ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Effect of Behavioral Attitudes and Internalized Misogyny Perception on Dating Violence Attitudes in Female University Students

Üniversite Öğrencisi Kızlarda Davranış Tutumları ve İçselleştirilmiş Mizojini Algısının Flört Şiddeti Tutumu Üzerine Etkisi

Büşra Gök[1], Şengül Yaman Sözbir[2]

[1]Department of Maternity and Women's Health Nursing, Tarsus University, Health Services Vocational School, Mersin, Türkiye
[2]Department of Nursing, Gazi University Faculty of Nursing, Ankara, Türkiye

Abstract

Introduction: Although the incidence and prevalence of violence varies between regions, it is an increasingly negative act worldwide. The aim of this study was to assess the effect of behavioural attitudes and internalized perceptions of misogyny on attitudes towards dating violence among female university students.

Methods: A descriptive information form, the Passivity, Assertiveness and Aggression Scale, Internalized Misogyny Scale and Dating Violence Attitude Scale were used to collect the data.

Results: The present study hypothesis that the act of characterizing one's conduct as "assertive" engenders a decline in passivity, with a marked decrease of 45%. It has been determined that an increase of 15% in the mean IMS-Valuing Men More Than Women score is concomitant with a rise of a single unit in the mean score. Passive and aggressive behaviour attitudes affect acceptance of dating violence directly by increasing acceptance of dating violence and indirectly by increasing internalized misogyny; internalized misogyny directly increases acceptance of dating violence (β: -0.36).

Discussion and Conclusion: The experience of dating violence is directly related to the acceptance of violence behaviour and the internalization of misogynistic attitudes. Implementing training programmes on behavioural development from an early age and incorporating these training programmes into compulsory courses will facilitate the growth and development of individuals.

Keywords: Assertiveness; Behavioural attitudes; Dating violence; Internalised misogyny violence

As biopsychosocial beings, humans need others for survival, personal development and quality of life. This need is possible through effective communication to express emotions, ideas and intentions correctly.[1] Behavior is a cognitive/psychomotor process that includes knowledge, skills and action. Emotions and thoughts are

expressed through three behaviors: aggressive, passive and assertive.[2] Aggression is a sense of harm to others, a sense of self-prioritization, and an insulting/oppressive attitude. Individuals who exhibit passive behavior may experience fear and insecurity when communicating, have difficulty expressing themselves and tend to compromise their rights.

Assertive behavior is a form of communication that prioritizes protecting one's rights and freedoms while showing respect for the interlocutor.[3] Behavioral attitudes can also be thought of as personal skills that can be acquired or developed through the implementation of appropriate training programs.[4] Assertiveness is a behavioral trait that encompasses honest, open, practical communication skills and is desirable for all people. Individuals who lack assertive behavioral traits may face difficulties in interacting with others and expressing themselves effectively. This can lead to high levels of stress and anxiety.[5] Since assertiveness and aggression are behavioral attitudes characteristic of men in patriarchal societies, passive behavioral attitudes are imposed on women.[6] Adopting these behaviours to gain societal acceptance may result in the adoption of social isolation and a decline in self-esteem. Misogyny is defined as dislike, contempt or prejudice against women.[7] Misogyny is considered as a social attitude that emerges as a feeling of disgust, humiliation, distrust and devaluation towards the female gender regardless of gender differences.[8] Girls growing up in societies with hatred of women absorb this hatred over time and internalized misogyny develops. Internalized hatred of women causes women to think that they deserve to be subjected to violence and dating violence against women is accepted. [9,10] Individuals who normalize dating violence have an increased risk of perpetrating violence or being victimized by violence. Attitudes and behaviors that are normalized and not perceived as violence cause violence to continue by transferring it to future generations.[11]

WHO defines violence as the intentional use of physical force and power, either directly or through threats, against oneself, another person, a group or society, resulting in injury, death, harm, disability or deprivation.[12] Violence is seen in all age groups, but it is more common in adolescence, the period of identity formation.[13] Individuals' attitudes towards violence may be influenced by age, gender, education, social environment and personal experiences.[14] Violence affects the psychosocial and physical health of victims and can even be fatal.[4] All forms of violence violate fundamental human rights, in particular women's right to life and safety. Individuals are predisposed to be victims of violence, but women are the most frequent victims.[15] Dating violence,

a form of violence, intensifies during the university period, which coincides with developmental processes. Dating violence, which is a multidimensional and complex concept, is classified in different ways. Dating violence can basically be classified as physical, psychological, sexual, virtual/digital and economic violence.[16] It is not possible to define and distinguish the type of violence precisely. In dating violence, which often lacks concrete evidence, the occurrence of one type of violence increases the risk of other types of violence. Dating violence occurs across all age ranges but is particularly intense among adolescents in university.[17]

Young adults' dating experiences influence how they shape their professional success and social lives in later years.[18] While romantic relationships are crucial for emotional and social development, they can be damaging when characterized by violence.[19] Survivors of dating violence are at risk of death and injury, as well as developing a range of psychological problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, anger issues, low self-esteem, depression and suicidal tendencies. In addition, they may develop substance abuse (alcohol, smoking, etc.), eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia, etc.), unhealthy weight fluctuations, early sexual experiences, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and pregnancy complications.[20] Moreover, individuals who have experienced violence are at high risk of further victimization or engaging in or perpetuating violent behaviors across generations.[21] Given the informal nature of the relationship, it is difficult for individuals with limited life experience to find an appropriate source of guidance and accurate information during adolescence.

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between behaviors, internalized misogyny and attitudes towards violence among university students, considering their sociodemographic characteristics and past experiences of violence.

Materials and Methods

The study is a descriptive, relationship-seeking nature. It was carried out at the online with a sample of female university students in Türkiye. The study examined the relationship between behavioral type (assertive, passive, aggressive) and attitudes towards dating violence, the relationship between behavioral type and internalized misogyny attitudes and the predictors of attitudes towards dating violence among female university students. The study's dependent variable was dating violence attitude, while the independent variables were behavioral type, internalized misogyny attitude and sociodemographic variables.

The hypotheses and models are as follows:

> *H1. There is a significant correlation between assertive behavior type and dating violence attitude.*
>
> *H2. There is a significant correlation between timid behavior type and dating violence attitude.*
>
> *H3. There is a significant correlation between aggressive behavior type and dating violence attitude.*
>
> *H4. There is a significant correlation between the perception of internalized misogyny and attitudes towards dating violence.*
>
> *H5. Sociodemographic variables predict the attitude towards dating violence at a high level with the type of behavior and the perception of internalized misogyny.*

Participants

To determine the research sample, the results of a study comparing the risk of exposure to dating violence and the tendency to terminate these behaviors based on assertiveness skills were employed. In the power analysis, it was found that a total of at least 176 female university students should be included in the sample with 99% power and 0.01 error level when calculated according to the correlation between the scales (r=-0.35, p: <0.001) (t-tests: Correlation: Point biserial model) (G*Power 3.1.9.4 version).

Including criteria: The study sample comprised 195 female university students who volunteered to participate. The study included female students who could read and write Turkish, were enrolled at a university in Turkey, did not have a diagnosed and untreated mental health disorder, and volunteered to participate.

Exclusion criteria: Completing the study questions incompletely, wanting to leave the study at any stage, not being able to read or write in Turkish, being male, having a diagnosed and untreated mental health problem.

Data Collection

The research data were collected online via Google Forms between 27/04/2024 and 27/09/2024. The survey link was disseminated via social media platforms, including Facebook®, Instagram®, Twitter®, and WhatsApp®. Only one submission per e-mail address or phone number was permitted. The data were collected using the Introductory Information Form, Passivity, Assertiveness and Aggression Scale-PAAS, Internalized Misogyny Scale and Dating Violence Attitude Scale.

Introductory Information Form

The questionnaire comprises 23 closed-ended questions, including eight items about the participants' sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., age, number of siblings, parent's education level, socioeconomic status of the family, income status, etc.), four items concerning school characteristics (e.g., grade, department, school success, etc.), and 11 items regarding violence experience characteristics (e.g., family attitude, experiencing Violence in the family, father's Violence against mother, experiencing Violence in dating experiences, etc.). The research team constructed the form.

Passivity, Assertiveness and Aggression Scale (PAAS)

The Personal Assertion Analysis Scale is a self-report style scale developed by Hedlund and Lindqvist. Duyan V. and Gelbal S.[2] conducted this scale's Turkish validity and reliability. The scale is employed to ascertain whether individuals express their knowledge, opinions and emotions in a passive, assertive or aggressive manner. The scale is comprised of three sub-dimensions. The scale consists of three sub-dimensions: Passivity (items 3, 6, 11, 13, 16, 21, 25, 26, 27 and 29), Assertiveness (items 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 14, 18, 19, 20 and 28) and Aggression (items 5, 7, 10, 12, 15, 17, 22, 23, 24 and 30). The total score that can be obtained from each subscale ranges from 10 to 40. A low score indicates a high level of passivity, Assertiveness and Aggression, whereas a high score indicates a low level of these three factors. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.649 for the Passivity sub-dimension, 0.694 for the Assertiveness sub-dimension and 0.777 for the Aggression sub-dimension6. In this study, the Cronbach alpha coefficients were 0.764, 0.743 and 0.738, respectively.

Internalized Misogyny Scale (IMS)

The scale was developed by Piggott in 2004. The scale illuminates the internalized sentiments of animosity and disdain that women harbour towards their fellow women. The scale comprises three subscales: 'Devaluing Women' (items 1-4), 'Distrusting Women' (items 5-10) and 'Valuing Men More Than Women' (items 11-17), with a total of 17 items. All items are presented on a 7-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale does not include items that can be answered in reverse. The total score that can be obtained from the scale ranges from 17 to 119, with higher scores indicating more incredible internalized misogyny. The validity and reliability of the scale were investigated by Yaman Sozbir S. et al.[22]

Table 1. Some Sociodemographic and educational characteristics of the students participating in the study (n=195)

	n	%		n	%
Education status			Settlement unit		
Associate degree	128	65.6	Metropolitan	60	30.8
Licence	67	34.4	City	88	45.1
Section			Village/Town	47	24.1
Health	118	60.5	Father's education status		
Social	55	28.2	Illiterate	3	1.5
Engineering	22	11.3	Primary school graduate	64	32.8
Classroom			Secondary school graduate	54	27.7
Preparation/1	73	37.4	High school graduate	52	26.7
2	96	49.2	University graduate	22	11.3
3	21	10.8	Father's employment status		
4/thesis period	5	2.6	Working	165	84.6
Academic success			Not working	30	15.4
Bad	5	2.6	Mother's education status		
Centre	125	64.1	Illiterate	27	13.8
Good	65	33.3	Primary school graduate	74	37.9
Marital status			Secondary school graduate	37	19.0
Married	4	2.1	High school graduate	48	24.6
Single	191	97.9	University graduate	9	4.6
Income status			Mother's employment status		
Income less than expenditure	91	46.7	Working	52	26.7
Income equals expenditure	83	42.6	Not working	143	73.3
Income more than expenditure	21	10.8			

Age/Mid: 20.77±2.66; Min: 18.00; Max: 39.00

with a sample of female university students. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were found to be 0.82 for the general scale, 0.71 for the devaluing women subscale, 0.51 for the distrusting women subscale, and 0.80 for the valuing men more than women subscale. The present study's Cronbach alpha values ranged from 0.633 to 0.823.

Dating Violence Attitude Scale (DVAS)

The scale, developed by Terzioğlu F. et al.,[23] comprises 28 items and five sub-dimensions: Sexual Violence, Emotional Violence, General Violence, Economic Violence and Physical Violence. This scale, developed to ascertain individuals' attitudes towards violent behaviour in a dating relationship, is a 5-point Likert-type scale. Responses to the scale items are scored as follows: '5' for strongly agree, '4' for agree, '3' for undecided, '2' for disagree, and '1' for strongly disagree. Accordingly, the maximum score that can be attained for each item on the scale is 5, while the minimum score is 1. A mean score approaching 5 indicates a negative attitude towards dating violence and a lack of

support for such behaviour. Items 1, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 6, 7, 7, 8, 9, 9, 10, 11, 12, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28 of the scale are reverse scored. Items 1-5 measure the General Violence Subdimension, 6-10 items measure the Physical Violence Subdimension, 11-16 items measure the Emotional Violence Subdimension, 17-21 items measure the Economic Violence Subdimension, and 22-28 items measure the Sexual Violence Subdimension. Scale mean scores approaching 5 indicate that individuals' attitudes towards dating violence do not support dating violence.

Statistical Analyses

The collected information was processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows version 27.0 software (IBM Corp, Armonk, NY, USA) and LISREL 8.8 programs were used to evaluate the data obtained from the study. Descriptive statistics were assessed with number, %, mean±standard deviation. In comparing continuous variables, Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess the normality of data. For the comparison of two groups,

Table 2. Some structural and violence experience characteristics of the participating students and their families (n=195)

	n	%		n	%
Family type			Father's behaviour and attitude		
Core	149	76.4	Assertive	116	59.5
Shattered	15	7.7	Passive	40	20.5
Wide	31	15.9	Aggressive	39	20.0
Family behaviour			Experience of violence		
Democratic	105	53.8	Yes	93	47.7
Inconsistent	26	13.3	No	102	52.3
Repressive/Authoritarian	26	13.3	Father's violence against the mother		
Overprotective	19	9.7	Yes	67	34.4
Perfectionist	9	4.6	No	128	65.6
Over-indulgent (no rules)	6	3.1	Mother's violence against the father		
Indifferent / Indifferent	4	2.1	Yes	37	19.0
Own behaviour attitude			No	158	81.0
Assertive	138	70.8	Dating experience		
Passive	53	27.2	Yes	158	81.0
Aggressive	4	2.1	No	37	19.0
Mother's behaviour and attitude			Experiencing violence in dating experience		
Assertive	137	70.3	Yes	51	26.2
Passive	42	21.5	No	144	73.8
Aggressive	16	8.2	Violence in Dating Experience		
			Yes	19	9.7
			No	176	90.3

Independent samples t test and for the comparison of three or more groups ANOVA were used. Pearson Correlation Analysis was performed to determine the relationships between the scales average score and the relationship between the continuous variables and the scales average score. Regression and path analyzes were performed to reveal the predictors of dating violence. The results were evaluated at 95% confidence interval and a significance level of 0.05 was used.

Ethical Aspects

Permission was obtained from Tarsus University Ethics Commission (25/04/2024, no. 39) for the research, author consent to use the scales and written informed consent was obtained from participants (included in online questionnaire intro, with questions needing approval). Participants were collected online and anonymously, without the researchers seeing their data. They acted in accordance with Helsinki. This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Results

Sociodemographic characteristics of the students participating in the study and some characteristics related to their educational life are given in Table 1. 65.6% of the students were studying in associate degree programmes and 60.5% were studying in health fields.

76.4% of the students in the study reported living in a nuclear family, and 53.8% reported that their family's behavioural attitude was democratic. 70.8% of the students described their behavioural attitude, 70.3% described their mother's attitude, and 59.5% described their father's attitude as sociable. 47.7% of the students stated that they had experienced violence from someone in their past lives, 34.4% said that their father had inflicted violence on their mother, and 19% stated that their mother had inflicted violence on their father. 81% of the students stated that they had dating experience, 32% of those who had dating experience had experienced dating violence and 9.7% had been subjected to violence during dating experience (Table 2).

Table 3. Scale scores of the students participating in the study (n=195)

	Mean±SD	Min–Max
Passivity, Assertiveness, Aggression Scale		
Passivity	21.35±5.87	10–37
Aggression	18.95±5.29	10–34
Assertiveness	28.99±5.42	10–39
Internalised Misogyny Scale	41.24±13.58	17–88
Devaluing women	12.01±5.13	4–27
Distrust of women	16.30±5.86	6–40
Valuing men more than women	12.92±5.95	7–38
Dating Violence Attitude Scale	128.98±9.23	85–140
General violence	24.13±1.85	16–25
Physical violence	23.41±2.14	15–25
Emotional violence	26.02±4.01	12–30
Economic violence	21.94±2.94	11–25
Sexual violence	33.47±3.30	18–35

SD: Standard deviation; Min: Minimum; Max: Maximum.

The mean scores of the students participating in the study on the Passivity, Assertiveness, Aggression Scale, Internalised Misogyny Scale and Dating Violence Attitude Scale are given in Table 3. Since the Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the general violence, physical violence and economic violence sub-dimensions of the Dating Violence Attitude Scale were low; they were not used in comparative analyses.

There is a weak positive correlation (r=0.219, p<0.01) between the mean IMS score and the mean PASS- Passivity score, a very weak positive correlation (r=0.151, p<0.05) between the mean PASS- Aggression score and a moderate negative correlation (r=-0.401, p<0.01) between the mean DVAS score. There is a very weak negative correlation (r=-00.142, p<0.05) between the mean DVAS score and the mean PASS- Passivity score, a weak negative correlation (r=-0.286, p<0.01) between the mean PASS- Aggression score and a moderate negative correlation (r=-0.401, p<0.01) between the mean IMS score (Table 4).

Table 5 shows the multiple linear regression analysis results for the factors affecting the study participants' mean scores of PASS- Passivity, PASS- Aggression, PASS- Assertiveness, DVAS and IMS.

It was determined that self-behaviour attitude, mother's education level, experiencing violence from anyone in the past and IMS-Valuing Men More Than Women score predicted PASS- Passivity score mean significantly (p<0.01). In the model, 28.1% of the variance was explained by the independent variables (F: 19.940, p: 0.000). Describing one's behaviour as assertive decreases passivity by 45%, illiteracy of the mother increases it by 9%, expressing that one has been subjected to violence in the past increases it by 18%, and a one-unit increase in the mean IMS- Valuing Men More Than Women score increases it by 15% (Table 5).

Table 4. Correlations between mean scores on the PAAS, IMS and DVAS

	PAAS- passivity	PAAS- aggression	PAAS -assertiveness	IMS
Images				
r	**0.219****	**0.151***	-0.123	
p	0.002	0.035	0.088	
IMS - devaluing women				
r	0.140	**0.158***	-0.108	
p	0.050	0.027	0.132	
IMS - distrust of women				
r	**0.169***	0.072	-0.061	
p	0.018	0.318	0.400	
IMS - valuing men more than women				
r	**0.213****	0.137	-0.127	
p	0.003	0.056	0.077	
DVAS				
r	**-0.142***	**-0.286****	0.047	**-0.401****
p	0.047	0.000	0.517	0.000

r: Pearson correlation coefficient; *: Correlation is significant at a 0.05 level; **: Correlation is significant at 0.01 level; PAAS: Passivity, Assertiveness and Aggression Scale; IMS: Internalised Misogyny Scale; DVAS: Dating Violence Attitude Scale.

Table 5. Variables predicting scale mean scores

Variables	B	SE	β	t	p	R	R²	Adj R²
Constant (passivity)	22.236	1.187		18.728	0.000			
Own behaviour attitude (1: Sociable, 0: Other)	-5.760	0.804	-0.447	-7.166	0.000			
Education status of the mother (1: Illiterate, 0: Other)	1.524	1.062	.090	1.435	0.005	**0.544**	**0.296**	**0.281**
Status of being subjected to violence (1: Seen, 0: Not seen)	2.160	0.732	0.184	-2.647	0.004			
IMS - valuing men more than women	0.151	0.061	0.153	2.468	0.014			
Durbin Watson: 1,955		F: 19.940		p: 0.000				
Constant (aggression)	37.010	5.457		6.782	0.000			
DVAS	-0.229	0.048	-0.400	-4.811	0.000			
Experience of violence (1: Seen, 0: Not seen)	0.879	0.739	0.083	1.189	0.031	**0.369**	**0.136**	**0.118**
Father behaviour attitude (1: aggressive, 0: Other)	2.214	0.923	0.168	2.399	0.017			
DVAS - general violence	-0.441	0.236	-0.155	-1.867	0.036			
Durbin Watson: 2.099		F: 7.492		p: 0.000				
Constant (assertiveness)	23.814	0.932		25.556	0.000			
Dating experience	2.107	0.892	0.153	2.362	0.019	**0.453**	**0.205**	**0.197**
Own behaviour attitude (1: Sociable, 0: Other)	4.908	0.769	0.412	6.381	0.000			
Durbin Watson: 2.058		F: 24.736		p: 0.000				
Constant (DVAS)	145.116	2.632		55.129	0.000			
Images	-0.230	0.043	-0.339	-5.373	0.000			
Aggression	-0.437	0.110	-0.250	-3.959	0.000			
Education level (1: Undergraduate, 0: Other)	3.227	1.209	0.166	2.669	0.008	**0.526**	**0.276**	**0.257**
Violence in a dating relationship (1: Seen, 0: Not seen)	3.518	1.369	0.168	2.570	0.011			
Violence in a dating relationship (1: Implemented, 0: Not applied)	-3.994	2.009	-0.129	-1.988	0.048			
Durbin Watson: 2.006		F: 14.435		p: 0.000				
Constant (IMS)	104.658	13.352		7.838	0.000			
DVAS	-0.555	0.097	-0.377	-5.742	0.000	**0.433**	**0.188**	**0.179**
Passivity	0.383	0.152	0.166	2.520	0.013			
Durbin Watson: 2.027		F: 22.169		p: 0.000				

B: Regression coefficient; SE: Standard error; β: Estimated risk ratio; R²: Variance explained; Adj R²: Adjusted R²; IMS: Internalised Misogyny Scale; DVAS: Dating Violence Attitude Scale.

It was determined that the mean DVAS score, having experienced Violence from anyone in the past, the father's behavioural attitude and the mean DVAS-General Violence score significantly predicted the mean PASS-Aggression score (p<0.01). In the model, 11.8% of the variance was explained by the independent variables (F: 7.492, p: 0.000).

A one-unit increase in the mean DVAS score decreased Aggression by 40%, an 8% increase in the mean score of having experienced violence in the past, a 17% increase in the mean score of describing the father's behaviour as aggressive, and a 16% decrease in the mean score of DVAS-General Violence (Table 5).
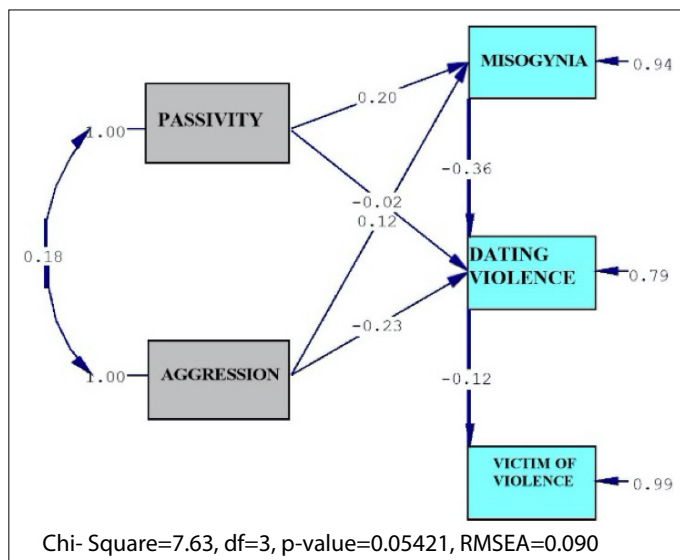
Figure 1. Path analysis of the relationship between behaviour attitude, internalised misogyny and dating violence of the students participating in the study.

There is a relationship between the behavioral attitudes, internalized misogyny and dating violence of the students who participated in the study. According to this relationship; passive and aggressive behavioral attitudes directly affect the acceptance of dating violence, and indirectly by increasing internalized misogyny; internalized misogyny directly increases the acceptance of dating violence (β: -0.36). As the attitude of acceptance of dating violence increases, the level of experiencing violence in dating relationships increases (β: -0.12). Path analizinde x/df: 2.54, RMSEA: 0.09, GFI: 0.98, AGFI: 0.92, CFI: 0.93, NFI: 0.90, IFI: 0.94 ve SRMR: 0.05 (Fig. 1).

Discussion

In our study, approximately half of the participants (47.7%) stated that they had experienced violence from someone in their past lives, more than one third (34.4%) stated that their father had inflicted violence on their mother, the majority (81%) stated that they had dating experience and approximately one third (32%) stated that they had experienced violence during dating experience. In a study conducted in Turkey, it was found that 51.8% of university students were exposed to violence during childhood, 37.8% frequently witnessed violence, 28.6% were exposed to dating violence, 22.1% used violence against their partner, and 13.9% had an emotional relationship that ended due to violence.[20] In studies, the prevalence rate of dating violence varies between 2% and 76% depending on the definition of dating violence used, the types of violence considered, and the assessment method.[24] The findings of our study are consistent with those reported

in the existing literature. The findings of this study show that a significant portion of university female students were exposed to violence both within the family and in dating relationships during childhood.

The findings of our study indicate that individuals who exhibit passive or aggressive behavioural attitudes are more likely to accept dating violence. The findings of this study can account for approximately 26% of the factors that cause of the occurrence of dating violence. The acceptance of violence in dating relationships is increased by 34% with an increase in internalized misogyny, 25% with an increase in aggressive behaviour, and 13% with an increase in the assertion that they have used violence in a dating relationship. In a study conducted with students who had dated in the past, aggressive behavior was found to be associated with both dating violence victimization and perpetration.[25] Findings from another study show that internalized misogyny is associated with increased passive behavior, attitudes, and dating violence victimization.[9] The findings of our study suggest that changing behavioral attitudes may affect the acceptance of dating violence. Our study revealed that passive and aggressive behavioral attitudes increase internalized misogyny and indirectly increase the acceptance of dating violence. The increase in acceptance of dating violence is associated with the prevalence of dating violence. Therefore, it can be assumed that changing behavioral attitudes will also be an effective method for preventing dating violence. It is predicted that internalized misogyny will lead to an increase in the acceptance of dating violence. Such attitudes may ultimately lead to the perception that violence is an acceptable form of revenge. The findings of our study are supported by existing research in the literature.[26] It can be assumed that interventions that reduce internalized misogyny may, as a result, also reduce the incidence of dating violence.

In our study, it was shown that defining the behavioral attitude as assertive increased the likelihood of exhibiting assertive behavior and decreased the likelihood of exhibiting passive behavior. This finding supports the idea that assertive individuals have a better grasp of their own personality and are therefore more likely to express their thoughts more precisely.[27] It is thought that defending one's rights and expressing one's feelings, thoughts, and desires in a constructive manner decreases passivity and aggression.[28] Teaching or developing assertive behavior skills in young girls is effective in preventing violence by not accepting dating violence. A study conducted with 862 students who reported having had a dating relationship in the previous year reached a similar conclusion, finding that assertive behavioral characteristics

were associated with reducing dating violence.[29] Previous exposure to violence is associated with an increase in passive and aggressive behavioral attitudes. In particular, exposure to violence by the father was found to increase aggressive attitudes. At the same time, the mother's level of education, literacy, and passive behavior are among the factors that cause the development of such attitudes. A study has shown that as attitudes toward aggression increase, the likelihood of both perpetrating and experiencing dating violence also increases.[30] The findings of our study are consistent with the findings of previous research indicating that individuals with aggressive attitudes may be at higher risk of resorting to violence due to their anger.

Our findings lend support to the hypothesis that exposure to violence during childhood, or the witnessing of parental violence, increases the likelihood of perpetrating or becoming a victim of violence in adulthood. Additionally, an attitude that places more excellent value on men than women has been linked to increased passivity, which may be a consequence of the belief that women deserve violence.

Limitations

The study was limited to female university students. The findings were not based on direct observation but on the participants' self-reports.

Conclusion

The experience of dating violence is linked to the acceptance of such behaviour and the internalisation of misogynistic attitudes, influenced by passive and aggressive behaviours. The adoption of assertive attitudes can prevent victimisation in the context of dating violence by decreasing the prevalence of misogynistic attitudes. Behavior-based education programs developed in cooperation with school nurses and psychological counseling and guidance units starting from primary school age will raise awareness of individuals. In addition, regular trainings provided by psychological counseling and support centers in universities will reduce the incidence of dating violence. It is predicted that programs to combat dating violence, which will be compulsory at all levels of education, will increase the health of individuals.

In contrast to the limited number of studies in the existing literature, our study integrates many elements. The findings and results of the study will provide insight into the most effective strategies for reducing dating violence. It is recommended that further research be conducted on the study's parameters with a more significant number of participants from different regions.

References

1. Tülüce HA. Bireysellik ve toplumsallık bağlamında modern bireyin anlam arayışı. J Univ Res 2022;5(3):305-12. [Article in Turkish] [CrossRef]

2. Duyan V, Gelbal S. Passivity, Assertiveness and Aggression Scale-PAAS: Study of reliability and validity. TJFMPC 2016;10(4):233-42. [CrossRef]

3. Postolatii E. Assertiveness: Theoretical approaches and benefits of assertive behavior. J Innov Psychol Educ Didact 2017;21(1):83-96.

4. Çakmak A, Şahin A, Özkubat S. Üniversite öğrencilerinin edilgenlik, girişkenlik ve saldırganlık düzeyleri ile benlik saygıları arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi. Soc Sci Stud J 2024;4(24):5097-105. [Article in Turkish] [CrossRef]

5. Uzuntarla Y, Cihangiroğlu N, Ceyhan S, Uğrak U. Üniversite öğrencilerinin atılganlık düzeylerinin analizi. TAF Prev Med Bull 2016;15(2):98-104. [Article in Turkish] [CrossRef]

6. Qing S. Gender role attitudes and male-female income differences in China. J Chin Sociol 2020;7(1):12. [CrossRef]

7. Oxford English Dictionary. Misogyny. Available at: https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=misogyny. Accessed July 1, 2025.

8. Evrenol Öçal S. Üniversite öğrencilerine yönelik geliştirilen kadına karşı her türlü düşmanca tutuma (mizojini) karşı eğitim programının etkinliğinin değerlendirilmesi [Doctoral dissertation]. Hacettepe Üniversitesi; 2019. [In Turkish]

9. Evteeva M. Internalized misogyny: The patriarchy inside our heads. J Integr Soc Sci 2024;14(1):82-108.

10. Sözbir ŞY, Vural G, Ünal Toprak F. A study for testing the validity and reliability of the Turkish version of the internalized misogyny scale. Int J Ment Health Addict 2021;19:1705-15. [CrossRef]

11. Çelik G. Öldüren erkek(lik)ler: Eşine şiddet uygulamış cezaevindeki erkekler. Istanbul: NotaBene Yayınları; 2017. [In Turkish]

12. World Health Organization. World report on violence and health. Available at: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9241545615. Accessed July 1, 2025.

13. Vega A, Cabello R, Megías-Robles A, Gómez-Leal R, Fernández-Berrocal P. Emotional intelligence and aggressive behaviors in adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Trauma Violence Abuse 2022;23(4):1173-83. [CrossRef]

14. Ortiz Jiménez EM, Gómez-Benito J, Llach SL, González A, Ochoa S. Relationship between emotional awareness, symptoms, and protective factors in children exposed to intimate partner violence. Psychol Trauma 2024;16(7):1063-74. [CrossRef]

15. Taşağal D. Sosyal hizmette krize müdahale yaklaşımının aile içi şiddet mağduru kadın sorunu üzerinden tartışılması. Tıbbi Sosyal Hizmet Derg 2023;(21):148-71. [Article in Turkish] [CrossRef]

16. Taquette SR, Monteiro DLM. Causes and consequences of adolescent dating violence: A systematic review. J Inj Violence Res 2019;11(2):137-47. [CrossRef]

17. Akış N, Korkmaz NH, Taneri PE, Özkaya G, Güney E. Üniversite öğrencilerinde flört şiddeti sıklığı ve etkileyen etmenler. ESTÜDAM Halk Sağlığı Derg 2019;4(3):294-300. [Article in Turkish] [CrossRef]

18. Woolweaver AB, Abu Khalaf N, Espelage DL, Zhou Z, Reynoso Marmolejos R, Calnan M, et al. Outcomes associated with adolescent dating and sexual violence victimization: A systematic review of school-based literature. Trauma Violence Abuse 2024;25(4):2781-96. [CrossRef]

19. Sezer S, Ertel R, Ertel İ. Bir iktidar ve meşrulaştırma aracı olarak flört şiddeti: Muğla Kötekli Mahallesi örneği. Marmara Univ Kadın Toplumsal Cinsiyet Araştırmaları Derg 2020;4(2):85-115. [Article in Turkish] [CrossRef]

20. Gökkaya VB, Öztürk M. Çocukluktaki aile içi şiddet öyküsü ile flört şiddeti arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi. Manisa Celal Bayar Univ Sos Bilimler Derg 2021;19(4):219-40. [Article in Turkish] [CrossRef]

21. Webster K, Diemer K, Honey N, Mannix S, Mickle J, Morgan J, et al. Australians' attitudes to violence against women and gender equality. Findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS). Sydney, NSW: ANROWS; 2018.

22. Sözbir ŞY, Vural G, Ünal Toprak F. A study for testing the validity and reliability of the Turkish version of the internalized misogyny scale. Int J Ment Health Addict 2021;19:1705-15. [CrossRef]

23. Terzioğlu F, Gönenç İM, Özdemir F, Güvenç G, Kök G, Yılmaz-Sezer N, et al. The validity and reliability of the dating violence scale. J Anatolia Nurs Health Sci 2016;19(4):225-32.

24. Öztürk M, Gökkaya VB. Üniversite öğrencilerinin flört şiddeti mağduriyetleri ile mücadele stratejileri. Fırat Univ Sos Bilimler Derg 2022;32(2):795-806. [Article in Turkish] [CrossRef]

25. Valdivia-Salas S, Lombas AS, Jiménez TI, Lucas-Alba A, Villanueva-Blasco VJ. Profiles and risk factors for teen dating violence in Spain. J Interpers Violence 2023;38(3-4):4267-92. [CrossRef]

26. Erenoğlu R, Sözbir ŞY. Is there a relationship between internalized misogyny and attitudes towards dating violence in young women? Arch Psychiatr Nurs 2024;51:89-94. [CrossRef]

27. Uçar ES. Üniversite öğrencilerinin iletişim becerileri ve atılganlık düzeylerinin incelenmesi. [Master's thesis]. Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi; 2019. [In Turkish]

28. Darojat K, Sa'diyah EH, Hidayah R. Efforts to prevent violence in dating. Feelings J Couns Psychol 2024;1(1):15-22. [CrossRef]

29. Villanueva-Blasco VJ, Iranzo B, Mateu-Mollá J, Carrascosa L, Gómez-Martínez S, Corral-Martínez M, et al. Teen dating violence: Predictive role of sexism and the mediating role of empathy and assertiveness based on gender. Front Psychol 2024;15:1393085. [CrossRef]

30. Dodaj A, Sesar K, Šimić N. Impulsivity and empathy in dating violence among a sample of college females. Behav Sci 2020;10(7):117. [CrossRef]