DATING VIOLENCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: THE ROLE OF SELF-ESTEEM, PERCEIVED RELATIONSHIP SELF-EFFICACY AND ATTACHMENT STYLES[i]

Demet Yolcu[1ii],
Sinem Evin Akbay[2]
[1]Specialist Psychological Counsellor,
Turkey
[2]Assist. Prof., Education Sciences,
Mersin University,
Turkey

Abstract:

This study aims to examine what extent self-esteem, perceived relationship self-efficacy, and attachment styles predict the attitudes of university students towards dating violence. The sample group of the study was composed of 769 (555 women, 214 men) university students who study at Mersin University. "Demographic Data Form", "Dating Violence Attitude Scale", "Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale", "Relationship Self-Efficacy Scale", "Relationships Scales Questionnaire" were used as instruments in the present study. As a result of the findings obtained, it was found that there is a negative correlation between dating violence and self-esteem, perceived relationship self- efficacy and there is a positive correlation between dating violence and preoccupied attachment style. According to the results of multiple regression analysis and stepwise regression analysis, It is shown that relationship self-efficacy, self-esteem and preoccupied attachment style have a significant predictive role on dating violence among university students and perceived relationship self-efficacy has the biggest predictive role on dating violence attitudes. Implications of the findings were discussed in the discussion part of this article and some suggestions were given for further researches.

Keywords: dating violence, self-esteem, perceived relationship self-efficacy, attachment styles

Özet

Bu araştırmanın amacı, üniversite öğrencilerinin flört şiddetine yönelik tutumlarını benlik saygısı, algılanan ilişki özyeterliği ve bağlanma biçimlerinin ne derece yordadığının incelenmesidir. Araştırma Mersin Üniversitesi'nde öğrenim gören 769 (555 kadın, 214 erkek) üniversite öğrencisi ile yapılmıştır. Veri toplama araçları olarak "Kişisel Bilgi Formu", ''Flört Şiddeti Tutum Ölçeği", "Rosenberg Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği", "İlişki Özyeterlik Ölçeği" ve "İlişki Ölçekleri Anketi" kullanılmıştır. Flört şiddeti ile algılanan ilişki özyeterliği ve benlik saygısı arasında negatif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki, flört şiddeti ile saplantılı bağlanma biçimi arasında ise pozitif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Yapılan çoklu ve adımsal regresyon analizi sonuçlarına göre algılanan ilişki özyeterliğinin, benlik saygısının ve saplantılı bağlanma biçiminin üniversite öğrencilerinin flört şiddetine yönelik tutumlarını anlamlı derecede yordadığı, flört şiddetini en çok yordayan değişkenin algılanan ilişki özyeterliği olduğu saptanmıştır. Elde edilen bulgular tartışılıp yorumlanarak, gelecekte flört şiddetine yönelik yapılacak çalışmalara önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: flört şiddeti, benlik saygısı, algılanan ilişki özyeterliği, bağlanma biçimleri

1. Introduction

Dating violence in this study is considered as one of the types of violence and it is the result of the desire of the partners to control each other in a romantic relationship, a violation of respect for each other and the restriction of the rights of individuals (Sünetçi, et.al., 2016). Dating violence is one of the interpersonal dimensions of violence concept, which is quite common nowadays, in romantic relationship patterns. In this study, besides the general violence attitude lower dimension, lower dimensions such as physical violence like hitting or pushing; psychological violence like being too jealous, humiliation or solicitation; sexually violence like raping, sexual harassment or sexual pressure (Yumuşak, 2013) and economic lower dimension such as withholding partner to access or use a pecuniary resource that s/he uses or taking her/him under control economically (Yavuz, 2016). Dating violence is a sort of violence in a relationship that involves a single act or perpetual acts, which can be practiced by a partner or both partners through the use of violence as coercion or harassment and to gain sovereignty or authority. And, it might be seen in every period of human life including adolescence, adulthood, and senility (Carlos et al., 2017). However, according to Bugay and Çok (2015)'s study, it has shown that physical and sexual violence attitudes in relationships are more frequent especially in adolescent groups. When studies about gender are considered, Clements, Clauss, Casanave and Laajala (2018)' s study shows that dating violence does not vary according to men and women; and that women use dating violence at least as much as men. But according to the Simister (2012)'s study, statistically physical violence victimization of women in relationships is more than men. Even in countries considered

as welfare states, the number of women who got killed or injured in the context of dating violence is more than the number of men.

Self-esteem, as one of the variables discussed in this study, is a belief system of self that includes self-efficacy, motivation, and self-regulation (Mruk, 2006). Having a high level of self-esteem is when an individual is satisfied with his / herself without finding it more or less than it is. The individual considers him/herself worthy of being loved and liked; to have a positive perception about him/herself and to find him/herself valuable. It includes the individual accepting him/herself the way they are and to trust their essence (Yörükoğlu, 2012). According to Shaw (2009)'s study, there is a significant negative correlation between self-esteem and dating violence. When self-esteem increases, dating violence decreases and likewise when self-esteem decreases, dating violence increases. According to Yıldırım (2016), there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and dating violence. Again, according to this study, individuals with low self-esteem might exhibit more angry behaviors than individuals with high self-esteem and might have more difficulties in coping when they encounter stressful cases. However, they might have difficulty in regulating their emotions and therefore as a result, they might use violence as a coping strategy. Perceived self-efficacy, as another variable discussed in this study, includes all the beliefs of an individual for her/his relationship. Meanwhile, self-efficacy belief is an individual's belief in his / her ability and ability to create, edit and execute a possible action plan for managing possible life events (Bandura, 1995), relationship self-efficacy includes all of the expectations of the individual to successfully resolve conflicts in romantic relationships, to agree on differences with the partner and to defend their rights in the relationship (Raghavan et al., 2005). Individuals with a high level of relationship self-efficacy are generally individuals who have a secure attachment style, respect for themselves as well as other individuals with whom they are in a relationship, do not hesitate to establish emotional intimacy and express themselves satisfactorily in their close relationships. They produce constructive solutions to stressful events or conflicts in their relationships and have a relationship based on a lower level of anxiety, mutual respect and good communication (Akan, 2018). Individuals with low self-efficacy have difficulty in solving the problems that they encounter in the process of dating violence or cannot prevent dating violence which they are likely to encounter in the future. This increases the likelihood of being exposed to dating violence and affects the quality and duration of their romantic relationships (Baker, et.al., 2016). Like the perceived self-efficacy, attachment styles are also the predictor variable in this study. The concept of attachment was first addressed by Bowlby, and attachment styles are about the bond that is developed between individuals and their first carers in the first years of their lives and determined the quality of their interpersonal relationships in later years of their life (Hazan and Shaver, 1994). In the relationship of the baby with his/her first caregiver, the caregiver's style of meeting baby's needs has an important role in terms of the relationships that the baby establishes during his/her life and to maintain these relationships. Therefore, attachment occurs and develops as a result of repeated interaction between the infant and the first caregiver in the early stages of life (Korkut,

2013). In this study, four forms of attachment which are secure, preoccupied, dismissing and fearful, which are formed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), are discussed. Safe attachment can be defined as the belief that babies can trust their caregivers as a result of their care, love, and needs being met by the caregiver in a good and orderly manner based on their relationship with their caregivers. It represents the attachment style adopted by the baby in their relationships over time (Majidli, 2018) and secure attachment style has a positive self and a positive attitude towards others (Bartolomew and Horowitz, 1991). Meanwhile, individuals with preoccupied attachment style have positive self-perception towards others and negative self-perception towards themselves (Yıldırım, 2018), have unrealistic expectations and obsessions in their relationships (Akbay, 2015). Individuals with dismissing attachment style have positive self-perception for themselves and negative self-perception towards other people (Yıldırım, 2018). People with this style of attachment can deny the value of their close relationship, avoid them, and defend the importance of independence in their lives (Kuyumcu, 2011). The fearful attachment style can be regarded as the inverse of the secure attachment. These people who have this attachment style have a negative self-perception for themselves and others. They do not find themselves valuable enough and find it difficult to trust others (Yüksel, 2016). In those individuals, there are general anxiety and the desire to please people and they care about the impressions of the people with whom they are connected (Sümer and Güngör, 1999). As attachment styles are highly effective in interpersonal relationships and problems (Horowitz, et.al., 1993), insecure attachment of one or both individuals in romantic relationships poses a greater risk for dating violence (Yarkovsky, 2016).

Dating violence might affect the quality and quantity of individuals' romantic relationships and reduce the level of satisfaction from romantic relationships. At the same time, it might affect the integrity of individuals and psychological states and, also it might reduce the level of their life satisfaction. Considering the importance and indispensability of romantic relationships in human life, the extent to which dating violence affects individuals' lives is revealed. Therefore, the conceptualization of dating violence and its types is quite important in raising awareness about dating violence and reducing the effects of dating violence. Benefiting from developmental psychology to avert dating violence and performing applications according to traits of developmental stages are so important. It is considered that it will create a resource in school practices for building healthy parent relationships in the applications with students and their families, raising awareness about the effect of romantic relationship in the familial relationships, describing the violence type that individuals face and improving individuals' copy skills. Therefore, it is thought that the present study will contribute to the field of Guidance and Psychological Counseling and its employees and will be important in terms of providing resources for the studies to be carried out in this field. In addition to this, self-esteem and attachment styles are important notions that are discussed in so many studies in the psychology literature. As for relationship self-efficacy, it is a quite new notion in our country's literature and, it is described as the self-belief in the conflict resolution in his/her relationship. It is thought that determining the direct or indirect effects of all these factors

on dating violence will be important in terms of understanding the concept of dating violence and preventing dating violence and, will be a source for future researches. In brief, the fact that dating violence is a very common phenomenon, damaging the physical and mental health of individuals and minimizing the satisfaction of their life and relationship has led to the prevalence of studies on dating violence in recent years and investigating various variables that may predict dating violence. This study aims to examine the degree of self-esteem, perceived relationship self-efficacy and attachment styles towards university students' dating violence attitudes.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design
This research is designed according to the relational screening model which is one of the quantitative research methods. This method is a research method that is used in researches carried out to determine the current situation to reach large samples and collect quantitative data and finally to generalize it (Karasar, 2007).

2.2 Study Group
The study population of this research consists of undergraduate students studying at Mersin University in the Fall Semester in the 2018-2019 academic year. The sample of the study has consisted of 1070 (788 (73.6%) female, 282 (26.4 %) male) students from Mersin University, who study in four major faculties; in the departments of Faculty of Education, Science and Literature, Engineering, Economics, and Administrative Sciences. However, 301 students who had never had a romantic relationship before were excluded from the analysis, so the analyses were performed on 769 (555 (72.2%) female and 214 (27.8%) male) data sets. In the process of sampling selection, the convenience sampling method was used.

2.3 Data Collection Tools
2.3.1 Personal Information Form
With the Personal Information Form created within the scope of this study, the aim was to obtain the sociodemographic information of the students participating in the research. In this context, questions were asked about student's gender, age, whether or not if he/she ever had a romantic relationship before, whether if he/she has a romantic relationship at the moment and what the level of academic grade is.

2.3.2 Dating Violence Attitude Scale
The Dating Violence Attitude Scale (DVAS), which aims to measure the attitudes of individuals towards dating violence, was adapted by Terzioğlu, et al. (2016). The scale, which can be applied to adults over 18 years of age, consists of 5 sub-dimensions: sexual, economic, physical, emotional and general violence. The items in the range of 1st -5th measure the General Violence Sub-Dimension, the items in the range of 6-10th items measure the Physical Violence Sub-Dimension, the items in range of 11-16th items

measure the Emotional Violence Sub-Dimension, the items in range of 17-21st measure Sub-dimension of the Economic Violence, the items in range of 22-28th items measure the Sub-dimensions of Sexual Violence. There are 28 items in total and 23 items are scored in the opposite direction. The items that are not scored in the opposite direction are: 2, 17, 23, 24, 27. 5-point Likert Type (1= I strongly disagree, 2= I disagree, 3= I am undecided, 4= I agree, 5= I agree) was used in the scale. The fact that the average of the scores obtained from the scale is close to 5, shows that the individuals do not have an attitude that supports dating violence. In this case, the increase in scores obtained from the scale is interpreted as low supportive attitudes towards dating violence. In the reliability studies of the scale, internal consistency analysis and test-retest reliability analysis were performed. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.91 and the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients of the subscales were 0.72-0.85. In this context, it is interpreted that the scale is appropriate and reliable (Terzioğlu, et al., 2016). As a result of the analyses conducted within the scope of the present study, the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of DVAS was found to be .91.

2.3.3 Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RBSI), which was developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965 and aim to measure the self-esteem levels of individuals, is a 63-item scale consisting of 12 subscales; self-esteem, continuity of self-concept, inability to trust people, sensitivity to criticism, depressive affect, dreaming, psychosomatic symptoms, feeling threat in interpersonal relationships, being able to participate in discussions, parental relationship, relationship with father and psychic loneliness. However, in the present study, the self-esteem subscale was used. A short form of self-esteem assessment scale was adapted to Turkish by Çuhadaroğlu in 1986 (Korkmaz, 1996). The scale items are graded in a 4-point Likert format between "so right" and "so wrong". Half of the scale items have consisted of positive items and the other half are consisted of negative items. The items 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 in the scale were evaluated as so correct = 4, correct = 3, false = 2, so wrong = 1, while questions 3, 5, 8, 9, 10 were evaluated as so correct = 1, correct = 2, false = 3, so wrong = 4. The high scores of the scale indicate a high level of self-esteem (Öklük, 2018). In the adaptation study, test-retest reliability analysis was performed, and the reliability coefficient was found to be .75. The validity coefficient of the scale was found to be.71 (Korkmaz, 1996). In this study, the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) of the RSES was .86.

2.3.4 Relationship Self-Efficacy Scale

The Relationship Self-Efficacy Scale (RSES), which was developed by Lopez, Morua, and Rice (2007) and aims to measure the perceived relationship self-efficacy of individuals, was adapted to Turkish by Akan (2018). In the original version of the scale, which had 25 items and 3 sub-dimensions, there were 16 items and 3 sub-dimensions that measured relationship self-efficacy. These sub-dimensions are; 'Reciprocity', 'Emotional Control', 'Differentiation'. All 16 items on the scale are positive. The lowest score to be obtained from the scale is 16, and the highest value to be obtained is 80 points. The scale was composed of a 5-point Likert type that ranged from "I never do" to "I always do". The

scores obtained from the scale indicate the relationship self-efficacy levels of the respondents. High scores obtained from the scale indicate that individuals have high relationship self-efficacy. The Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was found to be .81. The test-retest reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .90. The scale, which can be applied to individuals over the age of 18, is reliable and valid (Akan, 2019). In the present study, the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) of the scale was found to be .86.

2.3.5 Relationships Scales Questionnaire

The Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) that was developed by Griffin and Bartholomew in 1994 and was adapted to Turkish by Sümer and Güngör (1999), is a 30-item scale and this scale aims to measure the four attachment styles with different items in the scale. The RSQ was composed of Hazan and Shaver's attachment measurement in 1987, the Relationship Questionnaire formed by Bartholomew and Horowitz in 1991, and the items in the Adult Attachment Scale of Collins and Read in 1990. The participants evaluate themselves and their general attitudes in their close relationships with each item in the scale with a 7 Likert type scale (1 = never identifies me; 7 = completely identifies me). Secure and dismissing attachment styles consist of five items, while preoccupied and fearful attachment styles consist of four items. The scores that determine the four attachment styles are obtained by summing the items that measure these styles and dividing this sum by the number of items in each sub-scale. Thus, the scores obtained from the subscales vary between 1 and 7 points. The scores obtained in this way determine the attachment styles of the participants. In this process, it is commented that each participant has the attachment style which they take the highest score on. 4 substances used for fearful attachment are; 1, 5, 12, 24 and 4 items used for preoccupied attachment are; 6 (scored in the opposite direction), 8, 16, 25. 5 items in which dismissing attachment was scored; 2, 6, 19, 22, 26 and 3, 9 (scored in the opposite direction), 10, 15, 28 (scored in the opposite direction) points are used for secure attachment. The internal consistency coefficients for the subscales of the questionnaire range from .27 to .61. As a result of the test-retest, the correlations ranged from .54 to .78 (Sümer and Güngör, 1999). In this study, the construct validity of the scale was discussed separately for the subscales consisting of 4 attachment styles in the RSQ and as a result of the analysis, internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach Alpha) of the scale for subscales were found as; .59 for fearful attachment, .51 for dismissing attachment, .25 for secure attachment, and .20 for preoccupied attachment.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data obtained through the scales used in this study were transferred to digital media and were made suitable for analysis. Data were analyzed using SPSS 22 (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences).

To analyze the data, firstly T-test for independent groups was used for gender and whether they have a relationship or not during this research, and later on One-way ANOVA was used for the grade level variable. Then, the Pearson Correlation Coefficients

between dependent and independent variables were calculated. After that, multiple regression analysis assumptions were examined. For this purpose, firstly, whether the scores have a normal distribution in all scales or not and then whether there is a linear relationship between the self-esteem, perceived relationship self-efficacy and attachment styles which are predictive variables and the dating violence predicted variable were examined by scattering diagram in SPSS program. And finally, multiple regression and stepwise regression analyses were performed to check whether the variables of self-esteem, perceived relationship self-efficacy and attachment styles predict university students' attitudes towards dating violence and to determine the predictive power of each variable. In the research, the level of significance was determined as .05.

3. Findings

Initially in the analysis of the data, multiple regression analysis assumptions were examined. After the examination, it was observed that the scores obtained from all scales showed a normal distribution and the relationships between self-esteem, perceived relationship self-efficacy and attachment styles which are predictive variables and predicted variable dating violence were linear. Then, the Pearson Correlation Coefficients between the variables were calculated and multiple regression analysis was performed. Finally, a stepwise regression analysis was performed to examine the extent to which variables predict the dependent variable.

The Pearson correlation coefficients between the variable dating violence predicted for 769 university students that form the sample and self-esteem, the predictive relationship self-efficacy, and attachment styles are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients Between Dating Violence and
Self-Esteem, Perceived Relationship Self-Efficacy and Attachment Styles

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Dating Violence	1						
2. Self-esteem	.18**	1					
3. Relationship Self-efficacy	.24**	.28**	1				
4. Fearful Attachment	-.03	.15**	-.05	1			
5. Preoccupied Attachment	-.15**	-.18**	.07*	.16**	1		
6. Dismissing Attachment	.05	-.02	.00	.43**	-.13**	1	
7. Secure Attachment	-.00	.15**	.14**	-.27**	.04	-.07*	1
Arithmetic Mean	4.45	31.50	63.13	4.28	3.73	4.64	4.12
Sd	.51	5.44	9.37	1.13	.93	.94	.82

*p<.05 **p<.001.

As shown in Table 1, a significant positive relationship was found between attitudes towards dating violence and self-esteem (r = .18, p <.001) and perceived relationship self-efficacy (r = .24, p <.001). In the light of these findings, the higher the perceived self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs in romantic relationships, the more supportive attitudes towards dating violence decreased (The increase in score for dating violence refers to an attitude

that does not support dating violence). According to another finding, there is no relationship between attitudes towards dating violence and fearful, dismissing and secure attachment, while there is a significant negative correlation between preoccupied attachment style ($r = -.15$, $p < .001$). According to this, it is seen that university students who develop a preoccupied attachment pattern in their relationships have a more supportive attitude towards dating violence.

When the relationships between the other variables used in the research are examined; a significant positive correlation was found between self-esteem and perceived relationship self-efficacy ($r = .28$, $p < .001$). There is a negative correlation between self-esteem level and fearful attachment style ($r = -.15$, $p < .001$) and preoccupied attachment ($r = -.18$, $p < .001$). At the same time, a significant positive correlation was found between self-esteem level and secure attachment style ($r = .15$, $p < .001$). There is a weak positive correlation between the level of relationship self-efficacy and preoccupied attachment ($r = .07$, $p < .001$), and a significant positive relationship between secure attachment style ($r = .14$, $p < .001$). The relationship of the sample's dating violence scores with the predictive variables of self-esteem, perceived relationship self-efficacy and preoccupied attachment style was tested through multiple regression analysis and the results obtained are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Self-Esteem, Perceived
Relationship Self-Efficacy and Preoccupied Attachment as Predictors of Dating Violence

	B	SH$_B$	B	t	p
Constant	3.687	.162	-	22.816	.000
Self-esteem	.009	.003	.092	2.496	.013
Relationship Self-efficacy	.013	.002	.231	6.369	.000
Preoccupied Attachment	-.084	.020	-.152	-4.305	.000

$R^2 = .096$ F $_{(3-766)} = 27.238$, $p < .05$

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that self-esteem, perceived relationship self-efficacy and preoccupied attachment style predict the attitudes of university students towards dating violence (F $_{(3-766)} = 27.238$, $p < .001$). According to this result, all independent variables commonly explain 10% of students' attitudes toward dating violence. The data obtained in the study, stepwise regression analysis, also called stepwise regression, was used to measure the common effects of the predictive variables as well as their individual effects, and the results of the analysis are given in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, considering the standardized regression coefficients (β), perceived relationship self-efficacy ($\beta = .231$), self-esteem ($\beta = .092$), preoccupied attachment ($\beta = -.152$) variables predict the attitudes of university students towards dating violence in a significant level (F $_{(3-766)} = 27.238$, $p < .001$). According to this result, when the predictive variables are considered, perceived relationship self-efficacy is the most predictive variable of university students' attitudes towards dating violence and predicts 6% of the total variance. Perceived relationship self-efficacy explains 7.5% of the total variance with self-esteem. Perceived relationship self-efficacy, self-esteem, and

obsessive attachment explained 9.6% of the attitudes towards dating violence together (R = .310, R^2 = .096).

Table 3: Results of Hierarchic Regression Analysis of Self-Esteem, Perceived.
Relationship Self-Efficacy and Preoccupied Attachment as Predictors of Dating Violence

Model	Variables	B	SH$_B$	β	t	p	R	R²	F	p
1	Constant	3.597	.124	-	29.113	.000	.245	.060	49,023	.000
	Relationship Self-efficacy	.014	.002	.24	7.002	.000				
2	Constant	3.346	.142	-	23.486	.000	.273	.075	30,883	.000
	Relationship Self-efficacy	.012	.002	.209	5.760	.000				
	Self-Esteem	.012	.003	.126	3.470	.001				
3	Constant	3.687	.162	-	22.816	.000	.310	.096	27,238	.000
	Relationship Self-efficacy	.013	.002	.231	6.369	.000				
	Self-Esteem	.009	.003	.092	2.496	.013				
	Preoccupied Attachment	-.084	.020	-.152	-4.305	.000				

In brief, it was found that self-esteem, perceived relationship efficacy and preoccupied attachment style predicts university students' dating violence attitudes significantly. In that case, when university students' self-esteem and perceived relationship efficacy levels increase, their supportive attitudes towards dating violence decrease. And when university students have preoccupied attachment style, it increases their supportive attitudes towards dating violence. And it was also found that the most predictor variable of university students' supportive attitudes towards dating violence is perceived relationship efficacy.

4. Discussion, Conclusion and Implications

This study aims to investigate how the extent of the attitudes of university students towards dating violence is predicted by self-esteem, perceived relationship self-efficacy and attachment styles. Within the scope of the research, it was observed that the perceived relationship self-efficacy variable was the most predictive variable of university students' attitudes towards dating violence. According to the findings of the study, while the perceived relationship self-efficacy levels of university students increase, their supportive attitudes towards dating violence decrease. Relationship self-efficacy includes all the expectations of the individual to successfully deal with conflicts in the relationship, to agree on the differences with the partner and to defend their rights in the relationship (Raghavan, et.al., 2005). Increasing relationship self-efficacy decreases the supportive attitudes of individuals towards violence in general. The increase in the relationship self-efficacy affects the quality and satisfaction of the relationship, and the decrease causes a rise in the disagreements experienced in the relationship and makes it difficult to resolve these disagreements (Akan, 2019). Sullivan, McPartland, Price, Cruza-Guet and Swan (2013)'s study with women stated that the relationship self-efficacy prevents the dating violence and all kinds of its mental effects. The low level of relationship self-efficacy of women increases the psychological and sexual violence

encountered in relationships. The findings of these studies support the current study. Baker, et.al. (2016)'s study shows that there is a relationship between dating violence and relationship self-efficacy. But again, according to this study, individuals with high self-efficacy have low level of termination when they encounter dating violence because individuals have beliefs that they can solve the problems that they experience in their relationships and therefore, it is thought that they continue their relationship. It is expected that supportive attitudes towards dating violence will be lower when individuals with high self-efficacy express themselves better, have more respect for themselves and their partner, produce more constructive solutions to the problems that they face in the relationship, have better communication with his/her partner and have a secure attachment style.

According to the findings, the other variable that predicts the attitudes of university students towards dating violence is self-esteem. When the self-esteem level of university students is increased, the supportive attitudes towards dating violence are decreased. Yıldırım (2016) found similar findings over men with her study. Increasing the self-esteem level of men reduces their supportive attitudes towards dating violence. Shaw (2009) pointed out a negative relationship between self-esteem and flirting violence. The decrease in self-esteem levels of individuals increases violence in relationships, likewise, dating violence decreases self-esteem levels. In the study of Burke, Stets and Pirog-Good (1988), self-esteem levels of both genders, indirect effects of self-esteem are manifested by the acceptance of violence as sexual violence for women and physical violence for men. In addition to these studies, there are also studies showing that there is no relationship between dating violence and self-esteem. Gosselin (2008)'s study shows that there is not a significant relationship between self-esteem and dating violence. Self-esteem was not associated with being subjected to physical violence, frequency of dating violence, applying dating violence or being a victim. Craver (1999) 's study also reached a conclusion that supports this situation. This study shows that there is not a significant relationship between the violence experienced by female students, who are university students, and their self-esteem. But in this study, it was found that there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and supportive attitudes toward dating violence. Supportive attitudes toward dating violence of individuals with high self-esteem might be low, due to they have high self-worth, find themselves worthy to be loved, have good relationships with people, and might produce solutions to the problems they face. Since those individuals' tendency of aggression and violence may not be high, their rate of dating violence may be low, and they might be less likely to accept violence as they find themselves valuable.

In terms of dating violence, attachment styles are quite important (Farr, 2000). Attachment styles are behavioral pattern forms, which determine the quality of interpersonal relations in later years in life, of the attachment that occurs between the caregiver and individual in the first years of an individual's life and at those times provide the comprise of the feeling of trust (Soysal, et al., 2005). The individuals who have insecure attachment styles have a higher possibility of behaving violently (Farr,

2000). The studies which are made by Yarkovsky (2016) and Smagur, Bogat and Levendosky (2018) show that insecure attachment styles increase the risk of dating violence. As a result of the present study, it was determined that the preoccupied attachment style that is one of the insecure attachment styles predict the attitudes towards dating violence. Trak (2016) specified that the possibility of having the obsessive-compulsive disorder for the individuals who have preoccupied attachment style is higher than the other attachment styles. Korkmaz (2017) also determined with her study that individuals who have preoccupied attachment style depend on their partner and they dislike being alone. He stated that individuals with this attachment style also have a high level of separation anxiety. The fact that individuals with preoccupied attachment style have negative self-perceptions for themselves and positive perceptions for others may increase the likelihood of accepting dating violence while experiencing intense emotional transitions. Also, intense anxiety about their relationships might increase the possibility of perpetrating dating violence towards their partners. These studies emphasize the importance of the effects of preoccupied, fearful and dismissing attachment styles, which are insecure attachment styles, on dating violence. But in this study, there is not an evidence that these insecure attachment styles such as dismissing and fearful attachment styles predict dating violence. Since individuals with indifferent attachment styles may be individuals who are very fond of their independence and avoid developing close relationships with others, it is thought that they might not be close enough with their partners even if they develop romantic relationships, therefore they might not use violence as a means of communication or coping in dating relationships. Individuals with fearful attachment style may also have difficulty in developing close relationships as they may have difficulty trusting others. For this reason, it is thought that individuals with fearful attachment style may have difficulties in developing close relationships, as well as the dismissing attachment style, and supportive attitudes towards dating violence may be low. Individuals who have a secure attachment style might not hesitate to develop close relationships, show their love and intimacy, and their emotional regulation skills might be more developed than other attachment styles and more constructive in their communication and coping skills. For this reason, it was assumed that the secure attachment style predicted university students' attitudes towards dating violence, but no finding was obtained. It is thought that violence is a phenomenon where is quite common and normalized today, therefore individuals may be unaware of the behaviors and attitudes involving dating violence or that university students are a sample group that cannot measure this situation.

The present study has some limitations. The study is limited to the measurements of the scales used. The internal consistency coefficients of the scales used in the Relationship Scales Questionnaire which aimed to measure the attachment styles of individuals were found to be low. The present study was limited to self-esteem, perceived relationship self-efficacy and attachment styles. The sample of the study consists of university students, so the research can be generalized with university students. For the future studies, it is thought that revising the scale or developing a new

scale that can measure the attachment styles of individuals will contribute to future studies. To better understand dating violence, other variables that may predict dating violence may be included in the researches. And, also it is thought that using a different sample group will increase this generalization. For the future applications will be made about dating violence, it is considered that it is so important to make awareness studies about the dating violence and dimensions of dating violence with individuals. Since there are many aspects of dating violence, but often physical violence may come to mind, many individuals may be unaware that they are subjected to violence or perpetrate violence when they encounter the sexual, economic or psychological dimension of dating violence. From the perspective of attachment styles, which is considered to be an important predictor of dating violence, conversations and training programs for parents can be organized to develop secure attachment in individuals. At the same time, the studies to be done with the students about increasing the self-esteem of the students may also contribute to the decrease of dating violence as predicted by this study.

Conflict of Interest
The authors declare that they do not have conflict of interest.

About the Authors
Sinem Evin Akbay (PhD) is currently an Assistant Professor of Psychological Counseling and Guidance. Her research interests include higher education, attachment, intimacy, authenticity and procrastination. Mersin University, Faculty of Education, Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Çiftlikköy Campus, 33110, Mersin, Turkey.
http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6189-1896
Demet Yolcu, MS, is a Specialist Psychological Counsellor and she has been working in the humanitarian field. Her research interests are higher education and dating violence.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8005-621X

References

Akan, Y., 2018. *Şiddeti azaltma psiko-eğitim programının eşine şiddet uygulayan erkeklerin saldırganlık, duygu yönetimi ve ilişki özyeterlik düzeylerine etkisinin incelenmesi*. Unpublished doctorate dissertation, Mersin University Instıtute of Educational Sciences, Mersin.

Akan, Y., 2019. İlişki özyeterlik ölçeğinin türkçeye uyarlanması: Geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışması. *Uluslararası Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi, 9*(10): 1603-1624.

Akbay, S., 2015. *Ana babaya bağlanma ile romantik yakınlık ve otantik benlik arasındaki ilişkilerde bağlanma stillerinin aracı rolünün incelenmesi*, Unpublished doctorate dissertation, Mersin University Instıtute of Educational Sciences, Mersin.

Baker, L. R., Cobb, R. A., Mcnulty, J. K., Lambert N. M., and Fincham, F. D., 2016. Remaining in a situationally aggressive relationship: The role of relationship self-efficacy. P*ersonal Relationships, 23:* 591–604.

Bandura, A., 1995. *Self-efficacy in changing societies*. New York: Cambrige University Press. [Adobe Acrobat Reader version]. Retrieved from http://www.mersin.edu.tr/idari/kutuphane-ve-dokumantasyon-daire-baskanligi

Bartholomew K and Horowitz L. M., 1991. Attachment styles among young adults: Latest for four category model. *J Pers Soc Psychol, 61*(2): 226–44.

Bugay, A. and Çok, F., 2015. Gençlikte romantik ilişkilerde şiddet ve istismar. *Okul Psikolojik Danışmanı E- Bülteni, 5*: 15-19.

Burke, P. J, Stets, J. E. and Pirog-Good, M. A., 1998. Gender identity, self-esteem, and physical and sexual abuse in dating relationships. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 51*(3): 272-285.

Carlos, D. M., Campeiz, A. B., Silva, J. L., Fernandes, M. I. D., Leitão, M. N. C., Silva, M. A. I. and Ferriani, M. G. C., 2017. School based interventions for teen dating violence prevention: integrative literature review. *Revıew P per Artıgo De Revısão, 218*: 133-144.

Clements, C. M., Clauss, K., Casanave, K. and Laajala, A., 2018. Aggression, psychopathology, and intimate partner violence perpetration: Does gender matter?. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma, 27*(8): 902-921. Available at: doi: 10.1080/10926771.2017.1410750

Craver, R. S., 1999. *Dating violence and its relation to identity, self-esteem, and silencing the self among college women.* Doctorate dissertation, North Carolina State University, Raleigh. Retrieved from http://www.mersin.edu.tr/idari/kutuphane-ve-dokumantasyon-daire-baskanligi

Farr, C. N., 2000. *Female to male dating violence: Borderline personality characteristics, attachment style, psychopathology, and motivation.* Unpublished doctorate dissertation, West Virginia University, Morgantown. Retrieved from http://www.mersin.edu.tr/idari/kutuphane-ve-dokumantasyon-daire-baskanligi

Gosselin, D. K., 2008. *Internalized homophobia, self-esteem, education, income, and the use of partner violence in a group of self-identified bisexual and lesbian women.* Doctorate dissertation, Capella University, Minnesota. Retrieved from http://www.mersin.edu.tr/idari/kutuphane-ve-dokumantasyon-daire-baskanligi

Hazan, C. and Shaver, P. R., 1994. Deeper into attachment theory. *Psychological Inquiry, 5*(1): 68-79.

Horowitz, L. M., Rosenberg, S. E. and Bartholomew, K., 1993. Interpersonal Problems, Attachment Styles, and Outcome in Brief Dynamic psychotherapy. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 61*(4): 549-560.

Karasar, N., 2007. *Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemi*. Ankara: Nobel Akademik Publishing.

Korkmaz, M., 1996. *Yetişkin örneklem için bir benlik saygısı ölçeğinin güvenirlik ve geçerlik çalışması.* Unpublished master's thesis, Ege University Institute of Social Sciences, İzmir.

Korkmaz, T., 2017. *Erişkin seperasyon anksiyetesi düzeyinin bağlanma biçimleri ile ilişkisinin incelenmesi.* Unpublished master's thesis, Üsküdar University Institute of Social Sciences, İstanbul.

Korkut Owen, F. (Ed.)., 2013. *Gelişimsel psikolojik danışma ve terapi: Yaşamboyunca iyilik halini arttırmak.* Ankara: Türk Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Association Publishing.

Kuyumcu, B., 2011. Evli Kişilerde Gestalt Temas Biçimleri ve Bağlanma Stilleri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi. *Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 3*(5): 57-70.

Lopez, F. G., Morua, W. and Rice, K. G., 2007. Factor structure, stability and predictive validit of college students' relationship self-efficacy beliefs. *Measurement and Evaluatian in Counseling and Development,* (40): 80-96.

Majidli, I., 2018. *Bağlanma biçimleri ile duygu düzenlemede güçlük arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi.* Unpublished master's thesis, Üsküdar University Institute of Social Sciences, İstanbul.

Mruk, C. J., 2013. *Self-esteem and positive psychology, 4th edition: research, theory and practice.* Newyork: springer publishing company. [Adobe Acrobat Reader version]. Retrieved from http://www.mersin.edu.tr/idari/kutuphane-ve-dokumantasyon-daire-baskanligi

Öklük, Ö., 2018. *Çocukluk dönemi travmatik yaşam olaylarına maruz kalmış yetişkin bireylerin benlik saygısı, kişilerarası ilişki tarzları ve baş etme becerilerinin incelenmesi.* Unpublished master's thesis, Işık University Institute of Social Sciences, İstanbul.

Raghavan, C., Swan, S. C., Snow, D. L. and Mazure, C. M., 2005. The mediational role of relationship efficacy and resource utilization in the link between physical and psychological abuse and relationship termination. *Violence Against Women, 11*(1): 65-88.

Shaw, K., 2009. *Interparental violence and child abuse among alcoholic households: Relationships to adult self -esteem and dating violence.* Doctorate dissertation, Old Dominion University, Virginia. Retrieved from http://www.mersin.edu.tr/idari/kutuphane-ve-dokumantasyon-daire-baskanligi

Simister, J., 2012. *Gender based violence: causes and remedies.* New York: Nova Science Publishers. [Adobe Acrobat Reader version]. Retrieved from http://www.mersin.edu.tr/idari/kutuphane-ve-dokumantasyon-daire-baskanligi

Smagur, K. E., Bogat, G. A. and Levendosky, A. A., 2018. Attachment insecurity mediates the effects of intimate partner violence and childhood maltreatment on depressive symptoms in adult women. *Psychology of Violence, 8*(4): 460 –469.

Soysal, A. Ş., Bodur, Ş., İşeri, E. and Şenol, S., 2005. Bebeklik dönemindeki bağlanma sürecine genel bir bakış. *Klinik Psikiyatri* (8): 88-99.

Sullivan, T. P., McPartland, T., Price C., Cruza-Guet, M. C. and Swan, S. C., 2014. Relationship self-efficacy protects against mental health problems among women in birectionally aggressive intimate relationships with men. *J Couns Psychol, 60*(4): 641-647.

Sümer, N. and Güngör D., 1999. Yetişkin bağlanma stilleri ölçeklerinin Türk örneklemi üzerinde psikometrik değerlendirmesi ve kültürlerarası bir karşılaştırma. *Türk Psikoloji Dergisi, 14*(43): 71-106.

Sünetçi, B., Say, A., Gümüştepe, B., Enginkaya, B., Yıldızdoğan, Ç. and Yalçın, M., 2016. Üniversite öğrencilerinin flört şiddeti algıları üzerine bir araştırma. *Ufkun Ötesi Bilim Dergisi, 16*(1): 56-83.

Terzioğlu, F., Gönenç, I. M., Özdemir, F., Güvenç, G., Kök, G., Yılmaz-Sezer, N. and Demirtaş Hiçyılmaz, B., 2016. Flört şiddeti tutum ölçeği geçerlilik ve güvenirlik çalışması. *Anadolu Hemşirelik ve Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi, 19*(4): 225-232.

Trak, E., 2016. *Hatırlanan ebeveyn ilgisi, yetişkin bağlanma biçimleri ve partnere bağlı benlik değerinin romantik ilişki ve partner temalı obsesif kompulsif bozukluk semptomları ile ilişkisi.* Unpublished master's thesis, Hacettepe University Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara.

Yarkovsky, N., 2016. *Experiences of dating violence in emerging adult couples: The role of attachment style and emotion regulation.* Doktorate thesis, Windsor University, Ontario. Retrieved from http://www.mersin.edu.tr/idari/kutuphane-ve-dokumantasyon-daire-baskanligi

Yavuz, R. A., 2016. Women employment and economic violence from the aspect of social gender inequality. *Journal of Life Economics, 3*(3): 77-100. doi: 10.15637/jlecon.132

Yıldırım, S., 2016. *Üniversite öğrencilerinin benlik saygısı ve toplumsal cinsiyet tutumlarının flört şiddetine yönelik tutumlarına etkisi.* Unpublished master's thesis, Hacettepe University Institute of Medical Sciences, Ankara.

Yıldırım, T., 2018. *Evli bireylerde bağlanma biçimleri, ilişkiye dair bilişsel çarpıtmalar ve evlilik uyumu ilişkisinin incelenmesi.* Unpublished master's thesis, İstanbul Bilim University Institute of Social Sciences, İstanbul.

Yörükoğlu, A., 2012. *Gençlik çağı ruh sağlığı ve ruhsal sorunları.* İstanbul: Özgür Publishing.

Yumuşak, A., 2013. *Üniversite öğrencilerinin flört şiddetine yönelik tutumları, toplumsal cinsiyetçilik ve narsisistik kişilik özellikleri arasındaki ilişki.* Unpublished master's thesis, Gaziosmanpaşa University Institute of Educational Sciences, Tokat.

Yüksel, Z. A., 2016. *Kurum bakımında kalmış yetişkinlerde bağlanma biçimleri ve ruhsal sorunlar.* Unpublished master's thesis, Ankara University Institute of Medical Sciences, Ankara.