

INVESTIGATION OF ADOLESCENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE IN TERMS OF GENDER AND SELF-EFFICACY¹

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating adolescents' attitude toward violence in terms of gender and self-efficacy domains. This brings about the question: "Do adolescents' attitudes toward violence differ in terms of gender and academic, social, emotional and general self-efficacy levels?" Participants consisted of 1078 students, especially during the early period (12-13 years) of adolescence. These students who have attended fourteen states secondary schools in the province of Mersin/Turkey have been determined through random sampling. Research data was obtained in the fall term of 2016-2017 academic year. Attitudes Toward Violence Scale and Questionnaire for Measuring Self-Efficacy in Youths are used. In analysis phase, two-way ANOVA was used to examine the differentiation of students' attitudes toward violence in terms of gender and self-efficacy level. LSD test was used to determine the source of variance between groups. When the findings obtained from this study were examined, it was observed that the males in early adolescence had better attitudes toward violence than the females. In other words, their attitudes toward violence were more positive. According to another finding of the research, adolescents with low academic, social, emotional and general self-efficacy have higher attitudes toward violence than adolescents with high self-efficacy. Considering the common impact of gender and self-efficacy levels, the attitudes toward violence do not significantly differ.

Keywords: Gender, self-efficacy, attitudes toward violence.

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ERGENLERİN ŞİDDETE YÖNELİK TUTUMLARININ CİNSİYET VE ÖZYETERLİKLERİNE GÖRE İNCELENMESİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada ergenlerin cinsiyet ve özyeterlik alanlarına göre şiddete yönelik tutumlarının incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaçla *“Cinsiyet ve akademik, sosyal, duygusal ve genel özyeterlik düzeyine göre ergenlerin şiddete yönelik tutumları farklılaşmakta mıdır?”* sorusuna cevap aranmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcılarını seçkisiz örnekleme yoluyla belirlenmiş olan, Türkiye/Mersin ilinde 2016-2017 Eğitim Öğretim yılı güz döneminde on dört devlet ortaokuluna devam eden erken ergenlik dönemindeki (12-13 yaş) 1078 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Veri toplama aracı olarak Şiddete Yönelik Tutum Ölçeği ve Ergenlerde Yetkinlik Beklentisi Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Öğrencilerin şiddete yönelik tutumunun cinsiyet ve özyeterlik düzeyine göre farklılaşmasını incelemek amacıyla iki yönlü ANOVA yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Gruplar arası farklılaşmanın kaynağını tespit etmek için LSD testi kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmadan elde edilen bulgular incelendiğinde, erken ergenlik dönemindeki erkek ergenlerin şiddete yönelik tutumlarının kız ergenlerden daha yüksek olduğu, yani şiddete yönelik tutumlarının daha olumlu olduğu görülmüştür. Araştırmanın bir diğer bulgusuna göre, özyeterlik açısından akademik, sosyal, duygusal ve genel özyeterliği düşük olan ergenlerin şiddete yönelik tutumları özyeterliği yüksek olan ergenlere göre daha yüksek bulunmuştur. Cinsiyet ve özyeterlik düzeyleri ortak etkisine bakıldığında ise şiddete yönelik tutum anlamlı bir farklılık göstermemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Cinsiyet, özyeterlik, şiddete yönelik tutum

INTRODUCTION

Violence, which has become one of today's global health problems, is characterized as being sometimes fair and sometimes unfair. Although, the legitimacy of violence often stems from desensitization towards violence, these interpretations usually depend on individual differences. Many definitions of violence have been made. Olweus (1997) described violence as a situation in which one uses his own body or an instrument to harm another, while Anderson and Bushman (2002) described it as an intentional aggression to harm. Another definition of violence is "any behavior or action of an individual or group that aims to harm a person or group" (Zimmerman & Farrell, 2013: 1313). The World Health Organization defines violence as "threats or physical abuse that may result in injury, death, physical disability, or some developmental disability or deprivation of oneself or another, a particular community or group (World Health Organization [WHO], 2002)]. Violence is so prevalent that in the United States at least one in four persons have been reported to have witnessed or experienced it (Nguyen-Feng et al., 2016).

Directly incurring or witnessing violence has been observed as one of the most important causes of violence tendency. Violence exposure can occur at home, at school, and in communities (Bacchini, Affuso&Aquilar, 2015; Kennedy &Ceballo, 2016; Zimmerman & Chad, 2016). Survey shows that violent offenses increase between pre-adolescence and adolescence period, and declines in young adults (Steinberg, 2007). Physical punishment by their father in childhood may lead them to display violence in adulthood (Wareham, Boots, Chavez, 2009). In view of this, Gooding et al, (2015) pointed out that boys in their adolescence who are exposed to violence in childhood have a higher tendency towards violence than others. In a public study investigating domestic violence against women in Turkey, it was found that men who perpetrate violence were exposed to violence (PMGDWS, 2015). Furthermore, gender (Kapcioglu, 2007), domestic violence, poverty and deprivation, racism, unemployment, substance abuse, lack of problem-solving skills (Conoleyve Goldstein, 2004), patriarchal system, illiteracy, wars, immigration (Blake, Ledsky, Goodenow& O'Donnell, 2001; Haynie, South & Bose, 2006; Çivi, Kutlu&Marakoğlu, 2008) and media (Oksay, 1994) may be ranked among the reasons for violence. All of these factors also constitute determinants of attitude towards violence.

Mersin/Turkey has the feature of being one of the most internal and external migration-receiving provinces. Especially after the 1990s, it ranks first in interregional migration (Tümtaş, 2009). For this reason, the province of Mersin has a cosmopolitan structure where people from different cultures live together. According to statistics of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI) (2013), Mersin is a province of migration- immigrant (1.66%) and emigrant (4.014%), with a net migration rate of 0 -2.4%. This shows that the population in Mersin continuously fluctuates. Moreover, it is in a proper position to represent Turkey based on the fact that it is the 10th largest city in the country and receives a lot of immigrants.

Bandura (1977) stated that children observed their immediate surroundings, especially their parents and so exhibit violent behaviors. In line with this view, Freedmann, Sers and Carl Smith (1998) stated that children who

witnessed violence sometimes imitate violence. If violence is a learned behavior, self-efficacy belief can as well be learned through modeling. One of the important ways of creating and strengthening self-efficacy beliefs is through indirect experiences provided by social models. For this reason, the self-efficacy beliefs of the study were discussed as another variable.

Self-efficacy beliefs determine the emotions, thoughts, motives and behaviors of individuals toward themselves. Bandura (1994, p. 2) defined self-efficacy as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives." Self-efficacy can be developed by four main sources of influence such as skills of performance, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and several psychological states (Bandura, 1977). Efficacy expectations influence the level of performance by raising the stability and intensity of the individual's efforts (Bandura, 1977; Bandura et. al, 1977). While interpreting individual performances as successfully improving self-efficacy, it fails to interpret the unsuccessful (Pajares, 1997). Adolescents with high self-efficacy have less psychological problems (Solberg and Villarreal, 1997; Riffert, Paschon and Sams, 2005). Elizabeth et al. (2004) found that adolescents with low self-efficacy had a higher chance to despair, women had higher self-efficacy than men, and Çelikkaleli, Gündoğdu and Kiran Esen (2006) found that adolescents with low depression level had a high academic and social competence expectancy level.

There are studies showing that violence and self-efficacy are linked to each other besides the theoretical framework and these studies. Dupere, Lenenthal & Vitaro (2012) argued that adolescents growing up in environments where violence is prevalent tend to decrease their self-efficacy beliefs and they suffer from psychological problems, such as depression and anxiety. Balkis et.al, (2005) found that there is a reverse relationship between attitudes toward violence and self-efficacy beliefs. While Telef and Karaca (2011) found that adolescents' self-efficacy is significantly related to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, somatization, and hostility. It has been discovered that the relationship between adolescents' self-efficacy and depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, somatization and hostility feelings is significant, in relation to a different opinion by Balkis, Duru, and Buluş (2005). Strong self-efficacy beliefs tend to play a protective role, especially in coping with post-traumatic syndrome resulting from domestic violence (DeCou, Lynch, Cole & Kaplan, 2015). People who are exposed to a friend's violence in romantic relationships are in need of more help if found to have a high level of self-efficacy, and relationship self-efficacy can be developed in these victims (Hébert, Van camp, Lavoie, Blais& Guerrier, 2014; Van Camp, Hébert, Guidi & Blais, 2014; Whittlesey-Jerome, 2014). However, those with high self-efficacy of relationship could go ahead with their relationship, since they believe that they can minimize violence and conflicts in the future, but their victimization may continue (Baker, Cobb, McNulty, Lambert & Fincham, 2016). These studies are often focused on violence from close relatives and youth empowerment.

Violence perpetration or exposure is risky for all age groups, and can have serious consequences especially in adolescents. It is expected that adolescents experiencing inadequacy in adolescence which is a significant

developmental period, may experience problems in fulfilling their future roles and responsibilities (McKnight, Huebner and Suldo, 2002). Bandura (1994) pointed out that children's self-efficacy can be enhanced by their parents during earlier developmental periods, which may facilitate the transition from childhood to adulthood. The most important effect of self-efficacy is to facilitate interpersonal relationships in the following years (Rice, Fitz Gerald, Whaley and Gibbs 1995). Adolescents with high self-efficacy appears to have less psychological problems (Solberg and Villarreal, 1997; Riffert, Paschon and Sams, 2005). This study aims at investigating adolescents' attitude toward violence in terms of gender and self-efficacy domains. This brings about the question: "Do adolescents' attitudes toward violence differ in terms of gender and academic, social, emotional and general self-efficacy levels?"

METHOD

Research Model

Correlational survey model was used in this research in order to investigate adolescents' attitude toward violence in terms of gender and self-efficacy domains.

Participants

Participants consisted of 1078 students, especially during the early (pre) period (12-13 years) of (pre) adolescence. These students who have attended fourteen states secondary schools in the province of Mersin/Turkey have been determined through random sampling. Research data was obtained in the fall term of 2016-2017 academic year. About 53.2% of the participants were female (n = 573) and 46.8% (n = 505) were male.

Before the analysis phase of the data, the missing values are first of all examined. About 3 pieces of missing data were excluded. It is acceptable because the rate of lost data is below 5% (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). In addition, 17 data were excluded from the range of -3 and +3 points in the standardized z-scores. Analyses were conducted with 1078 data.

Measures

Attitudes Toward Violence Scale (ATVS): ATVS was developed by Blevins (2001) and it was adapted to Turkish by Balkis, Duru and Buluş (2005). The scale consisted of 11 statements on a four-point response format (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) resulting in a scale range of 11 to 44 with higher scores representing a positive attitude towards violence, while lower scores mean negative attitudes toward violence against others. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was .74 and the total correlations of the item varied between .39 and .53. Factor analysis was performed for the scale's validity study and factor loads were found to be accumulated on 2,943 eigenvalue single factor, which explains 36.8% of the variance. According to the data from this study, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale is calculated as $\alpha = .77$.

Questionnaire for Measuring Self-Efficacy in Youths (QMSEY): The scale was developed by Muris (2001) and adapted to Turkish environment by Çelikkaleli, Gündoğdu and Kiran-Esen (2006). The QMSEY consists of 24 items and is of three dimensions: academic competence expectancy, social competence expectancy and emotional competence expectancy. As the score of the 5-point Likert-type scale increases, the individual's competence expectancy rises. The internal consistency coefficient for the QMSEY was calculated as $\alpha = .88$ for the whole scale and between .85 and .88 for each subscale. Factor analysis for the validity study revealed that the scale had three factors with eigen values higher than 1 (6.5, 3.2 and 2.2), and these three factors represents 56.7% of the total variance. According to the results of this study, internal consistency coefficient was calculated between $\alpha = .83$ for the whole scale and between .67 and .77 for each subscale.

Data Analysis

The Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used to determine whether the data obtained from the two measuring instruments were normally distributed or not, and the Levene Test showed that the variance of the scores of attitude towards violence was homogeneous. For both the subscale and total scores of the QMSEY, the data were categorized as low, moderate, and high self-efficacy by taking one point more and one point less than the standard deviation of the mean. Two-way ANOVA was used to examine the differentiation of students' attitudes toward violence in terms of gender and self-efficacy level. LSD test was used to determine the source of variance between groups since the variances were equal, but the sample size between groups was not equal. SPSS 22.0 program was used for all statistical analyzes.

FINDINGS (RESULTS)

An investigation has been carried out to determine whether the adolescents' attitudes toward violence differ in terms of gender and academic, social, emotional, and general self-efficacy levels. Descriptive statistics on adolescents' attitudes toward violence in terms of gender and self-efficacy levels are given in Table 1. Considering the descriptive statistics in Table-1 a test was conducted to check for differentiation between the variables and the findings are given below.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on Adolescents' Attitudes Toward Violence in Terms of Gender and Self-Efficacy Levels

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (σ)	Median	Skewness Coefficient	Kurtosis Coefficient
Attitudes Toward Violence (ATV)	1078	1.25	.126	.125	.138	-.770
ATV*Female	573	1.22	.119	.1.20	.331	-.562
ATV*Male	505	1.28	.126	1.30	-.111	-.738
ATV * Low academic self-efficacy	219	1.31	.114	1.32	-.199	-.277
ATV *Moderate academic self-efficacy	666	1.24	.123	1.23	.266	-.731

ATV *High academic self-efficacy	193	1.19	.119	1.18	.370	-.826
ATV * Low social self-efficacy	158	1.28	.111	1.28	-.203	-.404
ATV *Moderate social self-efficacy	778	1.25	.128	1.24	.204	-.754
ATV * High social self-efficacy	142	1.24	.129	1.23	.222	-.881
ATV * Low emotional self-efficacy	166	1.28	.132	1.28	.161	-.741
ATV * Moderate emotional self-efficacy	731	1.25	.124	1.25	.104	-.777
ATV * High emotional self-efficacy	181	1.23	.128	1.23	.227	-.882
ATV * Low general self-efficacy	138	1.30	.118	1.32	-.150	-.411
ATV * Moderate general self-efficacy	739	1.25	.123	1.25	.167	-.712
ATV * High general self-efficacy	201	1.21	.129	1.20	.375	-.858

Differences between adolescents' attitudes toward violence in terms of gender and academic self-efficacy levels: The attitudes of the students toward violence seem to constitute a significant difference in terms of gender ($F_{(1,1072)}=59.154$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.052$) and academic self-efficacy ($(F_{(2,1072)}=50.391$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.086$) levels. However, according to the common effect of gender and academic self-efficacy levels ($F_{(2,1072)}=.033$, $p>.05$, $\eta^2=.000$), there was no significant difference in the scores of adolescents' attitude toward violence. When the partial eta squared values were examined, it was observed that the academic self-efficacy effect ($\eta^2 = .086$) on the attitude toward violence is greater than gender ($\eta^2 = .052$) which shows that there is a significant difference in favor of females. According to LSD test results, a significant difference was found in favor of adolescents with moderate and high level of academic self-efficacy. As a result, males and those with low academic self-efficacy have higher attitudes toward violence than others.

Differences between adolescents' attitudes toward violence in terms of gender and social self-efficacy levels: The attitudes of the students toward violence seem to constitute a significant difference in terms of gender ($F_{(1,1072)}=49.919$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.044$) and social self-efficacy ($F_{(2,1072)}=5.667$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.010$) levels. However, according to the common effect of gender and social self-efficacy levels ($(F_{(2,1072)}= .731$, $p>.05$, $\eta^2=.001$), there was no significant difference in the scores of adolescents' attitude toward violence. When the partial eta squared values were examined, it was observed that the gender effect ($\eta^2=.044$) on the attitude toward violence is greater than the social self-efficacy effect ($\eta^2=.010$) which shows that there is a significant difference

in favor of females. According to LSD test results, a significant difference was found in favor of adolescents with moderate and high level of social self-efficacy. As a result, males and those with low social self-efficacy have higher attitudes toward violence than others. However, there is no significant difference between middle and high level social self-efficacy levels.

Differences between adolescents' attitudes toward violence in terms of gender and emotional self-efficacy levels: The attitudes of the students toward violence seem to constitute a significant difference in terms of gender ($F_{(1,1072)}=57.111$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.051$) and emotional self-efficacy ($F_{(2,1072)}=11.628$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.021$) levels. However, according to the common effect of gender and emotional self-efficacy levels ($F_{(2,1072)}=.724$, $p>.05$, $\eta^2=.001$) there was no significant difference in the scores of adolescents' attitude toward violence. When the partial eta squared values were examined, it was observed that the gender effect ($\eta^2=.048$) on the attitude toward violence is greater than the emotional self-efficacy effect ($\eta^2=.021$) which shows that there is a significant difference in favor of females. According to LSD test results, a significant difference was found in favor of adolescents with moderate and high level of emotional self-efficacy. As a result, males and those with low emotional self-efficacy have higher attitudes toward violence than others. However, there is no significant difference between middle and high level emotional self-efficacy levels.

Differences between adolescents' attitudes toward violence in terms of gender and general self-efficacy levels: The attitude of the students toward violence seems to constitute a significant difference in terms of gender ($F_{(1,1072)}=50.283$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.045$) and general self-efficacy ($F_{(2,1072)}=26.751$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.048$) levels. However, according to the common effect of gender and general self-efficacy levels ($F_{(2,1072)}=1.095$, $p>.05$, $\eta^2=.002$), there was no significant difference in the scores of adolescents' attitude toward violence. When the partial eta squared values were examined, it was observed that the general self-efficacy effect ($\eta^2=.048$) on the attitude toward violence is greater than the gender effect ($\eta^2=.045$) which shows that there is a significant difference in favor of females. According to LSD test results, a significant difference was found in favor of adolescents with moderate and high level of general self-efficacy. As a result, males and those with low self-efficacy have higher attitudes toward violence than others. However, there is no significant difference between middle and high level self-efficacy levels.

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

In this study, adolescents' attitude toward violence in terms of gender and self-efficacy domains has been investigated. In other words, it has been explained the differentiation of adolescents' attitudes toward violence in terms of gender and academic, social, emotional and general self-efficacy levels. Consequently, attitudes toward violence differentiate in terms of gender and self-efficacy, male adolescents and the ones with low self-efficacy have more positive attitudes. In other words, they have a higher tendency of being violent. Also, the gender of individuals with different levels of self-efficacy has been found not to change their attitudes toward violence.

Recent researches define violence as “damaging” and emphasized its preventability. Violence awareness can be enhanced by nonviolence education (Marcotte, 2016). At the same time, social support was found to reduce depression and risk of anxiety even when adolescents were exposed to violence (Eisman, Stoddard, Heinze, Caldwell & Zimmerman, 2015). This is why parental education for violence should be organized. Besides, in a study conducted with pediatricians, pediatricians' self-efficacy in the prevention of violence was investigated and their self-efficacy and self-confidence were found to be low. Even pediatricians can not give enough consultation on violence (Finch, Wiley, Ip & Barkin, 2008). It shows that professionals especially school psychological counsellors who will work on violence should be provided with an in-service training in this regard.

When the findings obtained from this study were examined, it was observed that the males in early adolescence had better attitudes toward violence than the females. In other words, their attitudes toward violence were more positive. A similar result was obtained in several studies which have investigated the adolescents' attitudes toward violence (Balkis, Duru and Buluş, 2005; Bozkurt, 2010; Baysan-Arabacı, 2011; Ghoneem, 2012; Siyez&Kaya, 2010; Ünalmiş, 2010; Özgür, Yörükoğlu & Yavuz, 2009; Peckins & Susman, 2015; Zimmerman & Chad, 2016). It was observed that men are angry, have had negative experiences of violence in the past and irrational beliefs about the concept of "masculinity" and have become individuals who are not at peace with themselves (Işiloğlu, 2006; Tüzer, Göka, 2007). It was also observed that men have justified their positive attitudes toward violence and have a gendered perspective (Ferragut & MJ Ortiz-Tallo, 2014). Sons believe that men have the right to behave as they want and all problems will be resolved violently as a result of experiencing violence in the family (Polat, 2001). Studies on nonviolence have also revealed that increases in self-efficacy are more effective and protective for females than males (Farrell, Henry, Michael, Bettencourt & Tolan, 2010). Females are more likely to seek help than males in coping with violence (Hébert, Van camp, Lavoie, Blais & Guerrier, 2014). These studies can be said to support the finding obtained from this research. That is, male adolescents have more positive attitudes toward violence compared to adolescent females.

According to another finding of the research, adolescents with low academic, social, emotional and general self-efficacy have higher attitudes toward violence than adolescents with high self-efficacy. Research findings on attitudes toward violence and self-efficacy indicate that low self-efficacy is associated with aggressive and violent behaviors in adolescents (Kirsh, 2011). Caprana, Regalina and Bandura (2002) indicated that the female and male adolescents' emotion regulation and self-efficacy predicts violent behaviors (according to their own statements). Besides, it is seen that adolescents with high self-efficacy on violence who believe aggression is moderate and acceptable, tend to be more violent (Hadley, Mowbray & Jacobs, 2017). Balkis, Duru and Buluş, (2005) found that adolescents had a negative relationship between self-efficacy beliefs in their tendency towards violence. In another study, the level of academic self-efficacy in adolescents was found to be a significant predictor of psychological aggression (Schwartz & Runtz, 2002). Adolescents who have been exposed to violence and have higher attitudes toward violence seems to find themselves to be academically inadequate

(Hardaway, Larkby & Cornelius, 2014; Schwartz, Kelly, Financial & Duong, 2016). There is a relationship between attitudes toward violence and low self-esteem, loss of confidence, anxiety, substance use and depression (Kennedy & Ceballo, 2016; Zimmerman & Chad, 2016). There are studies showing that these variables are also related to low self-efficacy (Çelikkaleli, Gündoğdu & Kıran-Esen, 2006; Solberg ve Villarreal, 1997; Riffert, Paschon ve Sams, 2005; Telef ve Karaca, 2011). In violence prevention studies, it was reported that higher self-efficacy is important for nonviolence (Farrell, Henry, Michael, Bettencourt & Tolan, 2010). Informing and coping with violence has been shown to improve self-efficacy, and violence against men's friends has been reduced (Josephson & Proulx, 2008). All these findings indicate that adolescents with high self-efficacy beliefs are less prone to violence.

Considering the common impact of gender and self-efficacy levels, the attitudes toward violence do not significantly differ. From the literature reviewed, there is no research evidence that differentiate the attitudes toward violence with gender and self-efficacy.

SUGGESTIONS

Guidance activities aimed at reducing the tendency towards violence or primary prevention efforts to strengthen self-efficacy in psycho-educational group work is thought to support a reduction in the tendency to be violent for both male and female adolescents. It is advisable to plan activities that will enhance self-efficacy for school psychological counselors who plan to develop programs to prevent violence, and to inform teachers and parents about this, while suggesting that they inform and support them on how to improve their self-efficacy. It can be taken into account that male adolescents and low level of self-sufficient female or male adolescents may form a risk group. This study is limited to 1,078 early adolescents who participated in the study at 12-13 years of age. Researchers can compare research results comparatively by doing similar research with people of different generations.

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