

A Mixed Method Study on Dating Violence Attitudes and Experiences in Emerging Adulthood

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate to what extent the attitudes towards dating violence in emerging adulthood differ according to gender, perceived parental violence type, and dating violence experiences, conform with the sense-making of emerging adults towards dating violence encounters. Convergent parallel pattern which is one of the mixed method patterns was used in the study. In the quantitative section of the study, 564 emerging adults (298 female-266 male) were reached by convenience sampling method. In the qualitative section of the study, however, there were four female and two male participants who were reached by purposive sampling method. Additionally, in the study, Attitude Towards Dating Violence Scales, Personal Information Forms and Semi-Structured Interview Forms were used. While t-test and one-way analysis of variance ANOVA were used for independent variables in the quantitative section of the research, content analysis was utilized in the qualitative section. According to the results of the study, physical and psychological dating violence attitude scores of males and females who perpetrated violence showed significant differences according to gender. On the other hand, according to the history of dating violence, the attitude scores towards the physical dating violence perpetrated by females differed significantly. According to the perceived parental violence, it was observed that the difference between the mean scores in the attitude scores towards the physical dating violence perpetrated by males was higher in those without a history of parental violence. Self-reflection, views of dating violence/sense-making and reactions to dating violence themes of qualitative section findings were also found to be consistent with quantitative findings.

Keywords: Emerging Adulthood, Dating Violence, Parental Violence, Mixed Method

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Introduction

During emerging adulthood which occurs between the periods of adolescence and adulthood (approximately between the ages of 18-29) and is considered as a new developmental period (Arnett, 2000), dating violence happens to be one of the most frequently encountered problems (Lohman, Neppel, Senia and Schofield, 2013). Individuals decide which particulars are acceptable or unacceptable in their relationships in this period (Arnett, 2000). Dating violence is also deliberated as one of these particulars (Halpern-Meekin, Manning, Giordano and Longmore, 2013). This rate varies between 23-38% among emerging adults (Straus, 2004; Quinlann, 2011). When dating violence incident rates encountered in Turkey are observed, with the rate of 18-34%, university students appears to be placed on the top (Yüksel, Engin and Turgut, 2014). This variability is due to the uncertainty in definitions concerning dating violence and the silence of most individuals because of feeling shame, guilt and fear (Quinlann, 2011). Also, the most common type of violence in dating violence is psychological and is generally not perceived to be harmful. It is rather regarded as a normal situation in romantic relationships (Lazarevich, Irigoyen-Camacho, Velazquez-Alva, and Salinas-Avila, 2016).

When looking at the status of dating violence perpetration in gender basis, it is observed that both sexes are perpetrating dating violence to each other (Sugarman and Hotaling, 1989). Due to the fact that physical strength of men is greater than of women, females are more exposed to physical dating violence, and in fact, this is often accompanied by different forms of sexual violence as well (Phelan, Hamberger, Guse and Edwards, 2005). According to a study conducted in Turkey, attitude scores of males towards perpetrating both psychological and physical violence during dating are higher than of females (Sezer, 2008; Yumuşak, 2013). The differentiation of the social roles attributed to women and men also brings together with it risk factors, especially in regards to physical and psychological violence (Carney and Barner, 2012; Rosen and Bezold, 1996; Tarı Selçuk, Avcı and Mercan, 2018). Other factors, together with social gender, also become determinants of psychological and physical dating violence. Parental violence is one of the variables that are effective in exposure to or perpetration of dating violence. Many children encounter violence from their parents at home (Castagnola, 2011). Violence within the family is also considered as negative communication patterns, causing the child who is exposed to violence to be at risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence in romantic relationships during the emerging adulthood period (Ehrensaft et al., 2003). For the fact that violence is a learnable behavior, the problem-solving method of a child who grows up in a family where there is violence in family communication patterns, happens to become also violence (Marshall and Rose, 1988).

The hostility between parents and adolescent during the period of adolescence (Shek, 2005) may result in violence perpetrations in individuals' emotional relationships. In summary, perceived

parental violence is also associated with dating violence. In Turkey, however, dating violence is focused more on to individual factors, and explored in the contexts of mood state, prevalence (Cinal, 2018; Kütük, Gümüştas and Almiş, 2018; Yüksel, Engin and Turgut, 2014), and cultural impact (Selçuk, Avcı and Mercan, 2018; Yumuşak, 2013). In research conducted recently, in addition to the acceptance of dating violence by university students being discussed in the context of demographic variables (such as gender, age, parental education status), it is also tackled in the focus of gender roles, relationship beliefs, perception of the dating violence and childhood violence history (Ayyıldız and Taylan, 2018; Fidan and Yeşil, 2018; Gündoğdu, Yavuzer and Karataş, 2018; Sezer and Sumbaş, 2018). As a result of these studies, it was observed that the acceptance levels of violence towards dating violence were higher in males (Karataş, Yavuzer, and Gündoğdu, 2019; Sezer and Sumbaş, 2018), that in this, gender roles were determinant, and witnessing violence in their pasts was effective in their views and encounters of violence (Ayyıldız and Taylan, 2018), that university youth are in the tendency to normalize and conventionalize violence (Fidan and Yeşil, 2018), and that the realism of their romantic relationship beliefs is related to violence (Gündoğdu, Yavuzer and Karataş, 2018).

As for this study, whether or not physical and psychological dating violence attitudes differ according to the variables such as gender, dating violence experiences and perceived parental violence type and status will be examined. Both the attitudes of the emerging adults towards dating violence and their experiences and encounters of dating violence will be examined by combining quantitative and qualitative data. In this study, scale data will be used to examine the attitudes towards dating violence by gender, the difference between perceived parental violence and dating violence history. At the same time, the dating violence experiences and meanings of the emerging adults in the study are explored through semi-structured interviews. The reason for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data is to compare the results converged from two different approaches.

Method

Research Pattern

The choice of a mixed method is effective because it can compensate for the weaknesses of either the qualitative and/or the quantitative research. While the subject matter of the research is discussed in depth with the qualitative dimension, it can be possible to make more comprehensive assessments with the quantitative one (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011). In this study as well, revealing what dating violence means in various aspects was aimed. Since quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously, but analyzed separately, one of the mixed method types, convergent parallel pattern was used. As a result, a whole understanding is developed by comparing or correlating whether or not the findings confirm each other (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011).

Sample Group

The quantitative dimension of the study consists of students in their emerging adulthood period (19-26 years) who were studying in the Faculty of Education in a major city in the 2017-2018 academic year. The quantitative section of the study consists of 564 (298 female-266 male) emerging adults. In order to reach the sample, one of the non-random sampling methods, which is convenience sampling method, was used. When the general characteristics of the individuals reached in the quantitative section of the research are observed;

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Emerging Adults

	Variable	f	%
Gender	Female	298	52,8
	Male	266	47,2
Dating Status	Yes	177	31,4
	No	387	68,6
Dating Violence Experience	Yes	127	22,5
	No	437	77,5
Dating Violence Against Partner	Yes	65	11,5
	No	499	88,5
Parental Violence Experience	Physical	41	7,3
	Psychological	141	25
	None	312	55,3
	Both Physical and Psychological	70	12,5

In the qualitative section of the study on the other hand, criterion sampling method, which is included in the purposive sampling method, one of the non-random sampling methods, was used. Participants are selected on the basis of whether or not they meet the criteria set by the researcher (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). Among the research criteria are; emerging adults who are continuing their education at the Faculty of Education should have at least one romantic relationship experience, should have encountered dating violence previously, should be living away from their parents, and should be at the middle or upper socio-economic level. They were not included in the study; if the experience of dating violence and romantic relationship was not during their emerging adulthood periods, if they were married, divorced or engaged, if they spend more time staying with their parents, or if they were not an active student at the university. These benchmarks were determined by taking the emerging adulthood criteria in the body of literature and the subject of the study into consideration. In line with these criteria, face-to-face interviews were conducted with six people (four females-two males) who met the criteria from nine emerging adults who volunteered to participate in the study. Sample size (six participants) provides the expected average value of five people (Başkale, 2016) due to key information interviews conducted in parallel with quantitative data. Whether or not the criteria were met was determined according to the declarations of the participants. When the characteristics of

the participants in the qualitative section of the research are evaluated in general, it was found out that a female and a male participant were having an ongoing relationship during the interviews and psychological dating violence had been experienced or was still being experienced. One female and two male participants on the other hand, both experienced and perpetrated dating violence in their past relationships. Two female participants who had experienced dating violence in the past had felt the need to receive psychological support. As well as the intense psychological dating violence encountered, it is observed that they had also experienced sexual and physical violence. Those participants in mention were reached through announcements about the qualitative section of the research while the scale applications were being made during the application made for the quantitative section of the research in the classrooms of the Faculty of Education. After the announcements, participants who met the criteria and volunteered to participate in the study were identified. Interviews were conducted with participants who were informed verbally about the content and confidentiality of the research where voice recordings were taken.

Data Collection Tools

In the qualitative section of this research applied with a mixed method, semi-structured interview questions prepared by the researchers were used for which expert opinions were obtained. Among the focus points during the interviews were; how they defined dating violence and how they made sense of their experiences, the effects of these experiences on the person, making-sense by gender, familial and environmental impacts, coping methods with dating violence, priorities in the relationship, and areas where they developed awareness as a result of these experiences. The scope and the content of questions aim at addressing the individual's life and beliefs in the context of partner, family and culture at the same time. Qualitative interviews made by a researcher working at the university who was familiar to the participants in general were conducted in the researcher's office at the university. Prior to the start of the interviews, participants were individually informed about the research process and confidentiality. The relevant permissions were obtained orally from the participants. The length of the interviews was approximately 30 minutes, depending on sharing willingness of participants. When interview records of the six participants were transcribed for each participant number of pages ranged from 3-5 pages.

Before the interviews, participants in the qualitative section has filled *Attitude Towards Dating Violence Scales* (Yumuşak and Şahin, 2014), developed by Price, Byers and Dating Violence Research Team (1999) for sexual, physical and psychological violence attitudes of women and men. 5-point Likert-type scale consists of four sections, these are; *Attitudes Towards Male Physical Dating Violence Scale* (12 items), *Attitudes Towards Male Psychological Dating Violence Scale* (15 items), *Attitudes Towards Female Physical Dating Violence Scale* (12 items), and *Attitudes Towards Female*

Psychological Dating Violence Scale (11 items). In this study, reliability values were found to be .82, .82, .84 and .86 respectively.

Personal Information Form developed by the researchers, participants were asked about their age, gender, department and year they studied, whether or not they were presently involved in a romantic relationship, whether or not they have experienced or perpetrated dating violence in the past or present themselves. In order to find out the history of violence in the family and childhood, participants were asked to state the circumstance and type of violence encountered between their parents, and the circumstance and type of violence they experienced from their parents in childhood (psychological, physical, none, or both physical and psychological).

Analysis of the Data

The content and sentimental direction analyzes conducted separately by the two researchers were compared, and the categories obtained were finalized. In sentimental direction analysis, parallel to the categorical analysis, an idea about direction and trend was tried to be obtained as well (Tavşancıl and Aslan, 2001). For reliability condition is believed to be established as a result of one of the researchers working at the university where the emerging adults were reached, as well as that particular researcher being in the same environment and living in the same culture. At the same time, the consistency between the encoders of the qualitative analyzes conducted by the researchers in the study was calculated as 92%. Purposeful sampling and inclusion/exclusion criteria and the general framework for the participants provide external validity in the research as well. In the qualitative section of this study, where qualitative and quantitative data collection and data analysis were conducted concurrently, descriptive research pattern was used, whereas for the independent variables, t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were utilized. According to the attitude towards dating violence scores which are the independent variables of the study, gender (female-male), whether or not there is a significant difference according to the dating violence (dating violence experienced-not experienced) and parental violence (physical-psychological-both physical and psychological-none) history was analyzed with SPSS 22 package program over the data obtained. The significance of the findings was interpreted with reference to .05 significance level.

Results

Quantitative Data Analysis Findings

Table 2. T-Test Results of Attitudes Towards Psychological and Physical Violence Perpetrated by Males and/or Females of Emerging Adults, by Gender

Dependent Variable	Gender	N	X	ss	sd	t	p
Psychological Violence Perpetrated by Males on Dating	Female	298	24,9128	7,51	508.9	-9,931	,000*
	Male	266	32,0414	9,32			
Physical Violence Perpetrated by Males on Dating	Female	298	17,2248	5,98	469.3	-7,843	,000*
	Male	266	22,1316	8,50			
Psychological Violence Perpetrated by Females on Dating	Female	298	18,6980	6,71	562	-5,454	,000*
	Male	266	21,9023	7,25			
Physical Violence Perpetrated by Females on Dating	Female	298	20,3758	7,29	562	-2,992	0,003*
	Male	266	22,2519	7,59			

p<0.05*

The homogeneity of the variances of the two distributions was tested by Levene's test, and as a result, the variance of the physical dating violence ($L = 1,048$; $p > .05$) and the variance of the psychological dating violence ($L = .798$; $p > .05$) perpetrated by the female were found to be homogeneous. According to the gender variable among emerging adults, it was seen that there was a significant difference between the attitude scores towards the physical dating violence perpetrated by the male ($t = -9,931$; $p > .05$). It is observed that there were significant differences between male attitudes scores towards psychological dating violence perpetrated by the male according to gender ($t = -7,843$; $p > .05$). Significant differences were found between the attitudes towards physical dating violence perpetrated by the female according to gender ($t = -5,454$; $p > .05$). Significant differences were found between the attitudes towards psychological dating violence perpetrated by the female according to gender ($t = -2,992$; $p > .05$). According to these results, in all attitude scores, male emerging adults received higher attitude scores.

Table 3. T-Test Results of Attitudes Towards Psychological and Physical Violence Perpetrated by Males and/or Females of Emerging Adults According to Dating Violence Experiences

Dating Violence Experience		N	X	S	sd	t	p
Psychological Violence Perpetrated by Males on Dating	Yes	207	27,6329	9,33	562	-1,273	0,204
	No	357	28,6471	9,00			
Physical Violence Perpetrated by Males on Dating	Yes	207	19,2126	8,04	562	-0,769	0,442
	No	357	19,7283	7,46			
Psychological Violence Perpetrated by Females on Dating	Yes	207	19,7005	7,05	562	-1,289	0,198
	No	357	20,5042	7,19			

Physical Violence Perpetrated by Females on Dating	Yes	207	19,7198	7,03	562	-3,766	,000*
	No	357	22,1541	7,61			

p<0.05*

The homogeneity of the variances of the two distributions was tested by Levene's test, and as a result, the variance of the physical dating violence perpetrated by the male ($L = ,52$; $p > .05$), the variance of the psychological dating violence ($L = ,784$; $p > .05$) perpetrated by the male and the variance of the physical dating violence ($L = 2,241$; $p > .05$) perpetrated by the female were found to be homogeneous. According to the dating violence experience variable among emerging adults, it was seen that there was a significant difference between the attitude scores towards the physical dating violence perpetrated by the female ($t = -3,766$; $p > .05$). According to this result, acceptance levels of emerging adults without a dating violence experience are higher towards psychological dating violence perpetrated by the female.

Table 4. Average and Standard Deviation Values of Attitudes Towards Psychological and Physical Violence Perpetrated by Males and/or Females of Emerging Adults According to Parental Violence Experience Conditions

	Parental Violence	N	X	SS
Psychological Violence Perpetrated by Males on Dating	Physical	41	25,8537	8,54
	Psychological	141	26,4610	7,86
	N/A	312	29,4167	9,75
	Physical and Psychological	70	28,2571	8,15
Physical Violence Perpetrated by Males on Dating	Physical	41	20,5610	10,12
	Psychological	141	17,5816	5,81
	N/A	312	20,2115	7,93
	Physical and Psychological	70	19,8857	7,66
Psychological Violence Perpetrated by Females on Dating	Physical	41	18,9024	6,50
	Psychological	141	18,9220	6,19
	N/A	312	20,6987	7,58
	Physical and Psychological	70	21,3857	6,94
Physical Violence Perpetrated by Females on Dating	Physical	41	18,9024	6,03
	Psychological	141	19,4184	6,97
	N/A	312	22,1090	7,50
	Physical and Psychological	70	22,57	7,49

p<0.05*

Table 5. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Attitudes Towards Psychological and Physical Violence Perpetrated by Males and/or Females of Emerging Adults According to Parental Violence Experience Conditions

	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Quadratic Mean	F	p
Psychological Violence Perpetrated by Males on Dating	Between-groups	1111,040	3	370,347	4,53	0,004*
	In-groups	45759,362	560	81,713	2	
	Total	46870,402	563			
Physical Violence Perpetrated by Males on Dating	Between-groups	732,608	3	244,203	4,22	0,006*
	In-groups	32401,534	560	57,860	1	
	Total	33134,142	563			
Psychological Violence Perpetrated by Females on Dating	Between-groups	475,295	3	158,432	3,14	0,025*
	In-groups	28234,017	560	50,418	2	
	Total	28709,312	563			
Physical Violence Perpetrated by Females on Dating	Between-groups	1051,327	3	350,442	6,43	,000*
	In-groups	30495,360	560	54,456	5	
	Total	31546,686	563			

As a result of the analysis, according to conditions of emerging adults who have not experienced parental violence, physical, but who have experienced physical, psychological and both physical and psychological dating violence, their attitude scores towards physical dating violence perpetrated by the male ($F= 4,532$; $p>.05$), attitude scores towards psychological dating violence perpetrated by the male ($F= 4,221$; $p>.05$), attitude scores towards physical dating violence perpetrated by the female ($F= 3,142$; $p>.05$), attitude scores towards psychological dating violence perpetrated by the female ($F= 6,435$; $p>.05$) differ significantly. According to these results, the difference between the attitude score averages towards physical dating violence perpetrated by the male is higher in those who have not experienced parental violence. Although the difference between the level of acceptance of psychological dating violence perpetrated by the male is higher in those who have experienced physical parental violence, there is a close average in those who have experienced both physical and psychological parental violence and who have not experienced parental violence. Although the difference between the attitude scores towards physical dating violence perpetrated by the female is higher in both those who have experienced physical and psychological parental violence, there is also a close average in those who did not experience parental violence. The difference between attitude scores towards psychological dating violence perpetrated by the female is higher in those who have experienced both physical and psychological parental violence and those who have not experienced parental violence.

Qualitative Data Analysis Findings

As a result of interviews themes are self-reflection, views on dating violence/sense-making and reactions to the dating violence. The structures within each theme and the prominent structures on the other hand, are identified as sub-themes.

Table 6. Dating Violence Themes

Theme 1. Self-Reflection: Reflection of Personal Conflicts; Violation of Personal Boundaries; Lack of Establishing Boundaries

Theme 2. View on Dating Violence/Sense-Making: Normalization; Regarding as a Display of Affection; Reflection of Social Gender Perceptions; Contextual Approach

Theme 3. Reactions to the Dating Violence: Perpetrating What Has Been Perpetrated; Passive Coping; Shifting Focus; Receiving Support; Receiving Support

Theme 1. Self-Reflection

Personal perceptions finding themselves a place in romantic relationships also affects how the relationships are experienced in return. Finding a place in individual's adaptation to the relationship and relationship satisfaction, *self-reflection* manifests itself as *reflection of personal conflicts*, *personal boundary violation* and *lack of establishing boundaries*. The sub-theme of *reflection of personal conflicts* is the tendency of persons to carry over their existing personal and/or relational conflicts, which they have experienced in their past lives and have difficulty resolving within themselves, to their existing relationships. “*Our biggest problem is not being honest to ourselves. Because one is always afraid to face one's self and reflects this as violence to the outer world.*” (I-1). Another sub-theme is a *violation of personal boundaries*. There is a high tendency for individuals to find it difficult to distinguish between their individual freedoms and their common spaces in the relationship, and to consider over-involvement in each other's private areas as a necessity of relationship. “*I was very annoyed at not being able to act freely.*” (I-3). The last sub-theme is the *lack of establishing boundaries*. In dating violence encounters, and in the tendency to partner with people who also possess this tendency, lies the effect of the weakness of individuals in establishing boundaries and maintaining them in a stable way. As these individuals generally do not have much experience of what it is like to create a border, this situation is usually left more to the preference of person whom they partner with. It can also bring complications in demanding the termination of the relationship in later stages. “*After a while, this formed a habit in me; like, I couldn't do anything without telling her.*” (I-6).

Theme 2. View on Dating Violence/Sense-Making

The second theme that emerged, *view on dating violence/sense-making*, coupled with the effect of self-reflection, manifests itself in past relationship experiences, family experiences, and environmental influences. As the sub-themes of the theme of view on dating violence/sense-making, which is effective in the way relationships are experienced and ended and found itself a place in these areas, *normalization*, *regarding it as a display of affection*, *reflection of the social gender perceptions* and *contextual approach* are reached. In some of the emerging adults, tendency to *normalize* dating violence was observed. There is a tendency to view both experienced and perpetrated dating violence as a general characteristic of the relationship that would have occurred in every relationship rather than a form of violence. As a matter of fact, this point of view can also lead to the continuation of

dating violence sometimes increasing in magnitude. *“At first I didn't know this was violence. Normally, when I went somewhere, I needed to call him right away.”* (I-6). Another sub-theme comes out to be *regarding dating violence as a display of affection*. It is observed that physical violence was regarded more as violence, but when psychological violence manifested itself in situations such as oppression, intervention and restrictions, it was not perceived as a type of violence. Constraints such as the interfering with the clothes worn, places visited and the people met and persistence were regarded as a display of affection and interest between the partners. This right to intervene, given by one or both of the partners to the other, may find itself a far-reaching place in time. Another sub-theme is the reflection of *social gender perception*. Together with the influence of the geography and culture lived in, gender roles also manifest themselves. The perception formed together with gender roles determines the boundaries drawn for the women and man and the power distribution in the relationship, and this situation may lead to disadvantages and greater exposure to dating violence for the women. *“His mom keeps telling him when you get married, she won't listen to you, she will be headstrong, it will be hard to maintain a relationship with someone who works.”* (I-3). The last sub-theme is *contextual approach*. In this sub-theme where there is a relative perspective of dating violence, depending on the circumstances and conditions, what are experienced are or are not described as dating violence. *“There is also this situation, if the perpetrator was a lady and she was inflicting physical violence, I certainly would not have hit her. But I can easily hit a man.”* (I-1).

Theme 3. Reactions to Dating Violence

Emerging adults who had dating violence experiences have a number of coping methods and reactions that they develop during or after the process. *Perpetrating what has been perpetrated, passive coping, shifting focus, receiving support and justification* sub-themes of the *reactions to dating violence* theme was reached. For the individuals, transferring dating violence they had experienced in their relationships to their later relationship as learning may sometimes come into question. In such cases, the individual who had experienced dating violence, at the same time, switch to being the perpetrator of dating violence. *“Pressure was in the sort of don't see that person, don't meet with this person, I caught this, let me not see this again. I was doing it too. It was mutual.”* (I-2). Another sub-theme is the *passive coping* theme. When living with dating violence begins to be difficult, or when it starts to feel uncomfortable, and in case if they continue to remain in the relationship, they can choose to ignore the situation or resort to long-term and ineffective coping methods. *“I tried to be quiet in the beginning, and I said if I kept quiet, if I remained silent he would give up after a while.”* (I-6). Individuals experiencing dating violence to begin confronting this reality, may not necessarily bring the skills to cope effectively and to manage the process with it. In such cases, individuals prefer to *shift their focus* by gravitating towards other things. *“Actually, I gave up everything, including school, my family life, and I even drank for a while.”* (I-1). With the help of receiving support, which is an important source in ending the dating violence experienced, individuals realize that they cannot

sufficiently cope with the situation alone and turn to their circles as a source of empowerment. The sources of support may be friends and family of the individual or experts. “*I’ve been waiting for a savior outright, and I wished something to happen so that he would break up with me. Because I couldn’t break up myself, at least he should give up here and now, how it happens doesn’t matter at all.*” (I-6). The last sub-theme in this theme is *justification*. Individuals experiencing or perpetrating dating violence may harbor a tendency to palliate this experience. There comes a perception into question for the individual that experiencing or perpetrating dating violence has justified reasons and is therefore encountered. “*When I was thinking about it, I was wondering if I really was like that, cause he was telling me I wasn’t honest. I wondered if I wasn’t really honest.*” (I-6).

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

It appears possible for individuals who can communicate in the family to establish good relations with their partners and resolve relationship conflicts. Conversely, the lack of open and direct communication between individuals when individuality in the family diminishes can lead to the violation of personal boundaries, and thus, this situation is interpreted as the disappearance of individual boundaries (Becvar and Becvar, 2006). Thus, the ability of individuals who grow up in this environment to create boundaries and respect existing boundaries may remain weak (Özgüven, 2001). Weakness of the boundaries of the relationship and condonation of violence increases the risk of dating violence in emerging adulthood periods of both men and women (Woodin, Caldeira and O’Leary, 2013).

When attitudes towards dating violence are examined, it is seen that the acceptance level of attitudes towards physical and psychological dating violence perpetrated by the male and female is higher among men. These findings are consistent with other research findings (e.g. Ayyıldız and Taylan, 2018; Sezer, 2008) conducted in Turkey. When considering the fact that men show greater acceptance for different types of dating violence, regardless of gender, primarily the aspect of taking pride for being a man in the masculine perspective that is supported by the culture and which comes with the patriarchal structure plays a role. Women, on the other hand, are in a more passive position and keep in the background. Therefore, in this equation, the violent behavior of men is endorsed (Yavuzer, Karataş, and Gündoğdu, 2013). When evaluated in conjunction with qualitative findings, in addition to the *reflection of social gender perception* sub-theme, due to the fact that violent behaviors exhibited in the relationship (jealousy, repression, etc.) are at the same time regarded as a *display of affection*, it may not be interpreted as a negative situation. On the other hand, men’s acceptance of the type of physical and psychological violence perpetrated by the female more, leads to the sub-themes of *contextual perception* and *normalization* in qualitative findings. When the person himself/herself is not the party experiencing violence, he/she can regard the violence stance exhibited by the female as a method of retaliation and coping. Dating violence becomes *normalized* as after a while it causes the

couples to perpetrate violence to each other mutually and leads to the perspective of *perpetrating what has been perpetrated* on to them. Although the level of acceptance of the men towards the type of physical and psychological violence perpetrated by women is high, the proportion of women exposed to both psychological and physical violence is higher (Harned, 2001). However, it seems the violence perpetrated by the men on to the women is considered less acceptable than the violence perpetrated by the women on to the men (Bookwala, Frieze, Smith and Ryan, 1992). It is contemplated here that social preferability may also be interceded at the same time. Since statements endorsing the violence perpetrated by men may create a negative perception, the level of acceptance appeared high towards the violent behaviors exhibited by the women. Yet another reason is that some individuals use violence as a defense mechanism and consider it as a manipulation or problem-solving strategy (Lewis and Fremouw, 2001). It is possible to see this situation, again in the qualitative findings, in the sub-themes of *perpetrating what has been perpetrated* and *justification*.

When the encounters of dating violence are examined, and perpetrated (Lipsky, Holt, Easterling and Critchlow, 2004) by the female and the male women is equal, it is still a controversial matter of debate (Alleyne-Green, Coleman-Cowger, and Henry, 2012). It would be difficult to explain the violence exposure or perpetration behavior of women and men and the type of violence only by gender (Houry et al., 2008). Not only to gender, but it is necessary to pay attention to some of the features that gender brings along as well. Hence, one of them is the meanings attributed to the dating relationship. When this issue is studied with emerging adults in Turkey, the unrealistic beliefs about romantic relationships were found to be associated with the physical and emotional maltreatment (Gizir, 2013). In Turkey, in a study conducted with university students, this situation presents itself as if a special case that should not be intervened when assessing the violence between couples (Karatay, Karatay, Gürarlan Baş and Baş, 2018). In addition, the level of commitment and seriousness of the relationship affects the likelihood of dating violence. (Lewis and Fremouw, 2001).

When considered according to the experience of dating violence, the level of acceptance of physical violence perpetrated by women is higher than those who do not experience dating violence and is the only significant variable according to dating violence experience. In this case, the perception of women in society is thought to be effective. This idea is reinforced by the fact that this perception is not present in those who have not experienced dating violence. Here, some kind of a positive discrimination against women comes into question. In other words, it is thought to be effective to accept this as a self-defense mechanism of the women. The weak perception of women in male-dominated Turkish society may also be effective in this case (Altuntaş and Altınova, 2015). In Turkish society, girls and boys are raised differently, and as they grow up, they are raised with different expectations and messages (Vefikuluçay, Zeyneloğlu, Eroğlu and Taşkın, 2007). Together with the reflection of the social gender perception found in the qualitative findings, it comes to the

forefront with the theme of justification as it is perceived as a defense mechanism, and with the theme of contextual approach as being excused in the social conditions of the society lived in.

When attitudes towards physical and psychological dating violence perpetrated by the female and the male according to perceived parental violence is examined, the striking point is the fact that the level of acceptance is higher in individuals who have not experienced parental violence. Those who have been subjected to physical violence by their parents in the past have higher levels of acceptance towards psychological violence perpetrated by the male. Violence perpetrator in the family is usually the male. Therefore, it is thought that psychological violence has become more acceptable for these individuals who are exposed to physical violence in the family. Emerging adults, who stated that they had experienced both psychological and physical parental violence in the past, showed the highest level of acceptance in psychological violence perpetrated by the male and female and physical violence perpetrated by the female. In this case, again, the psychological violence perpetrated because of the possibility that the physical violence perpetrator is the man (in the statements, cases where the perpetrator of the domestic violence stated to be the father, was about ten times of the cases where the perpetrator was the mother) or since generally the mother is also the victim (Rosen and Bezold, 1996), it is thought that violence perpetrated by the female is found to be more acceptable. Individuals do not necessarily have to have experienced violence in order to accept or normalize it. They may have had witnessed these behaviors in another. This in return, affects their perceptions of violence (Lewis and Fremouw, 2001). At the same time, this neglect experienced during the childhood and witnessing domestic violence are observed to be predictors of dating violence (Conger, Cui, Bryant and Elder, 2000). It does not mean that there has been no violence between the parents of those who have not experienced parental violence or within their families or the environment in which they live in. It may also be that parents are the first means of socialization and that parents' beliefs and attitudes play a determining role in violence (Baumrind, 1991). It is thought that *self-reflection* theme, which is prominent in qualitative findings, is effective in high level of acceptance of violence in those persons with and without history of parental violence. Individuals are likely to carry their unresolved *personal conflicts* that they have experienced or witnessed in the past to their current relationships. At the same time, the sensitivity shown in creating personal boundaries and the ability of maintaining these boundaries affect the attitudes of individuals towards dating violence. The individual who was exposed to maltreatment may not always be able to get out of this equation. The reason for this is that from time to time the person does not feel ready to end the relationship due to his/her emotional investment in it (Lewis and Fremouw, 2001). This experience encountered in close relationships later reveals itself as domestic violence in the future as well (Clark, 1994).

When experiencing the dating violence, individuals may turn to different alternatives, such as ending the relationship, maintaining the relationship or facing the partner or getting support from their resources. These supports may be official sources (police, therapist, psychological counselor,

psychiatrist, etc.) but also the informal sources (friends, family, etc.) (Glasgow, 2015). In the qualitative findings of this study, sources of *receiving support* differed. In cases where it was thought that the desired support could not be obtained in the family, getting support from an expert (psychological counselor) was resorted. In some cases, *passive coping* methods were employed, such as ignoring or neglecting the situations, rather than confronting the partner or the circumstances. In cases where the impacts of the situation were severe and time was needed, *shifting focus* was resorted. Furthermore, in cases where emerging adults found it difficult to deal with the dating violence and needed support in making-sense and managing the process, this might have led the victim to accept or think they deserved the violence if the support they sought did not come from their circles.

In summary, the behavior of the parent is reflected on to the child and the behavior of the child is reflected in the relationship. Violence reflected in the relationship on the other hand, becomes a behavioral pattern that is reflected in later relationships. In fact, even if violence in the family is controlled, the violence experienced by individuals continues in their adulthood as well (Lohman et al., 2013). For individuals who have been exposed to violence, especially living in conservative societies, normalization and legitimization of this situation after a certain period of time (Brown, Sumner and Nocera, 2002) becomes a matter of fact.

In Turkey, attitudes towards dating violence in emerging adulthood are important in how individuals position themselves in experiencing dating violence and how they handle their perceived parental violence and domestic violence histories. Using the mixed method in the research, ensured the subject matter to be discussed in a more comprehensive manner. However, the research has some limitations. The first of those is the fact that the issue has not been addressed in the context of domestic violence history. Secondly, the study is limited to only emerging adults living in one of the Eastern regions of Turkey. As to the research to be conducted in the future, by using larger sample groups, family history should be tried not to be limited to domestic violence only, and at the same time, the family structure (single parent, nuclear-extended family, etc.), socio-demographic characteristics of the family (the region inhabited, income and education levels, number of siblings, etc.) should also be taken into consideration. Concentrating on longitudinal studies in dating violence research and studies to encompass adolescence, emerging adulthood and adulthood periods believed to provide the subject matter to be tackled in a more comprehensive manner. Reflections of culture happens to be different in terms of regions in which individuals are raised and live. Therefore, as it is not possible to commentate on dating violence independent of culture, studies can be expanded to include different regions of Turkey, ethnic diversity, and the level of devoutness. Studying the research groups in more homogeneous structures such as whether or not they live with their partners, their sexual lives or whether or not if they are a victim or perpetrator, is thought to be much beneficial. Support programs can be developed by also conducting research on individuals' help seeking behaviors. School-based and skill-focused support programs can be developed that concentrate on

defining dating violence, and raising awareness, covering high schools and universities. In addition, other studies using a measurement tool that measures parental violence are recommended. Apart from the impact of the family effect on dating violence, the impact of peer pressure and media influence are also high. Research focusing on these issues is also required. First and above all, by making this a public policy it is necessary to carry out awareness-raising activities towards dating violence.

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