

The relationship between violence against women and gender attitudes in men, Bolu province Kırıscık example

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Abstract

Purpose: The study has two purposes: “ascertaining the determinants and the frequency of violence against women in men” and “determining the relation between men's violence against women and gender attitudes.”

Design and Methods: The study is of cross-sectional type. Three questionnaires were used to collect the research data: sociodemographic information form, violence against women questionnaire, and the Gender Equality Scale.

Findings: The first important finding of the study is that the rate of domestic violence against women is high. The second important finding is that men who have resorted to violence against women have more unequal gender attitudes.

Practice Implications: The research reveals the significance related to the participation of men in gender equality policies and provides guiding data for healthcare professionals.

KEYWORDS

gender, gender attitude, men, violence, violence against women

1 | INTRODUCTION

Despite all national and international positive developments, violence against women is still among the outstanding problems of our country and the whole world. As a global problem, domestic violence against women is a serious social problem that needs to be tackled in our country. In addition to being an important public health problem, as it harms the material and moral integrity of women, the phenomenon of violence against women encountered at every stage of social life constitutes an obstacle to social and economic development by preventing women's active participation in social life (Louise et al., 2017).

Although there are many factors affecting the occurrence, repetition, type, and severity of violence against women, the main source of violence is mainly gender inequality and the asymmetric power relationship between women and men arising from the patriarchal social structure. In parallel, violence against women and domestic violence against women as a subtype is the most effective tool in maintaining the patriarchal order, maintaining obedience, and preserving the ongoing imbalance of power.

Recently, gender inequality has been distinguished as a risk factor for multiple forms of violence. At the societal level, research has long emphasized the etiological relationship between gender inequality and patriarchal beliefs and violence against women, positing that these beliefs reinforce the dominant position and power men hold over women and perpetuate male aggression toward women. For example, an ecological study in Spain found that the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) was higher in communities with greater gender inequality (Redding et al., 2017). In the study conducted by Ozaki and Otis (2017), it was found that individuals who believe in gender inequality and have patriarchal cultural norms have a higher rate of physical and psychological dating violence (Ozaki & Otis, 2017). The results of the studies conducted in Turkey are also similar. In the study conducted by Küçükkeleş and Özkan (2021) on dating violence, it was determined that men tend to inflict more physical and psychological violence on women (Küçükkeleş & Özkan, 2021). In the study conducted by İftar and Güler (2020), it was determined that the level of acceptance of psychological and physical violence by men is high. These studies

highlight how gender differences in roles and behaviors can create inequalities, and possibly encourage an environment in which one group becomes empowered and the other is disadvantaged (e.g., men being empowered and women being subordinate) (World Health Organization [WHO], 2019)

Domestic violence against women causes fatal and nonfatal effects on women. Health problems such as hypertension, heart diseases, and so on arise at later ages in women being exposed to violence (Kim et al., 2018; WHO, 2021). Another social problem encountered by women who are subjected to violence is the prevention of using family planning services and the lack of precautions against sexually transmitted diseases (Almıř et al., 2018; Özpınar, 2018a, 2018b).

It seems important to draw attention to the importance of the issue and to deal with the reasons and consequences in detail in combating violence. Obtaining clues about how to help women based on what causes violence, what the woman victim of domestic violence experiences, and the effects of violence on women will support them to cope with violence. On the other hand, conducting studies on violence against women only with women causes the problem to be addressed unilaterally and the solution remains infertile. For this reason, it is highly important to carry out studies investigating the reasons for violence against women regarding men who are the perpetrators of violence against women.

In the literature, acts of violence against women and their reasons, especially in Turkey, were examined in a sample of women. It is an important privilege in this study to examine the behaviors of violence against women and their reasons in a male sample. In this regard, it is thought that the research will guide other studies on the prevention of violence against women.

The study planned with this justification has two very close aims:

- Ascertaining the determinants and the frequency of violence against women in men.
- Determining the relation between men's violence against women and gender attitudes.

The distant aim of the study is to provide a source of data on gender and combatting violence against women.

2 | METHODS

2.1 | Design and methods

The study is of cross-sectional type. Research data were collected between February 8, 2018 and July 14, 2018.

This study was carried out in the Kırbrıcık district of Bolu province. The total population of Kırbrıcık district of Bolu province is 3220, the total population of the district center is 1193, the total number of men is 1606, and the total number of men in the district center is 636. Its climate is continental. The district center has a mountainous and rugged structure. The district's livelihood is generally agriculture and animal husbandry.

The population of the research consists of 378 married men living in the Kırbrıcık district of Bolu province ($N = 378$). In determining the sample size, domestic violence against women in our society was considered as 40%, and the minimum sample size was determined as 187 at the 95% confidence interval at the 0.05 error level. The sample group was randomly determined from the NBYS AH (NBYS AH—Family Medicine Information Management System).

2.2 | Materials

2.2.1 | Data collection

The data were collected by the researchers between February 8, 2018 and July 14, 2018. They were contacted directly in their home. Detailed information was given to men about the research and verbal consent was obtained. The questionnaires were given to men in their homes. It took approximately 40 min to fill out a survey in a single session.

2.2.2 | Tools

Three forms were used to collect the research data, namely, personal introductory question form including basic characteristics of individuals, violence against women questionnaire, and Gender Equitable Men Scale for Turkish Men.

Personal introductory question form: It consists of nine sections, such as basic characteristics of the individuals, marital knowledge, smoking status, general health status and smoking status of the spouse, the basic characteristics of the husbands/intimate partners of the men, physical and sexual violence and emotional and economic violence/abuse, and cycle of violence, injury, impact, and struggle applied to the women with whom men have been in close relationship in any period of their lives and in the last 12 months before the interview (spouse or partners).

Violence against women questionnaire: The questionnaire form was designed considering the forms used in the study "Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women" by WHO (2005).

Gender Equitable Men Scale for Turkish men: The scale developed by Pulerwitz and Barker in 2008 and the validity and reliability study of the Turkish version was carried out by Uçan and Baydur in 2016, which consists of a total of 24 items. It is a 3-point Likert-type scale (1 = I agree, 2 = I partially agree, 3 = I disagree). The scale consists of four subdimensions (1 = Domestic Violence, 2 = Sexual Relationship, 3 = Reproductive Health and Disease Prevention, 4 = Domestic Chores and Daily Life). The simple sum of the scores obtained for each dimension is used to evaluate the results. A high score means gender equality. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.81 (Uçan & Baydur, 2016). Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as 0.95 in this study.

2.2.3 | Data analysis

Statistical software (SPSS 15.0; SPSS, Inc.) was used for data analyses. The association between risk factors and domestic violence was analyzed by using the logistic regression model (the "Enter" method). The odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals were presented. $p < 0.05$ value was considered statistically significant.

2.2.4 | Ethical considerations

Ethical committee permission for the study was granted by University Local Ethics Committee (ethic no: 20.47a.4a5). Moreover, permission from the local health district management where the study was to be conducted was obtained.

3 | RESULTS

Forty-one of the research group (21.9%) is in the age group of 41–50 years and the age distribution is 47.10 ± 16.82 (years); 26.2% is married, 63.1% is high school graduate and above, 90.9% has social security, and 66% belongs to upper social class (Table 1).

Table 2 shows the distribution of violence applied by the research group to their spouses during their lifetime and in the last year. It has been determined that lifelong physical violence in the research group is 61.5%, lifelong sexual violence is 8.6%, lifetime economic violence is 28.3%, and lifetime emotional violence is 70.6%. It was determined that physical violence was applied at 57.8%, sexual violence at 7.5%, economic violence at 22.5%, and emotional violence at 62.0% in the last year (Table 2).

According to Table 3, a statistically significant difference was found between Gender Equitable Men Scale for Turkish men and all types of violence ($p < 0.005$). The presence of gender for physical, emotional, sexual, and economic violence decreases in men who are more egalitarian (Table 3).

Table 4 shows the lifelong violence applied by husbands to their wives and the affecting factors. Men's gender attitude is affected by social class, cycle of violence, and fear of spouse. Men with negative gender attitudes, having low social status, being subjected to or witnessing violence in their childhood, and who have stated to be afraid of their spouse apply more violence to their wives than others (Table 4).

4 | DISCUSSION

Violence against women continues its existence as a violation of human rights all over the world without any religious, social, economic, geographical, and cultural boundaries. These violent behaviors considered to be an important social problem not only affect the physical and mental health of women but also have a significant negative impact on all social status developments.

In the study, 61.5% of men used lifelong physical violence against their spouses they live with or married to. Estimates published by WHO indicate that globally about one in three (30%) of women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual IPV or nonpartner sexual violence in their lifetime. The prevalence estimates of lifetime IPV range from 20% in the Western Pacific, 22% in high-income countries and Europe, and 25% in the WHO Regions of the Americas to 33% in the WHO African region, 31% in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region, and 33% in the WHO South-East Asia region. According to the Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey prepared by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies (2018), the rate of women who state that they have been subjected to physical violence in a certain period of their life in Turkey is 39% (İlknur et al., 2014), the rate of physical violence is 25% in a study by Özpınar et al. (2016) performed on 873 women living in the city center of Manisa, the rate of physical violence is 30.4% in a study conducted by Şahin et al. (2012) with 306 married women and

TABLE 1 Distribution of some characteristics of the research group

Characteristic	n	%
Age (years)		
15–24	10	5.3
25–34	42	22.5
35–44	39	20.9
45–49	18	9.6
50 ve üzeri	78	41.7
Education		
Literate but no education	13	7.0
Primary school, 1st level (1–4 years)	20	10.7
Primary school, 2nd level (5–8 years)	36	19.3
Secondary school (9–12 years)	68	36.3
Vocational higher education school/higher education school/university	50	26.7
Having a regular (permanent) job		
Yes	124	66.3
No	63	33.7
Perception of income		
Income less than expenses	34	18.2
Income equal to expenses	111	59.3
Income more than expenses	42	22.5
Social security		
Yes	170	90.9
No	17	9.1
Total	187	100.0

TABLE 2 Prevalence of domestic violence against women in the male sample, Kırisciık, Bolu, Turkey, 2018

	Lifetime		Total	Past 12 months		Total
	No	Yes		No	Yes	
Physical violence	72 (38.5)	115 (61.5)	187 (100.0)	79 (42.2)	108 (57.8)	187 (100.0)
Sexual violence	171 (91.4)	16 (8.6)	187 (100.0)	173 (92.5)	14 (7.5)	187 (100.0)
Emotional violence	134 (71.7)	53 (28.3)	187 (100.0)	145 (77.5)	42 (22.5)	187 (100.0)
Economic violence	55 (29.4)	132 (70.6)	187 (100.0)	71 (38.0)	116 (62.0)	187 (100.0)

TABLE 3 Comparison of types of domestic violence against women and Gender Equality Scale scores for Turkish men (GERM) in the research group

	Total GERM	GERM			
		Domestic violence	Sexual intercourse area	Reproductive health and prevention of diseases	Housework and daily life
Physical violence					
No	59.4 ± 9.5	15.5 ± 2.5	19.5 ± 3.5	12.9 ± 2.2	11.4 ± 3.1
Yes	41.7 ± 8.6	10.3 ± 2.5	13.9 ± 3.2	10.1 ± 2.5	7.3 ± 2.3
<i>p</i> *	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Sexual violence					
No	50.0 ± 11.8	12.7 ± 3.3	16.4 ± 4.2	11.5 ± 2.6	9.1 ± 3.3
Yes	33.1 ± 8.1	7.4 ± 1.9	11.9 ± 3.0	7.9 ± 2.2	5.8 ± 2.0
<i>p</i> *	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Emotional violence					
No	60.9 ± 8.6	15.9 ± 2.1	20.2 ± 3.3	13.0 ± 2.1	11.8 ± 2.9
Yes	43.4 ± 9.9	10.8 ± 2.9	14.3 ± 3.4	10.5 ± 2.6	7.7 ± 2.7
<i>p</i> *	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Economic violence					
No	52.2 ± 11.8	13.3 ± 3.3	17.1 ± 4.2	11.9 ± 2.5	9.7 ± 3.3
Yes	39.4 ± 8.9	9.6 ± 2.6	13.3 ± 3.1	9.4 ± 2.5	6.9 ± 2.4
<i>p</i> *	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

*Student's *t* test.

examining the factors affecting different types of violence against women (Alkan et al., 2020), the physical violence rate is 32.5% in the study by Duva (2019), and the physical violence rate is 27.2% in the study of Güçlü and Cann (2018) performed with 602 women in İzmir. In Turkey, exposure to physical violence rates among women varies between 24% and 40% (Alkan et al., 2020; Duva, 2019; Güçlü & Cann, 2018; Özpınar et al., 2016). The research results were found to be higher than the literature. This may be due to the fact that our research group consists of male individuals.

In the study, the rate of lifetime sexual violence used by men against their spouses they live with or married to is 8.6%. According to the WHO's report on violence against women published in 2021, the rate of sexual and/or physical violence against women is between 30%, according to the Research on Domestic Violence against

Women in Turkey prepared by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, the rate of sexual violence is 11%, the rate of sexual violence is 14.9% in a study conducted by Özpınar et al. (2016) performed on 873 women living in the city center of Manisa, the rate of sexual violence is 6.9% in the study of Duva (2019), and the rate of sexual violence is 12% in the study of Güçlü and Cann (2018) performed with 602 women in İzmir. In Turkey, exposure to sexual violence rates of women varies between 6% and 14% (Alkan et al., 2020; Duva, 2019; Güçlü & Cann, 2018; Özpınar et al., 2016; İlknur et al., 2014). The research results comply with the literature.

In the study, the rate of lifetime emotional violence used by men against their spouses they live with or married to is 70.6%. According to the Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey

TABLE 4 Results of the univariate and multivariate analysis of the factors affecting physical/sexual/emotional/economic violence of lifetime

	B	SE	Exp (B)	95% CI		p Value
				Min.	Max.	
Physical violence						
Duration of marriage	1.31	0.54	3.70	1.26	10.86	0.017
GERM/domestic violence dimension	-0.47	0.10	0.62	0.51	0.75	0.000
The woman is afraid of her husband	1.31	0.55	3.70	1.26	10.92	0.017
Sexual violence						
GERM/domestic violence dimension	-0.80	0.23	0.44	0.28	0.71	0.001
Physical and sexual violence						
Duration of marriage	1.12	0.53	3.06	1.07	8.71	0.036
GERM/domestic violence dimension	-0.47	0.10	0.62	0.51	0.75	0.000
The woman is afraid of her husband	1.10	0.53	3.01	1.06	8.524	0.038
Emotional violence						
Social class	2.75	1.15	15.75	1.64	150.97	0.017
Cycle of violence	3.41	1.22	30.25	2.74	333.39	0.005
GERM/domestic violence dimension	-0.38	0.11	0.68	0.54	0.84	0.000
The woman is afraid of her husband	1.45	0.56	4.29	1.41	13.01	0.010
Economic violence						
GERM/domestic violence dimension	-0.482	0.100	0.617	0.507	0.751	0.000

Abbreviation: CI, confidence interval.

prepared by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, the rate of emotional violence is 44% (Ilknur et al., 2014), the rate of emotional violence is 40.2% in a study conducted by Özpınar et al. (2016) performed on 873 women living in the city center of Manisa, the rate of emotional violence is 43.2% in the study of Duva (2019), and the rate of emotional violence is 50.5% in the study of Güçlü and Cann (2018) performed with 602 women in İzmir. In Turkey, exposure to emotional violence rates among women varies between 40% and 50% (Alkan et al., 2020; Duva, 2019; Güçlü & Cann, 2018; Özpınar, 2018a, 2018b; Özpınar et al., 2016; ilknur et al., 2014). Research results were found to be at a higher rate than the literature. This may be due to the fact that the research population is composed of men.

In the study, the rate of lifetime economic violence used by men against their spouses they live with or married to is 28.3%. The rate of economic violence is 25.1% in a study conducted by Özpınar et al. (2016) performed on 873 women living in the city center of Manisa, the rate of economic violence is 18.8% in the study of Duva (2019), and the rate of economic violence is 25.2% in the study of Güçlü and Cann (2018) performed with 602 women in İzmir. The rate of economic violence is 23% according to the ilknur et al. (2014). In Turkey, exposure to economic violence rates among women varies between 23% and 25% (Alkan et al., 2020; Duva, 2019; Güçlü &

Cann, 2018; Özpınar, 2018a, 2018b, 2020; Özpınar et al., 2016; ilknur et al., 2014). The research results comply with the literature.

It has been observed in the study that men who committed violence are more sexist and exhibit unequal gender attitudes. Gender is considered as the differences between the feelings, attitudes, behaviors, and roles that boys and girls learn and find “appropriate” for their gender in the socialization process (Özpınar, 2018a, 2018b, 2020; Pender, 2019; WHO, 2021). Unlike biological sex, gender difference occurs as a result of social construction and can be changed. In many societies, men and women are seen as different individuals and each one is recognized to have its own opportunities, roles, and responsibilities (Pender, 2019; Wu et al., 2020). Just like women have no choice in fulfilling gender-determined roles, men are also allowed to make a choice. Men do not have the option of stepping out of the dominant tendency, giving up the role of human and protective person who provides a living. The man who does not fulfill these roles assigned to him by the society can face psychological problems with the fear of losing his power and being questioned (to be questioned) and reflect this situation as violence to women (Koçoğlu, 2019; Pender, 2019; Wu et al., 2020). Hooks has stated that men are “obliged” to dominate women in return for the blessings of patriarchy and to exploit and suppress women by using violence if necessary so that patriarchy is not harmed (Koçoğlu, 2019).

It is important to identify risk factors to prevent or combat violence experienced by women in the family. In the literature, it is reported that there are several determinants of violence against women and the most significant one is poverty (Haris, 2018; WHO, 2017, 2020). When the risk factors that cause violence in women are examined in the study, it has been determined that men with negative gender attitudes, having low social status, being subjected to or witnessed violence in their childhood, and who have stated to be afraid of the spouse apply more violence to their wives than others. The fact that men stating that their spouse is afraid of themselves use violence four times more can be thought to be a tool for maintaining the patriarchal order, maintaining obedience, and maintaining the ongoing imbalance of power.

Social class was found to be an important determinant in the study. It has been determined that men in the lower social class use more violence than those in the upper social class. In the literature, it is noticeable that women suffering from domestic violence have low education and socioeconomic levels and do not work in any income-generating jobs (Aşkın & Aşkın, 2017; Ayan, 2018; Genç, 2016; Genç et al., 2017). In a report published by WHO in 2021, poverty is defined as a risk factor for all types of violence including spousal violence. It is undeniable that poverty increases women's vulnerability to violence because poverty not only increases the likelihood of exposure to violent situations but also decreases the possibility of avoidance of or escape from violence (Altıparmak, 2018; Aşkın & Aşkın, 2017; Ayan, 2018; Basar & Demirci, 2018; Genç, 2016; Genç et al., 2017; WHO, 2017). It has been thought that if women and men have a steady and regular income, there will be improvements in problematic gender perceptions and physical violence against women will decrease.

The cycle of violence in the study is an important factor that determines violence against women. It has been determined that men who have been subjected to or witnessed violence during their childhood commit more violence against their wives than others. In the literature, the fact that men and women are exposed to violence from their own families during childhood is stated as an important risk factor in violence against women. There are many studies linking the violence between spouses and the existence of violence in the family history of individuals (Alkan et al., 2020; Altıparmak, 2018; Basar & Demirci, 2018; Özpinar et al., 2016; WHO, 2017). This shows that violence is a learnable behavior.

It is an important data that according to the statements of men, 9 out of 10 women who were subjected to physical or sexual violence did not apply anywhere when they were subjected to violence. Among the reasons for not applying, the first one is "not needing" and the second one is the protection of family unity. In the study on violence against women in Turkey, approximately four-fifths of women who were subjected to physical or sexual violence did not apply anywhere when they were exposed to violence, which is the rate of 92% (İlknur et al., 2014). In Turkey, when women are exposed to violence, they first report to the police, then to the legal services, and finally to a health institution. These results are consistent with the results in the present study. According to the Turkey

Demographic and Health Survey (2018). It has been determined in the study that the most common institutions applied are hospital and police. Women in Turkey apply to police most frequently. These results are consistent with the results in the present study.

4.1 | Conclusion

The first important finding of the study is that the rate of domestic violence against women is high (lifetime physical violence rate is 61.5%, emotional violence rate is 70.6%, while the physical violence rate is 57.8% and emotional violence rate is 62% in the least year). The second important finding is that men who have resorted to violence against women have more unequal gender attitudes.

4.2 | Implications for nursing practice

The first important finding of the study is that the rate of domestic violence against women is high. The second important finding is that men who have resorted to violence against women have more unequal gender attitudes.

Men who commit domestic violence against women are especially those with lower social status. On the other hand, men who were subject to violence by their parents in their childhood commit more violence against their wives. Nine out of 10 women subjected to violence do not apply to any institution. The fact that men stating that their spouse is afraid of themselves use violence four times more can be thought to be a tool for maintaining the patriarchal order, maintaining obedience, and maintaining the ongoing imbalance of power.

The physical violence perpetrated by men against women is higher compared to the studies performed on women. The gender attitudes of men who have committed violence against women are more unequal. Social class is the most predictive socioeconomic factor for different types of domestic violence compared to low income.

Healthcare professionals play a pivotal role in the issue of woman abuse. They are part of the only institution in most countries that has the opportunity "to interact with almost every woman at some point in her life" Within healthcare teams, nursing, a predominantly female and social profession, has the potential to bring to healthcare practice reflections on gender, and to broaden the perspective on the problem of violence against women. Regardless, studies have revealed that healthcare practices are degendered and do not take into account the social processes that construct differences between women and men and thereby are predominantly based on a biological perspective.

It is thought to be important for men to learn what the inequalities in the gender construct and to develop a positive attitude. For this reason, it is thought to be important to carry out comprehensive provincial/regional studies on domestic violence against women including men and to prepare comprehensive

provincial action plans with interinstitutional cooperation to address the causes of the problem. The research reveals the significance related to the participation of men in gender equality policies and provides guiding data for healthcare professionals.

4.3 | Limitation of the research

The present study was carried out in only one province in Turkey. Therefore, the results are applicable only to men surveyed in this study and cannot be generalized to men in all the provinces of Turkey, which is one of the limitations of the study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Both the authors designed the study, searched the literature, analyzed the data, prepared the article, and approved the final version for submission.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data are available on request due to privacy/ethical restrictions. The data that support the findings of this study are available from the author upon reasonable request

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