



University Students' Perceptions of Dating Violence and the Relationship between the Victims of Dating Violence and Violence Experiences in Childhood

Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Flört Şiddetine Yönelik Algıları: Flört Şiddeti Mağduriyetleri ile Çocukluk Dönemi Şiddet Deneyimleri Arasındaki İlişki

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UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF DATING VIOLENCE AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VICTIMS OF DATING VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE EXPERIENCES IN CHILDHOOD

ABSTRACT

This study aims at examining the relationship between university students' perceptions of dating violence, their exposure to dating violence, and their early experiences and witnessing violence. The study group of the research consists of 2559 university students, 1651 of whom are female (64.6%) and 908 of whom are male (35.4%) at a university located in the Central Black Sea Region of Turkey. The ages of the students range from 17 to 32 ($x = 22.06$, $Sd = 3.24$). The research data were collected with the Personal Information Form and Attitudes Towards Dating Violence Questionnaire (ATDVQ). While analyzing the data, descriptive statistics and chi-square independence analysis were used. In this study, it was revealed that university students' experiences of dating violence are generally at a high level. On the other hand, it was revealed that female participants have a higher awareness of dating violence. In addition, female participants evaluated the expressions of being forced into sexual intercourse and being treated as a sexual object as dating violence at a higher rate. Another striking result of the study is that university students who were exposed to and witnessed violence in their childhood have more experience of dating violence. This result reveals that being exposed to ill-treatment or witnessing bad life events in childhood has a negative effect on their romantic relationships in their future lives.

Keywords: *Dating Violence, Childhood Violence Experiences, Witnessing Childhood Violence, University Students, Young Adult.*



ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN FLÖRT ŞİDDETİNE YÖNELİK ALGILARI: FLÖRT ŞİDDETİ MAĞDURİYETLERİ İLE ÇOCUKLUK DÖNEMİ ŞİDDET DENEYİMLERİ ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ

ÖZ:

Bu çalışmanın amacı üniversite öğrencilerinin flört şiddetine yönelik algıları, flört şiddetine maruz kalma durumları ve geçmişte şiddete tanık olma durumları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 1651 kadın (%64.6) ve 908 erkek (%35.4) olmak üzere Türkiye'de Orta Karadeniz bölgesinde bulunan bir üniversitede eğitim gören toplamda 2559 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Öğrencile-

rin yaşı 17 ile 32 arasında ($x=22.06$ $ss=3.24$) değişmektedir. Araştırmanın verileri Kişisel Bilgi Formu ve Flört Şiddetine Yönelik Tutum Anketi aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde betimsel istatistik ve Ki-kare bağımsız analizi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucunda üniversite öğrencilerinin flört şiddeti ile ilgili deneyimlerinin yüksek bir oranda olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Diğer yandan kadın katılımcıların flört şiddetine yönelik daha yüksek bir farkındalığa sahip oldukları ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca kadın katılımcıların özellikle cinsel ilişkiye zorlanma ve cinsel bir obje olarak davranılması ifadelerini yüksek oranda flört şiddeti olarak değerlendirmişlerdir. Çalışmanın dikkat çeken bir diğer sonucu da çocukluk dönemlerinde şiddete maruz kalan ya da tanıklık eden katılımcıların flört şiddetiyle ilgili daha fazla deneyime sahip oldukları sonucudur. Bu sonuç, bireylerin çocukluk döneminde kötü muamele maruz kalmaları veya kötü yaşam olaylarına şahit olmaları ileriki yaşamlarındaki romantik ilişkileri üzerinde olumsuz bir etkisi bulunduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Flört Şiddeti, Çocukluktaki Şiddet Deneyimleri, Çocukluk Döneminde Şiddete Tanık Olmak, Üniversite Öğrencileri Genç Yetişkin.



INTRODUCTION

Violence is one of the phenomena that has continued since the existence of humanity and whose cultural and social effects can be clearly observed. The concept of violence emerges as a spiral that includes the perpetrator, the survivor, the mediator, the result, the solution, and the struggle. The World Health Organization (2002) defines violence as actions that cause injury, death, and psychological harm, developmental disorders in the exposed person, group, or community as a result of the deliberate application of physical force to another person group, or community. As it can be understood from this definition, violence is defined mostly as physical acts such as brute force, coercion and threat. However, violence is not only physical, but also has a complex structure including psychological, emotional, sexual, economic, and verbal dimensions (Straus, 2004).

Violence emerges as a situation that can be faced by all groups of age. Violent behaviors or exposure to violent behaviors is more common during young adulthood (Dikmen, et al., 2018). However, the type of violence, called dating violence or close partner violence, has an important place in the mentioned period. Having been investigated since the 1980s, dating violence reveals that violence is not only among married couples (Harned, 2001), and it is the most common type of violence among all individuals in recent years (Kayı, et al., 2000; Lehrer, et al., 2007; Polat, et al. 2006; Türk, et al., 2020), but is frequently encountered among adolescents and young adults (Selçuk, et al., 2018).

Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) define dating violence as all the words, gestures and behaviors that include the use of painful or injurious physical or psychological force and threats against the partner during the relationship. In the guideline on sexual and intimate partner violence against women published by WHO in 2013, dating violence is explained as all kinds of aggressive behaviors that cause physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological damage between partners. The American Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines dating violence as sexual, physical, verbal, and emotional abuse that occurs during a dating relationship (CDC, 2021). As it can be understood from the definitions, dating violence includes strategic, continuous, and control-oriented acts of aggression (Joseph & Kuperminc, 2020). In short, dating violence emerges as an important public health problem (Bonomi, et al., 2012; Reyes, 2016; Türk, et al., 2020;) that causes physical and mental health problems in people who are exposed to it (Ackard, et al., 2007; Exner-Cortens, Gill & Eckenrode, 2016).

The use of painful and injurious physical or psychological force and threats against the partner are included in dating violence (Straus, 2004). These behaviors are sometimes consciously or unconsciously practiced in a relationship and may be perceived as a sign of showing love and can remain hidden. Individuals can sometimes confuse their partners' control over their behavior and harmful jealousy with love. In other words, partners first start to interfere with each other's clothes, the people they meet and the places they go, but then this starts to turn into harassment and violent behaviors by creating power and influence on the partner. Therefore, individuals with low awareness of dating violence are more likely to be exposed to violence. Dating violence can include physical violence as well as psychological, sexual, emotional and verbal violence (CDC, 2021, Gladden, et al., 2014). Studies show that women are more exposed to sexual violence and men are more exposed to emotional violence (Dikmen, et al., 2018), 39% of young people who are in a relationship are exposed to emotional violence (Park & Kim, 2018), and about 25% of them are victims of physical violence during a relationship (Karlsson, et al., 2016). In addition, studies on dating violence show that violence occurs reciprocally and partners involved in a romantic relationship both use violence and are exposed to it (Exner-Cortens, et al., 2016). This indicates that there is a gender-based symmetry in terms of physical and psychological dating violence among individuals in young adulthood (Bonomi, et al., 2012).

Researches on violence reveal that violence is at least as common in premarital relationships as it is during marriage (Çoban, Kızılca-Çakalkoz, Irmak, 2020; Machado, Caridade & Martins 2010; Murray, Wester, Paladino, 2008). In addition, a study by CDC (2021) revealed that dating violence is more common among high school students than expected, and that 26% of female students and 15% of male students are exposed to partner violence before the age of 18. Another survey carried out with high school students in Massachusetts report that 3.8% had sexual

intercourse and 5.3% reported both dating and physical and sexual violence (Temple, et al., 2013). Similarly, it is known that dating violence is common among university students in young adulthood. For example, Açıkgöz, et al. (2018), in their study examining the experiences of dating violence of fifth and sixth grade medical students (n=88), concluded that 15% of the participants who had a dating relationship were exposed to dating violence. In another study conducted on 348 universities, it was revealed that 22% of the students were exposed to dating violence (Çoban, et al., 2020). In a study conducted with 1777 university students, it was observed that 48% of the students were exposed to dating violence (Murray, Wester, & Paladino, 2008). Similarly, in a study carried out with 4,667 people from Portugal, 25.4% of the participants reported that they were exposed to dating violence (Machado, Caridade & Martins, 2010). There are also other studies reporting similar results in the literature (Anderson, et al., 2011; Courtain & Glowacz, 2018; Iftar & Güler, 2020). As can be understood from the research results, it is clear that dating violence is a widespread relationship problem among young people.

Types of dating violence result in a number of negative consequences. Dating violence negatively affects the exposed physically, mentally and emotionally. In addition, in long and short term dating violence causes post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, alcohol, substance use, smoking, eating disorders, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and abortions, somatic and psychosomatic problems, shame, guilt and negative situations such as suicide, outbursts of anger, sadness and decreased self-esteem (Akış, et al., 2019; Bonomi, et al., 2012; Çinal, 2018; Fawson, et al., 2018). On the other hand, problems such as suicidal thoughts, depression and anxiety (Wolfe, et al., 2009), academic problems, substance use, risky sexual behaviors (Banyard & Cross, 2008), physical health problems as well as unplanned pregnancies can occur (Karlsson, et al., 2016) among individuals exposed to dating violence in the literature. As can be seen, it affects individuals who are exposed to dating violence in a negative way in terms of physical, emotional, sexual and psychosocial aspects.

The causes of dating violence are as remarkable as the consequences. Gender inequality is among the primary causes of dating violence. Due to gender-based power inequality, it is stated that men use more violence against women in male-dominated societies (Selçuk, et al., 2018). On the other hand, the fact that individuals are exposed to abuse and neglect during their childhood, and being exposed to violence at school, in the family or in the community increases the risk of dating violence or being exposed to it (Türk, et al., 2020). In addition, starting to engage in date and in sexual activity at an early age, experiencing violence in the past, experiencing domestic violence and the effect of gender roles increase the risk of exposure to dating violence for women; alcohol and substance abuse, inadequate communication skills, exposure to or witnessing interpersonal violence are among the risk factors that increase dating violence for men (Aslani, et al., 2008; Wolfei,

et al., 2009). These results point out that dating violence has become a more severe problem and has made it important to search the related factors. Therefore, this research examines whether there is a relationship between the attitudes of university students' towards dating violence and their gender and the relationships between their victimization of dating violence and their witnessing and being exposed to violence in their childhood. It can be said that the findings of the research can be regarded as important in terms of contributing to understanding the relationship between dating violence and past experiences in childhood and determining the attitudes of university students' towards dating violence. In addition, this research can be beneficial in terms of supporting policy makers in order to prevent dating violence and researchers who examine dating violence as a phenomenon among university students. In accordance with this aim, the research questions above were tested:

H1: Is there a relationship between the attitudes of university students towards dating violence and their gender?

H2: Is there a relationship between the university students' exposure to violence in their childhood and being a victim of dating violence?

H3: Is there a relationship between the university students' witnessing violence in their childhood and being a victim of dating violence?

METHOD

Research Method

This research was designed in a descriptive survey model in order to examine the relationship between the university students' perceptions of dating violence, their victimization of dating violence and their past exposure to and witnessing violence. The descriptive survey model is a research design in which researchers aim to reveal the situation they examine without any intervention (Karasar, 2011). In other words, the descriptive survey model is a research model in which the views, thoughts, attitudes or tendencies of the participants about a subject or event are evaluated and, the results are aimed to be reflected as they are (Büyüköztürk, et al., 2010).

Research Group

The study group of the research consists of 2559 university students, 1651 of whom are female (64.6%) and 908 of whom are male (35.4%) at a university located in the Central Black Sea Region of Turkey. The ages of the students ranged from

17 to 32 ($x = 22.06$, $Sd = 3.24$). More information on the distribution of the study group is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Research Group

Variables	Categories	n	%
Gender	Female	1651	64.6
	Male	908	35.4
Grade Level	1 st grade	710	27.8
	2 nd grade	525	20.5
	3 rd grade	543	21.2
	4 th grade	488	19.1
	5 th grade	181	7.1
	6 th grade	111	4.3
Faculty	Medical School	166	6,5
	Faculty of Science and Literature	412	16,1
	Faculty of Education	401	15,7
	Faculty of Health Sciences	222	8,7
	Faculty of Dentistry	44	1,7
	Faculty of Agriculture	120	4,7
	Faculty of Law	61	2,4
	Faculty of Engineering	350	13,7
	Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	165	6,5
	Faculty of Communication	116	4,5
	Faculty of Veterinary Medicine	52	2,0
	Faculty of Fine Arts	74	2,9
	Faculty of Tourism	27	1,1
	Faculty of Architecture	50	2,0
Faculty of Theology	220	8,6	
Faculty of Sports Science	78	3,0	
Family Type	Nuclear Family	2003	78.3
	Extended Family	78,3	15,4
	Broken Family	160	6.3

Mother Education level	Illiterate	123	4,8
	Primary School	1021	39,9
	Middle School	448	17,5
	High School	583	22,8
	Associate Degree	82	3,2
	Bachelor's Degree	254	9,9
	Graduate	47	1,8
Father Educational Status	Illiterate	22	0,9
	Primary School	660	25,8
	Middle School	442	16,5
	High School	721	28,2
	Associate Degree	352	13,8
	Bachelor's Degree	381	14,9
Mother Working Status	Working	643	25,1
	Not Working	1915	74,9
Father Working Status	Working	1847	72,2
	Not Working	711	27,8
Perceived Income Status	Bad	228	8,9
	Middle	1916	74,9
	Good	414	16,2

DATA COLLECTION TOOL

Personal Information Form

Personal information form was used to obtain information from the participants about their gender, age, faculty, grade level, education level of the parents, family type and, working status of the parents.

Attitudes Towards Dating Violence Questionnaire (ATDVQ)

The measurement tool developed by the researchers to evaluate the violent experiences of university students consists of three parts. The first part, consisting of ten questions, evaluates whether university students were exposed to dating violence or other forms of violence in their past and in their current relationships. The second part, consisting of seven questions, was created to evaluate the attitudes of university students towards behaviors in dating violence. The last part, consisting of sixteen questions, evaluates which of the violent behaviors during dating that university students are exposed to. In order to validate the measurement tool de-

veloped in this research, the form was sent to the experts in the field and the items were edited after the feedback from the experts. The edited form was applied to a small group in order to evaluate the clarity of items in the form. As a result, the validity of the measurement tool was tried to be determined. Moreover, in order to determine the reliability of the data, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated and was found. 89. This result pointed out that the items of the tool have an interrelatedly consistent structure.

Data Collection

The necessary ethics committee (Ondokuz Mayıs University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee Date-Number of Decisions: 28.02.2020-2020/01) permission was obtained before data collection. Then, data collection tools were applied to the participants face to face, and the research was carried out with the individuals who participated in the study voluntarily.

Analysis of Data

The descriptive statistics of the data collected in the study were calculated. On the other hand, Chi-square independence analysis was conducted to examine whether university students' attitudes towards the violent behaviors during dating are related to gender. Similarly, Chi-square independence analysis was conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between university students' witnessing violence in the past or exposure to violence and their experiences of dating violence.

Ethics Committee Approval (There is No Requirement of Ethics Committee Approval for Review Articles)

Ethics committee approval was received for this study from Ondokuz Mayıs University

The Title of The Ethics Committee: Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee

Approval Date: 28.02.2020

Ethics Document's Number: 2020/01

FINDINGS

Findings Related to Experiences of Witnessing, Exposure to and Dating Violence in the Past of University Students

In the study, ten questions were asked to evaluate the violence and dating violence experienced by university students, and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Findings Related to Experiences of Witnessing, Exposure to and Dating Violence in the Past of University Students

Items	Answers	n	%
1.Exposure to Childhood Violence	Yes	681	26.6
	No	1877	73.4
2.Witnessing Childhood Violence	Yes	1177	46
	No	1381	54
3.Presence of Dating Relationship in the Past	Yes	1794	70.1
	No	764	29.9
4.Exposure to Violence in a Dating Relationship in the Past	Yes	223	8.7
	No	2335	91.3
5.The Existence of a Currently Dating Relationship	Yes	1090	42.6
	No	1468	57.4
6.The Duration of the Current Dating Relationship (Month)* (n=1112)	6 months to one year	453	39.1
	more than 1 year	667	60.9
7.Exposure to Psychological Violence in the Current Dating Relationships* (n=1423)	Yes	221	15.5
	No	914	84.5
8. Exposure to Physical Violence in Current Dating Relationship* (n=1132)	Yes	28	2.5
	No	1104	97.5
9.Exposure to Sexual Violence in Current Dating Relationship * (n=1138)	Yes	24	2.1
	No	1114	97.9
10.What is Your Reaction When You Witness Dating Violence Around You?	I do not intervene	372	14.5
	I intervene	1328	51.5
	I inform law enforcement forces.	858	33.5

* Indicates respondents who responded to this item.

As can be seen in Table 2, 26% of the participants were exposed to violence in their childhood, and 46% witnessed violence. It was observed that 8.7% of the participants had experienced dating violence in the past. It was determined that 42% of the participants are currently in a dating relationship, and 15% of them were exposed to psychological violence, 2.5% of them to physically violence and 2.1% of them to sexual violence in their relationships. On the other hand, when the approaches of the participants to the dating violence they will witness around them were examined, it was concluded that 14.5% of them did not intend to intervene, 51.5% of them would intervene directly, and 33.5% of them would prefer to inform the law enforcement officers without intervening.

Findings Related to the Attitudes of University Students Towards the Violent Behaviors in Dating

In the study, seven questions were asked to evaluate the attitudes of university students towards the violent behaviors in dating and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Findings Related to the Attitudes of University Students Towards the Violent Behaviors in Dating

Items	Answers	n	%
1. It is Dating Violence When Your Lover is Extremely Jealous of You.	Yes	770	30.1
	No	1788	69.9
2. It is Dating Violence When Your Lover Asks for the Passwords of Your Social Media Accounts.	Yes	1574	61.5
	No	984	38.5
3. Flirting is Violence When Your Lover Wants to be Aware of Your Every Move During the Day.	Yes	1560	61.0
	No	998	39.0
4. It is Dating Violence When Your Lover Forces You to Have Sex.	Yes	2398	93.7
	No	160	6.3
5. It is Dating Violence When Your Lover Makes Jokes About Sex.	Yes	806	31.5
	No	1752	68.5
6. Dating Violence is When Your Partner Treats You Like a Sexual Object.	Yes	2446	95.6
	No	112	4.4
7. It is Dating Violence That Your Lover Calls You with a Nickname.	Yes	1287	50.3
	No	1271	49.7

As seen in Table 3, 30.1% of the university students consider excessive jealousy as dating violence. Similarly, it was revealed that 61.5% of the university students

consider asking for the passwords of their social media accounts, and 38.5% of them consider being constantly under control as dating violence. Finally, it was concluded that 93% of the university students assume being forced into sexual intercourse and 95.6% of them regard being treated as a sexual object as dating violence.

Findings Related to Victimization of Dating Violence by University Students

In the study, sixteen questions were asked to evaluate what kind of violent behaviors in dating that university students were exposed to, and the findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Findings Related to Victimization of Dating Violence by University Students

Items	Answers	n	%
1. Your Partner is Extremely Jealous of You.	Yes	1064	41.6
	No	1494	58.4
2. Your Partner Wants to Spend All Her/His Time with You.	Yes	981	38.4
	No	1577	61.6
3. Your Partner Gives Attitudes to You.	Yes	1196	46.8
	No	1362	53.2
4. Your Partner Takes Your Money by Using Force.	Yes	628	24.6
	No	1930	75.4
5. Your Partner Makes Jokes About Sex.	Yes	806	31.5
	No	1752	68.5
6. Your Partner Forces You to Have Sex.	Yes	685	26.8
	No	1873	73.2
7. Your partner swears and uses sexually explicit words/phrases.	Yes	826	32.3
	No	1732	67.7
8. Your Partner Constantly Criticizes Everything You Do.	Yes	880	34.4
	No	1678	65.6
9. Your Partner Insults You.	Yes	993	38.8
	No	1565	61.2
10. Your Partner Threats You When S/He is Angry	Yes	812	31.7
	No	1746	68.3

11. Your Partner Throws Things When S/He is Angry.	Yes	782	30.6
	No	1776	69.4
12. Your Partner Slaps When S/He is Angry.	Yes	696	27.2
	No	1862	72.8
13. Your Partner Threatens to Share Your Private Life on Social Media.	Yes	664	26.0
	No	1894	74.0
14. Your Partner Controls Your Social Media Posts.	Yes	1095	42.8
	No	1463	57.2
15. Your Partner Controls You by Calling Constantly.	Yes	789	30.8
	No	1769	69.2
16. Your Partner Checks Your Social Media Posts Without Your Permission.	Yes	882	34.5
	No	1676	65.5

When Table 4 is examined, it can be seen that approximately 30% of the university students are exposed to different types of violent behaviors in dating.

Findings Related to the Relationship Between Witnessing or Exposure to Violence in Childhood of University Students and Their Experiences of Dating Violence

Chi-square independence analysis was conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between university students' witnessing violence in the past or exposure to violence and their experiences of dating violence. The results obtained are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Chi-Square Findings on the Relationship Between Witnessing or Exposure to Violence in Childhood of University Students and Their Experiences of Dating Violence

Experience of Violence in Childhood	Past Experience of Dating Violence						Chi-square Result
	Yes		No		Total		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Exposure to Violence in Childhood							$\chi^2 = 83.527$
Yes	117	17.2	564	82.8	681	26.6	df = 1
No	106	5.6	1171	94.4	1277	73.4	p = .000***
Total	223	8.7	2335	91.3	2558	100	

Witnessing Violence in Childhood							$x^2 = 27.650$ df = 1 p = .000***
Yes	140	11.9	1037	88.1	1117	46.0	
No	83	6.0	1298	94.0	1381	54.0	
Total	223	8.7	2335	91.3	2558	100	

***p<.001

As seen in Table 5, it was found that 17% of university students who were exposed to violence during their childhood had experiences of dating violence, but only 5% of university students who were not exposed to violence during their childhood had experience of dating violence. This result indicates that university students who were exposed to violence during their childhood have higher experiences of dating violence. It was found to be significant in the result of the Chi-square independence test ($x^2 = 83.527$; $df = 1$; $p < .001$). Likewise, 11.9% of university students who witnessed violence in their childhood had experiences of dating violence, but only 6% of university students who did not witness violence during their childhood experienced dating violence. This finding shows that university students who witnessed violence in their childhood have higher experiences of dating violence. It was found to be significant in the result of the Chi-square independence test ($x^2 = 27.650$; $df = 1$; $p < .001$).

Findings Related to the Relationship Between University Students’ Attitudes Towards Dating Violence Behaviors and Their Gender

In the study, Chi-square independence analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between university students’ attitudes towards violent behaviors in dating and their gender, and the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Chi-Square Findings Regarding the Relationship Between University Students’ Attitudes Towards Violent Behaviors in Dating and Their Gender

Dating Violence Behaviors	Attitudes of University Students						Chi-square Result
	Yes, it is dating violence.		No, it is not dating violence.		Total		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Extreme Jealousy							$x^2 = 128.387$ df = 1 p = .000***
Female	623	37.7	1029	62.3	1652	64.6	
Male	147	16.2	759	83.8	906	35.4	
Total	770	30.1	1788	69.9	2558	100	

Requesting Social Media Password							$x^2 = 80.341$ df = 1 p = .000***
Female	1122	67.9	530	32.1	1652	64.6	
Male	452	49.9	454	50.1	906	35.4	
Total	1574	61.5	984	38.5	2558	100	
Being Controlled Constantly							$x^2 = 21.355$ df = 1 p = .000***
Female	1062	64.3	590	35.7	1652	64.6	
Male	498	55	408	45	906	35.4	
Total	1560	61	998	39	2558	100	
Forced Sexual Relationship							$x^2 = 227.414$ df = 1 p = .000***
Female	1637	99.1	15	0.9	1652	64.6	
Male	761	84	145	16	906	35.4	
Total	2398	93.7	160	6.3	2558	100	
Making Sexual Jokes							$x^2 = 286.778$ df = 1 p = .000***
Female	1237	74.9	415	25.1	1652	64.6	
Male	372	41.1	534	58.9	906	35.4	
Total	1609	62.9	949	37.1	2558	100	
Being Treated Like a Sexual Object							$x^2 = 143.701$ df = 1 p = .000*
Female	1639	99.2	13	0.8	1652	64.6	
Male	807	89.1	99	10.9	906	35.4	
Total	2446	95.6	112	4.4	2558	100	
Being Called with Nicknames							$x^2 = 66.780$ df = 1 p = .000*
Female	930	56.3	722	43.7	1652	64.6	
Male	357	39.4	549	60.6	906	35.4	
Total	1287	50.3	1271	49.7	2558	100	

***p<.001

Chi-square independence analysis results in Table 6 show that gender and attitudes towards violent behaviors in dating are not independent of each other. In other words, it can be revealed that women consider extreme jealousy ($x^2 = 128.387$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$), being asked for a social media password ($x^2 = 80.341$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$), being constantly controlled ($x^2 = 21.355$; $df = 1$; $p < .001$), being forced into sexual intercourse ($x^2 = 227.414$; $df = 1$; $p < .001$), making sexual jokes ($x^2 = 286.778$; $df = 1$; $p < .001$), being treated like a sexual object ($x^2 = 143.701$; $df = 1$; $p < .001$) and being nicknamed ($x^2 = 66.780$; $df = 1$; $p < .001$) as dating violence more than men consider.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, university students' perceptions of dating violence, the relationship between their victimization of dating violence and their previous exposure to violence and witnessing violence were examined. The first finding of the study reveals that 8.7% of university students experienced dating violence in the past. In addition, it is determined that 42% of the university students participating in the research are currently in a dating relationship and 15% of these students have been exposed to psychological violence, 2.5% to physical violence and 2.1% to sexual violence. These results indicate that university students are exposed to dating violence at certain times in their lives. There are some other studies in the literature sharing similar results. For example, Açıkgöz, et al. (2018), in their study examining the experiences of dating violence of fifth and sixth grade medical students (n=88), concluded that 15% of the participants who had a relationship were exposed to dating violence. In another study conducted on 348 universities, it was revealed that 22% of students were exposed to dating violence (Çoban, et al., 2020). In a study conducted with 1777 university students, it was observed that 48% of the students were exposed to dating violence (Murray, Wester & Paladino, 2008). Similarly, in a study carried out with people from Portugal, 25.4% of the participants reported that they were exposed to dating violence (Machado, Caridade & Martins, 2010). There are other studies reporting similar results in the literature (Anderson, et al., 2011; Courtain & Glowacz, 2018; Iftar & Güler, 2020). It can be seen that the findings of this research are similar to the research results in the literature. When all these results are evaluated together, it can be stated that university students have a high level of dating violence experiences. It can be thought that the developmental period of university students is effective in terms of this result. The sample group of the research is in the young adulthood period as the developmental period. One of the most important needs of young adulthood is the need for intimacy with the opposite sex (Erikson, 1984). For this reason, it can be thought that university students in young adulthood tend to engage in more dating relationships with the opposite sex in order to meet their need for intimacy, and this is one of the reasons why university students have more dating violence experiences.

According to another finding of the study, it can be seen that 17% of university students who were exposed to violence during childhood had dating violence experiences, but only 5% of university students who were not exposed to violence during childhood had dating violence. This result can be interpreted as university students who were exposed to violence during their childhood are more likely to experience dating violence than other individuals. Similarly, 11.9% of university students who witnessed violence during their childhood experienced dating violence, and only 6% of university students who did not witness violence during their childhood experienced dating violence. According to this result, it can be said

that university students who witnessed violence in their childhood have higher experiences of dating violence. When both findings are evaluated together, it can be stated that individuals who are exposed to or witness violence in childhood are more likely to be exposed to dating violence in adulthood. Similar results can be observed in other studies in the literature. In a study, Sarihan and Yılmaz (2018) concluded that university students' childhood traumas positively predicted their attitudes towards dating violence. On the other hand, in another study conducted on 99 university students, it was concluded that individuals who experienced and witnessed physical violence by their parents during their childhood used more dating violence (Carr and VANdeusen, 2002). In another study conducted on 1012 university students, it was concluded that individuals who use dating violence frequently witness arguments between their parents during their childhood (O'Keefe, 1998). In a study examining the predictors of dating violence in young adulthood, it was revealed that individuals who were neglected and abused in childhood have more experiences of dating violence (Manchikanti Gómez, 2011). In another study, it is stated that negative family experiences in childhood increase the risk of dating violence in adulthood (Kalaitzaki, 2019). In a study examining the relationship between dating violence and past violence experiences of university students, it was concluded that individuals who were exposed to physical, emotional and psychological violence during childhood had higher dating violence experiences (Gover, Kaukinen, & Fox, 2008). There are other studies in the literature reporting that bad experiences during childhood are a significant predictor of being a victim of dating violence and perpetrating dating violence (Afifi, et al., 2017; Dodge Bates & Pettit, 1990; Iftar & Güler, 2020; Kim, et al., 2014; Sims, et al., 2008; Whitfield, et al., 2003). When all these results are evaluated together, it can be said that childhood experiences are quite effective on the dating violence experiences of adult individuals. The statement that childhood traumas affect the future lives of individuals in the literature (Jennings, et al., 2014; Sigelman et al., 1984; Makepeace, 1987; Smith & Williams, 1992) support this result. On the other hand, it can be said that the results of this study coincide with the proposition that the phenomenon of violence is transmitted between generations. Because it is stated in the literature that individuals who are exposed to violence and ill-treatment in childhood behave in a similar way in their later lives and have a higher tendency to commit violence (Bland, et al., 2018; Sarchiapone, et al., 2009; Wilson, et al., 2009). When the results of the research in the literature are considered, it can be interpreted that the violent events experienced or witnessed in childhood have negative effects on the romantic relationships of the individual in his/her later life and increase the possibility of exposure to and application of dating violence.

In the study, the relationship between university students' attitudes towards violent behaviors in dating and the gender as a variable were evaluated with Chi-square independence analysis, and as a result, it was determined that there was a

significant relationship between all dating violence expressions and gender variable. In other words, it can be revealed that women consider extreme jealousy, being asked for a social media password, being constantly controlled, being forced into sexual intercourse, making sexual jokes, being treated like a sexual object and being nicknamed as dating violence more than men. In addition, it was observed that female participants evaluated the expressions of being forced into sexual intercourse and being treated as a sexual object as dating violence at a higher rate. When all these results are evaluated together, it can be said that women's awareness of dating violence is higher than men's and they are more sensitive to dating violence. There are studies reporting similar results in the literature. In a study examining the attitudes of university students towards dating violence, it was found that female participants had higher awareness of dating violence (Karatay, et al. 2018). Similarly, in another study conducted with university students, it was revealed that women evaluated situations such as forced sexual intercourse and physical contact as dating violence more than men (Courtain & Glowacz 2018). It can be stated that these results support the current research findings. On the other hand, it can be thought that the fact that female participants' awareness and sensitivity levels towards dating violence are higher than those of high men may be due to the fact that they are exposed to dating violence more than men. Because, in the studies on dating violence, it is reported that women are exposed to more dating violence (Forke, et al., 2008; Stets & Straus 1990; Straus, 2004). For this reason, it can be stated that it is expected that women who have more experience of dating violence are more sensitive than men in this regard. However, there are also studies in the literature reporting that victimization rates of dating violence do not differ significantly according to the gender variable (Leen, et al., 2013; Marasca & Falck, 2015; Munoz-Rivas, et al., 2009).

In this study, it was revealed that university students' experiences of dating violence are generally at a high level. On the other hand, it was revealed that female participants had higher awareness of dating violence. In addition, female participants evaluated the expressions of being forced into sexual intercourse and being treated as a sexual object as dating violence at a higher rate. Another striking result of the study is that university students who have been exposed to and witnessed violence in their childhood have more experiences of dating violence. This result reveals that being exposed to ill-treatment or witnessing bad life events in childhood has a negative effect on their romantic relationships in their future lives. When all these results are evaluated together, it is revealed that the origins of experiences related to dating violence go back to childhood. These results reveal the fact that university students should be made aware of dating violence. In this way, it can be ensured that university students protect themselves against dating violence and at the same time be more careful about exhibiting dating violence.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although important findings were obtained regarding the attitudes of university students towards dating violence, this study has some limitations. This study was carried out only on data obtained from 2559 students at a university in Turkey. Therefore, generalizing research results to individuals in other cultures is a significant matter to be considered. In another study to be conducted in the future, more generalizable results can be obtained on dating violence by creating a sample group consisting of university students living in different cultures. In addition, survey questions developed by the researchers were used in this study. For this reason, a more comprehensive quantitative study can be conducted to examine the factors affecting dating violence by using measurement tools whose validity and reliability could be tested in future studies. On the other hand, the current research findings and other studies in the literature point out that university students have more experiences of dating violence. A qualitative research can be designed to examine the reasons for this situation in depth. In addition, an experimental study can be carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of this program by developing a psycho-educational program for coping with dating violence for university students. Finally, another study can be conducted to examine the developmental factors that affect the high level of dating violence experiences of university students.

Author Contributions:

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