. Violence is a serious obstacle to the formation of healthy societies. (Başar, Demirci, 2015)

According to the definition of World Health Organization, violence against women is any kind of behavior that is based on gender, which harms women, may result in physical, sexual and mental harm, and that it is subjected to oppression and arbitrary restrictions on their freedom in society or in private life. Domestic violence in the world and Turkey is known to be a major health problem. In the last 15-20 years, there has been a lot of research on spouse violence around the world. According to the data of 48 studies based on the whole world population, the World Health Organization reported that the rate of violence by women's spouses or partners is between 10-69%. (EG, LL. et al., 2002)

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

### **2.1. Dating and Dating Violence**

Dating; It is a type of relationship that involves social interaction and acts with the intention of continuing or terminating the relationship, then terminated at the request of one or two parties, or continuing with a formal relationship (marriage, engagement, living together) (Straus, 2004). Recent definitions include not only heterosexual associations but also homosexual associations.

Dating violence is manifested in the form of sexual violence, along with words, mimics and behaviors that involve the use of painful or injurious physical or psychological force and threats against the partner in a dating relationship. (Baldan, Akış, 2017) In other words, dating violence is one of the types of interpersonal violence. It is seen that the individuals in the relationship use physical, emotional and sexual violence to each other and bring social restrictions to each other (Yumuşak, Şahin, 2014). The individual problems of the attacker as well as gender roles (patriarchal societies), family structures and socio-cultural norms are responsible for the emergence of dating violence. The purpose of violence is to control the woman's behavior and thus to put pressure on her. (Polat, 2016)

### **2.2. Dating Period**

There are different approaches in the literature about the dating period. There are also approaches that indicate that it is a period that includes the emotional relationship as well as those who accept the flirtation period as the period before the emotional relationship. There are also institutions and writers who accept that the dating period is a period that includes dearness and marriage. CDC considers the severity of dating as a subtype of intimate partner violence and is a type of violence among unmarried persons. (CDC, 2018) In a report published by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2013, it was stated that close partner violence is a term that includes formal relationships (marriage) and informal relationships (dating relationships, extramarital sexual intercourse).

In our study of knowledge, attitude and behavior on the severity of dating, we accepted that the flirtation period was a period that included dearness and marriage. The reason is that we accept dating violence as violence committed by partners, such as domestic violence. In the same way, dating violence, which is considered to be informal relations, is seen during emotional relationship, engagement and sexual marriage outside marriage.

### **2.3. Types of Dating Violence**

The types of physical, emotional and sexual violence we encounter in a dating relationship are also divided into behaviors. Physical dating severity; kicking, slapping, pushing, punching. Psychological flirt severity; This includes non-physical but psychologically injurious behaviors such as embarrassment, nickname, ridicule, or obstruction of meeting with family and friends. Sexual dating violence; Forcing sexual intercourse against the will of the person or spreading rumors about this when the request is rejected. In addition, persistent pursuit against the will of the person is also a violent behavior. We can also include neglect in these species. (Balda, Akış, 2017)

## **3. LEGAL STATUS IN TURKEY**

### **3.1. In Accordance with the Law No. 6284**

A person who is exposed to dating violence, whether she/he knows the perpetrator or not may request from the nearest police or gendarmerie station, the Public Prosecutor's Office or the Family Court the confidentiality of their identity and address information, the provision of shelter and temporary protection as well as other protective and preventive measures in need.

Under the same law, the person who is the victim of violence could apply to the Governorship, District Governorate of the city where she/he lives or to the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers if any, or to the Provincial Directorates of Family and Social Policies for psychological, professional, legal and social guidance and counseling service, temporary financial assistance, protection of children if any, and temporary nursery service. (Karabacak, Kuyucu, 2017)

### **3.2. According to the Turkish Civil Code and Code of Obligations**

According to the Civil Code, if a victim of violence needs protection of his/her children, may request from the Family Court that their temporary custody may be given to him/her without requesting divorce. In accordance with the Civil Code and the Code of Obligations, a claim can be filed in the Civil Court of First Instance for material and moral damages resulting from dating violence. (Karabacak, Kuyucu, 2017)

### **3.3. According to the Turkish Penal Code**

Dating violence is not regulated as a separate offense under the Penal Code; however, the acts such as insults, sexual harassment, rape, and threats carried out in a dating relationship constitute a crime, the regulations in the Turkish Penal Code within the scope of psychological, physical and sexual violence will also be applied for this type of violence. (Karabacak, Kuyucu, 2017)

While the offense of intentional injury and deliberate killing against the spouse are aggravating circumstances, no aggravating circumstances are provided for the offense against the partner. In other words, if the same crime is committed in marriage, the upper limit of the punishment of the perpetrator spouse will be higher, whereas the upper limit of the punishment of the perpetrator partner will be less if the same crime is committed apart from the marriage period.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The main method used in the research is the questionnaire. Prior to participating in the questionnaire, a consent form which was added to the beginning of the questionnaire was read and ratified by the participants. Data were collected from 695 volunteers provided that they were older than eighteen years. In this context, a special occupational group, level of education and so on no limitations were provided for the participants. First of all, it was asked to the participants three demographic questions and then nineteen questions consisting of multiple choice answers. In some of these questions, it was given the opportunity to the participants to mark more than one option. At the end of the questionnaire, the participants who were not obliged to state their identities were asked what is the dating violence you were exposed or may exposed to, what types of dating violence they were exposed to, whether they perpetrate dating violence, and how they would behave if they were exposed to dating violence. These questions are generally aimed at measuring the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of individuals about dating violence. Graphs were generated from the determined data.

#### 5. DATA

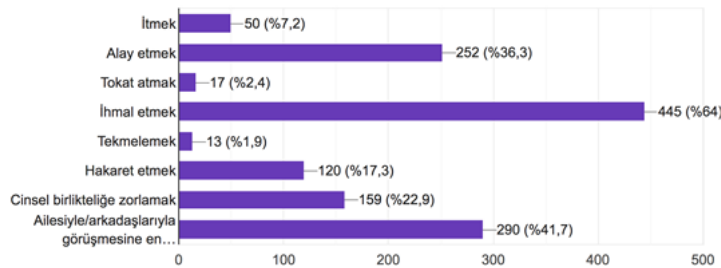
In the findings part of the study, data collected from 695 people will be evaluated. 73.5% of our participants were female and 26.5% were male, 94.1% stated that they had date before. When we look at the relationships durations of these people, 64.5% are 0-3 months, 15.3% are 3-6 months, 7.8% are 6 months-1 year, 6.8% are 1-3 years, and 5.8% are more than 3 years.

1. Which of the following actions are common during the dating period? (you can select more than one option)

64% of the participants said neglect.

41% of the participants stated that they should not be able to meet with their family / friends.

36.3% of the respondents responded to mockery. Participants reported that verbal and psychological acts of violence were more common than those involving physical violence.



2. Participants were asked to evaluate whether the six propositions given below were within the scope of dating violence. In this context:

a. 66.5% of the participants strongly agree, 23.9% mostly agree, 4.6% disagree with the suggestion that *your partner requests a photo of the clothes you wear every day*.

i. The majority of the participants said that it would be dating violence to ask the other partner to photograph the dress. This situation is very common among young people today. This request mostly comes from the male partner, but sometimes from the female partner. (Sünetçi et al., 2016)

b. 71.8% of the respondents strongly agree, 21% agree mostly, 4.5% disagree with the suggestion that *your dating requests the password of your social media accounts and checks your account periodically*.

i. Since the social media password constitutes personal data, obtaining or forcing the password against the consent of the partner and also regularly checking the social media accounts will also violate the privacy of private life.

c. *Dating violence is included if your dating hugs you or kisses you when you don't want to.*

69.1% of the respondents strongly agree, 19.7% mostly agree, 7.3% disagree.

i. Violation of body immunity by contact with the other partner without the consent of the partner is a criminal offense under the penal code. Nevertheless, a small part of the participants do not perceive this as a crime but as violence.

d. *Dating violence is included in your partner with whom you are friends and interfering with your social life.*

62.3% of respondents agree strongly, 29.1 agree mostly, 4.6% disagree.

e. *Dating violence is often included when your dating often makes a humorous or critical comment about your physical characteristics.*

58.6% of respondents agree strongly, 29.6% agree mostly, 6.8% disagree.

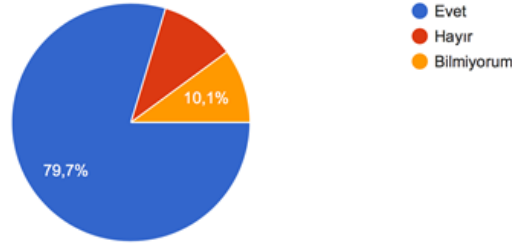
i. If humorous and critical comments about the physical characteristics of the partner are detrimental to his honor and dignity, these actions constitute the offense of insult under the Turkish Penal Code. The offense of insult is an attack on a person's personal rights that arise directly from being an individual. Therefore, comments reaching this intensity will constitute a crime. It should also be noted that the partner who is often subject to such comments is also under psychological violence.

f. *Jealousy is a sign of love.*

6.6% of respondents agree strongly, 27.1% agree mostly, and 44.3% disagree.

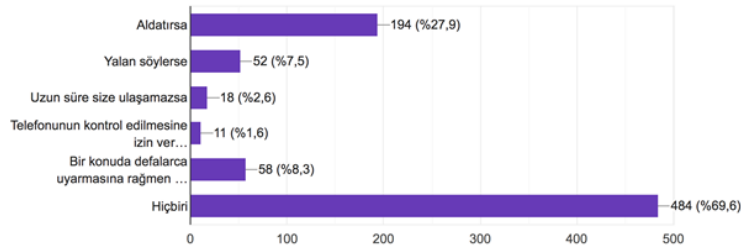
i. According to the results of the survey, a small number of the participants accepted the feeling of jealousy adopted by the partners or thought to be romantic as an indicator of love. The perception of jealousy as love constitutes the basis of the partners' application of many types of violence to each other in a dating relationship. Violence by partners is reflected and normalized as a result of love. The majority of the participants stated that the actions listed in the other options were violence but considered jealousy as an indicator of love. In our opinion, the sense of jealousy, which forms the basis of many dating violence cases, was not considered sufficient to be perceived as violence by the participants.

3. 79.7% of the respondents answered yes to the question whether they ever met someone who was exposed to dating violence.



4. *Physical violence (slapping, pushing, etc.) / verbal violence (shouting, insulting) can be considered reasonable when one of the following conditions is applied in a relationship.*

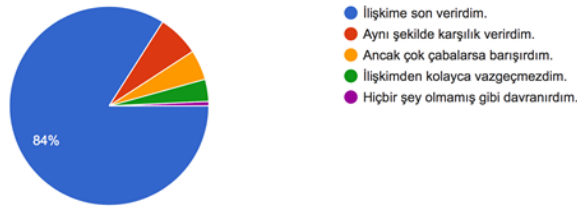
69.9% of the respondents stated that none of them responded, 27.9% stated that physical / verbal violence could be considered as a normal result of cheating.



i. Violence is unacceptable. Most of our participants stated that they would not use violence in any way and the other part stated that under some circumstances they could use violence against their partner. This situation unfortunately shows that violence is used by partners as a problem solving tool or communication tool.

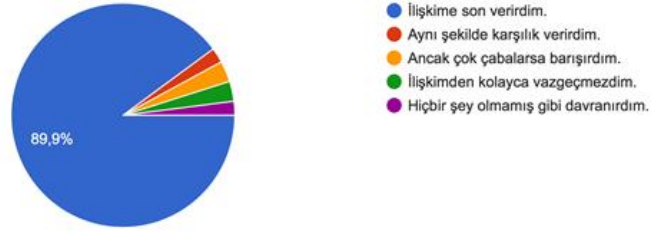
5. *How would you behave if you were subjected to physical violence (pushing, hitting, kicking, etc.) by your date?*

84% of the respondents stated that they would terminate the relationship and 6.8% said they would respond in the same way.



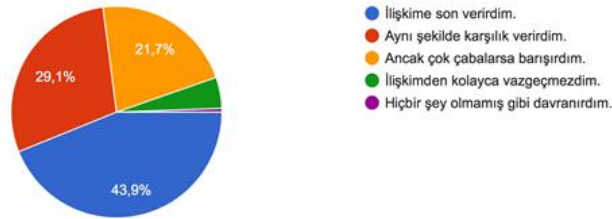
6. *How would you behave if you were exposed to sexual violence (coercion, involuntary contact, etc.) by your date?*

89.9% of the respondents said that I would terminate the relationship and 3% answered that I would make peace only if they tried hard.



7. How would you act if you had been subjected to verbal violence (insults, shouting etc.) by your dating?

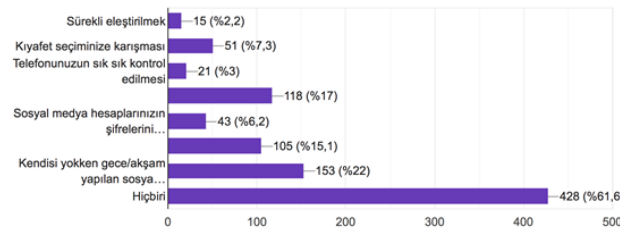
43.9% of the respondents would terminate my relationship, 29.1% would respond in the same way, 21.7% would only make peace if they tried hard.



i. When the results of questions 5, 6 and 7 are compared, it is seen that people have different perspectives according to the different types of violence. The participants stated that if they were subjected to physical and sexual violence from their partners, they would behave almost the same rate, that is, put an ending to the relationship. However, as a result of verbal violence, 43% would end the relationship and 29% would respond in the same way. So, in our opinion, verbal violence is seen as more bearable by the partners and maybe even not accepted as violence.

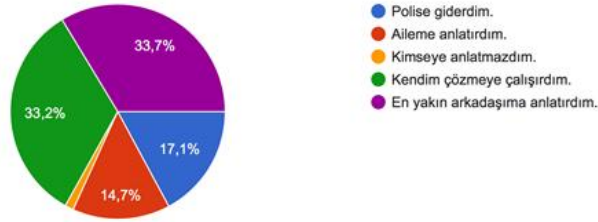
8. Which of these actions can be considered normal during the dating period? (You can select multiple options.)

61.6% of the respondents stated that none of them responded, 22% reacted to night / evening social activities when they were absent, and 17% said that checking the phone frequently could be considered normal during the dating period.



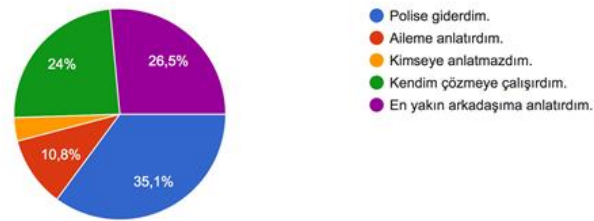
9. If you were exposed to physical dating violence, how would you try to get out of this?

33.7% of the participants would tell my best friend, 33.2% would try to solve it myself, while only 17.1% of the respondents would prefer to go to the police.



10. If you were exposed to sexual violence by your date, how would you try to get rid of it?

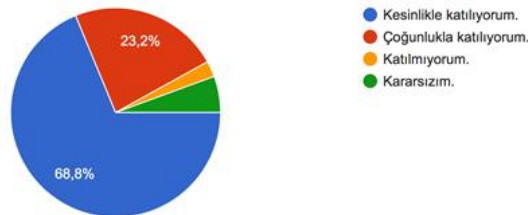
35.1% of the respondents would go to the police and 26.5% would tell their best friend and 24% would try to solve it themselves.



i. Based on the answers given to the questions 9 and 10, it is seen that there is a difference in the viewpoint of physical and sexual violence among the participants. The way participants coped with two forms of violence varies greatly. Although 35% of police responds to sexual violence as a result of physical violence, 17% of police responds to physical violence as a result of the response of the two types of violence reveals that the difference in people.

11. I think that the partner who used violence during the dating period but said he regretted it would also resort to violence in the continuation of the relationship.

68.8% of respondents strongly agree, 23.2% agree mostly, 2.4% disagree.



## 6. CONCLUSION

Although there is no common definition of dating period in the literature, it is seen that the dating period is defined as the period before the period of becoming lover, the period of dearness, engagement and even marriage. 69.5% of the respondents described the dating period as the period before they became lovers only. As it is understood from this, since the awareness of individuals during the dating period is not developed sufficiently, they do not call the types of physical, verbal, sexual and psychological violence experienced in their relationships as a dating violence.

It is seen that while the participants had a high level of awareness about physical and sexual violence, they were unconscious about psychological and verbal violence. In our opinion the reason of this is that although physical and sexual violence have visible consequences, the



consequences of psychological and verbal violence are time-consuming and difficult to see. At the same time, the behaviors that individuals will behave according to the type of violence are shaped differently if they are subjected to violence in connection with the level of awareness that varies according to the types of violence. In fact, 85-90% of the participants stated that they would bring their relationship to the end if they were exposed to physical or sexual violence, but only 43.9% of them stated that they would bring their relationship to the end if they were exposed to verbal violence.

In summary, dating violence is a type of violence that is frequently encountered in daily life and is seen among partners. Recently, its visibility has increased as well as its frequency, but social and individual awareness on this issue is not at the desired level. In our country, where the majority of the population is composed of young people, the first thing to be done is to accept and define the existence of this type of violence. The next step should be to determine the frequency of dating violence and risk factors which are specific to our country. Then, preventive measures should be put into practice considering the risk factors. Legislation in Turkey are prepared on the basis of domestic violence. For this reason, we do not have any law that specifically protect the violence that occurs in a relationship apart from marriage institution. Considering this situation, the legislation should also include rules based on dating violence, and these rules should be reinforced with the correct application.

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