

THE VIEWPOINT OF A GROUP OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN*

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Abstract:

The aim of this the study was to determine the viewpoint of Turkish university students on violence against women. The research is of definitive nature, and the population of the research has been composed of Adnan Menderes University Aydin School of Health Services students. 365 individuals have been sampled. The data for the study have been collected from 16/02/2011 to 04/03/2011. As the instrument for data collection, a data collection form, prepared by the researchers in line with literature, composed of 53 questions related to violence against women has been used. It was found that there are some differences between the opinions of female and male students on violence against women.

Key-words: *violence against women, violence in Turkey*

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Introduction

Violence is an increasing and important community health problem that can be seen in any area of human life. Domestic violence is defined as “a pattern of coercive behaviour designed to exert power and control over a person in an intimate relationship though the use of intimidating, threatening, harmful or harassing behaviour” [8]. Based on the source and modes of exerting violence, it is possible to make various classifications such as physical, psychological, sexual and economic. In our day, violence incidents are escalating without any limits. Violence is a significant social health problem arising in all societies and socio-economic groups, without any differentiation depending on the level of education.

In the report issued by the World Health Organization in 2002, it is noted that the highest rate of violence is observed in the family environment and against women [5,9]. Violence against women is a condition that occurs throughout the whole world and all cultures, regardless of geographical boundaries, economic development and level of education [4, 10]. In researches made in developed countries, it has been determined that 1/3 to 2/3 of the women are faced with violence by their spouses [1, 2, 3]. In developing countries, this

rate is approximately 20–50% [3, 7]. In the 2008 research of the T.R. Prime Ministry General Directorate, on the Status of Women on Domestic Violence against Women, among women of 15-59 years of age in 51 provinces, it is reported that the probability of women being faced with physical violence at any time in their lives is 39%, and probability of sexual violence is 15% [6]. Determining the levels of experience of violence, identifying the perceptions and viewpoints on violence in different segments of the society will serve as a guide in the preparation of programs for the prevention of violence.

Examining the meanings of the roles assigned to women and men in the society for university students shall be quite meaningful in revealing the opinions of students, at universities aiming to raise enlightened individuals, on social gender equality. Moreover, by identifying the opinions of the youth on social gender equality, the opinions of the future generation on social gender equality may be shaped in an egalitarian manner.

This research has been carried out to determine the viewpoints of the students studying at the Aydin School of Health Services.

Instrument-Method

The research is of definitive nature, and the population of the research has been composed of Aydin School of Health Services students. 365 individuals have been sampled. The data for the study have been collected from 16/02/2011 to 04/03/2011. As the instrument for data collection, a data collection form, prepared by the researchers in line with literature, composed of 53 questions related to violence against women has been used. The participants in the study have been adequately informed and their verbal consents have been received. The analyses of the data have been evaluated on the SPSS 15.0 computer statistics software, and percentiles have been used in the analyses.

Findings

In the study group, majority of which is composed of female students, the age average is 20.82 ± 1.17 (range=18-29). It has been determined the mothers of more than half of the students, and the fathers of 41.1% are primary school graduates. The fathers of nearly all of the students and more than three fourths of the mothers have a job. 89% of the students are expressing that the highest income to the family is provided by their fathers. 69% of the students have identified the economic levels of their families as equalized income and expenses. While half of the students are identifying their families as protective, one third is identifying them as democratic. 36.7% of the students are from families of at least two children. Half of the students are residing at the dormitory and again half of them are expressing that their income is adequate. While one in every five students are stating that they smoke, one in every ten students are noting that they smoke every day. Nearly three fourths of the students are not consuming alcohol.

11.9% of the students are stating that they have experienced violence by their fathers at any point of their lives, while 24% have experienced this by their mothers. 13.8% of the students have expressed that they have witnessed violence against their mothers at their homes.

Nearly all of the female students and half of the male students are noting that violence cannot be justified. While more than three

fourths of the female students state that parents should not use violence against their children under any circumstances, nearly three fourths of the male students are expressing that parents may beat their children if necessary. Nearly all of the students are supportive of court penalties for violence and nearly all are stating that violence against women may be prevented. Four fifths of the students are stating that they support the establishment of shelters by the taxes they pay.

While 95.4% of the female students believe that the chores at home should be shared equally by the spouses, 93.2% of the male students agree on this. 88.7% of the female students agree that women should be able to work at any job they wish outside the home, while 52.6% of the male students share this opinion. 83.8% of the female students believe that women should be able to spend their money as they choose, 44.7% of the male students do not agree on this. While 92.7% of the female students agree that girls should be sent to school for at least 8 years, 76.3% of the male students support this. Three fourths of the students are stating that women should ask for permission from their spouses when visiting neighbors-friends during the day, 57.5% believe that this is necessary when visiting their families in the same town, 80.8% when visiting their families at another town, 55% when going shopping, 66.3% when going to the movies or the theater and 88.2% when going to another village or town.

Conclusion

11.9% of the students are stating that they have experienced violence by their fathers at any point of their lives, while 24% by their mothers.

13.8% of the students have expressed that they have witnessed violence against their mothers at their homes.

While nearly all of the female students do not approve violence, nearly half of the male students approve violence.

While three fourths of the female students do not approve domestic violence, the same amounts of male students approve domestic violence.

While nearly all of the female students agree that women should be able to work at any

job they wish outside the home, only half of the male students support this idea.

Four fifths of the female students believe that women should be able to spend their money as they choose, half of the male students agree with this idea.

While nearly all of the female students agree that girls should be sent to school for at least 8 years, three fourths of the male students support this.

A large majority of the students defend that women should ask for permission from their spouses under all circumstances.

Recommendations

Based on these results, it has been concluded that students' awareness should be raised on the definition of violence and circumstances of violence and that they should be oriented to consultancy services.

Seminars should be organized especially for male students on violence against women and on equality of women and men.

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