



ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS OF THEOLOGY FACULTY STUDENTS ON ORGAN DONATION

İlahiyat fakültesi öğrencilerinin organ bağışına ilişkin tutum ve davranışları

Çiğdem TEKİN¹, Ayşe GÖKÇE², Ali ÖZER²

Abstract

Religious beliefs of individuals affect their attitudes and behaviours regarding organ donation. The aim of this study is to determine the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours of Theology faculty students about organ donation. The study is cross-sectional study which carried out on students in Faculty of Theology. Sample selection was not performed in this study. The first part of the questionnaires, which we created as data collection tools, comprised socio-demographic questions, whereas the second part comprised questions, prepared according to the literature that measures the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours on organ donation. Chi-Square test was used for statistical analysis. 0.7% of the students participating in the study stated that they were organ donors, whereas 56.4% said that they considered organ donation as religiously appropriate behaviour, and 38.6% said that they have not become organ donors before because the subject of organ donation was not brought to their attention previously. A comparison of whether the students viewed organ donation as religiously appropriate behaviour with the students' level of knowledge on organ donation revealed to be 65.8% among students with knowledge on organ donation and 49.5% among students who lacked knowledge on organ donation ($p=0.001$). Students with knowledge on organ donation also said that they viewed organ donation as religiously appropriate behaviour. Through training activities, the aim should be to increase the level of knowledge and awareness on organ donation of future religious staff and to thereby increase the level of organ donation in the society.

Keywords: Organ donation, theology faculty, student, attitude.

Özet

Bireylerin organ bağışı konusundaki tutum ve davranışlarını dini inanışları etkilemektedir. Bu çalışmada İlahiyat Fakültesi öğrencilerinin organ bağışı konusundaki bilgi, tutum ve davranışlarını incelemek amaçlanmıştır. İlahiyat Fakültesi öğrencilerinde yapılan bu çalışma kesitsel bir çalışmadır. Çalışmada örneklem seçilmemiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak oluşturulan anketlerin ilk bölümünde sosyo-demografik sorular, ikinci bölümde ise literatür bilgisi doğrultusunda hazırlanan organ bağışı bilgi, tutum ve davranışlarını ölçen sorular yer almaktadır. İstatistiksel analizlerde; Ki-Kare testi kullanılmıştır. Çalışmaya katılan öğrencilerin %0,7'si organ bağışında bulunduğunu belirtmiştir. Öğrencilerin %56,4'ü dini açıdan organ bağışını uygun bulduğunu, %38,6'sı şimdiye kadar hiç gündemine gelmediği için organ bağışında bulunmadığını ifade etmiştir. Öğrencilerin organ bağışı bilgi durumuna göre dini açıdan organ bağışını uygun görme durumu karşılaştırıldığında; organ bağışı bilgisi olan öğrencilerin dini açıdan organ bağışının uygun görülme oranı %65,8, bilgisi olmayan öğrencilerin oranı ise %49,5'tir ($p=0,001$). Organ bağışı bilgileri olduğunu ifade eden öğrenciler organ bağışının dini açıdan uygun gördüklerini de belirtmiştir. Yapılacak olan eğitimlerle, geleceğin din görevlilerinin organ bağışı bilgi düzeyinin ve farkındalığının artırılması sonucunda toplumun da organ bağışı düzeyini artırması hedeflenmelidir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Organ bağışı, ilahiyat fakültesi, öğrenci, tutum.

1- Department of Home Care Services, İnönü University, Health Vocational School, Malatya, Turkey

2- Department of Public Health, İnönü University Faculty of Medicine, Malatya, Turkey

Sorumlu Yazar / Corresponding Author: Dr. Ayşe GÖKÇE, MD.

e-posta / e-mail: abaran88@hotmail.com

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ORCID: Çiğdem TEKİN: 0000-0001-9038-1924, Ayşe GÖKÇE: 0000-0002-0591-2936, Ali ÖZER: 0000-0002-7144-4915

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Introduction

Organ transplantation is a medical procedure in which a missing or damaged organ in the body is replaced with a healthy tissue/organ from alive or dead donor. This procedure is accepted as an advanced treatment for the curation of many chronic diseases (1). Organ transplantation can be done for many organs with vital importance such as heart, liver, lung, pancreas, kidney, small intestine, blood, bone marrow and skin (2).

Although there are major developments in organ transplantation today, there are still major problems in the supply of the organs to be transplanted. Difficulty in supply of organs for donation hinders the organ transplantation since there is a big gap between organ supply and organ need. In Asian and Middle East country most of the organ transplants are carried out with the organs obtained from living donor (3). As the awareness and level of knowledge about the organ donation and transplantation increase, it will bring an increase in the number of

donated organs (4).

When the literature is reviewed, it was determined that education, socio-economic level, cultural factors and religious beliefs have been influencing the individuals' attitudes towards organ donation (5, 6). In many studies, it was shown that the effect of religious factors should be kept in mind in countries such as in our country, where the majority of the population is Muslim (7). According to the religion of Islam, organ transplantation is permissible (8, 9). In addition, the fact that people do not have sufficient or have wrong information about the organ donation causes the organ donation not to be at the desired level (10, 11). Increasing the knowledge and awareness of organ donation among the religious officials of the future is of great importance in planning the strategies in this area. In this study, we aimed to examine the knowledge and attitudes of the students of the Faculty of Theology, who are the future religious officials, about organ donation.

Material-Method

The study is cross-sectional study. The research population consists of students studying in Inonu University Faculty of Theology between the years of 2017-2018. When the research was made, there were 770 students at theology faculty. Reaching the whole population without selecting a specific sample was aimed. A total of 71.2% of the population, being the preparatory class, the first, second, third and fourth grade, has been reached. Written permission was obtained from Inonu University institutional review board for non-interventional studies (2017/22-10).

In the first part, the socio-demographic questions developed by the researchers to determine the

demographic characteristics of the students and in the second part, the questions measuring the knowledge of organ donation and the attitudes towards organ donation were prepared in accordance with the literature (4-7,12). Observational surveys were implemented by assistant researchers. After the data collection tools related to the research were applied as a questionnaire, each data set was checked and transferred to the computer. The questionnaires with missing answers excluded from the study.

The data were analyzed using the IBM SPSS (version 22.0) package program. In statistical analysis, Chi-Square was used for the data. $p < 0.05$ was considered as significant in all evaluations.

Results

Of the participants 77.9% were women and 22.1% were men, 46.7% were living

with their families, 39.8% of the students have an income of 1400 Turkish lira and below.

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of students.

Sociodemographic Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Female	427	77.9
Male	121	22.1
Age		
≤19	154	28.1
20-21	214	39.1
22-23	113	20.6
≥24	67	12.2
College year		
Preparation	83	15.1
1st	162	29.6
2nd	104	19.0
3rd	66	12.0
4th	133	24.3
Marital Status		
Married	25	4.6
Single	512	93.4
Other	11	2.0
Father Education Level		
Illiterate	14	2.6
Literate	30	5.5
Primary school	197	35.9
Secondary school	118	21.5
High school	101	18.4
Universty and above	88	16.1
Mother Education Level		
Illiterate	137	25.0
Literate	79	14.4
Primary school	220	40.2
Secondary school	70	12.8
High school	33	6.0
Universty and above	9	1.6
Monthly Income		
≤1400 liras	218	39.8
1401-2800 liras	180	32.8
2801-4200 liras	107	19.5
≥4201 liras	18	3.3
No income	25	4.6

Where to stay		
Dormitory	151	27.6
Privacy dormitory	62	11.3
At home with friend	41	7.5
At home with family	256	46.7
Other	38	6.9

While 56.4% of the students stated that they found the organ donation appropriate in terms of religion, 89.6% stated

that there was nobody in their family who donated organs and 89.2% did not know what procedure to follow for organ donation.

Table 2: Attitude and behaviors of students on about organ donation.

Attitudes and behaviors	n	%
Has anyone in your family donated any organ?		
Yes	23	4.2
No	491	89.6
No idea	34	6.2
Would you know how to follow a path for organ donation?		
Yes	59	10.8
No	489	89.2
Would you appropriate the organ donation in terms of religion?		
Yes	309	56.4
No	45	8.2
No idea	194	35.4
Do you believe organ donation is a necessity for humanity?		
Yes	523	95.4
No	25	4.6
Would you donate an organ if needed by to someone in your family?		
Yes	480	87.6
No	10	1.8
No idea	58	10.6
Would you accept organ transplantation if it were necessary for your health?		
Yes	433	79.0
No	15	2.7
No idea	100	18.3

The 99.3% of the students stated that they did not donate organs and 57.9% stated that they were undecided about donating

organs. The students who did not donate organs stated the reasons as they never thought about it (38.6%) and religious reasons (14.3%).

Table 3: Organ donation status of students and reasons of students not donating.

Status of Organ Donation	n	%
Have you donated any organ?		
Yes	4	0.7
No	544	99.3
Do you plan to donate organs?		
Yes	141	25.9
No	88	16.2
Undecided	315	57.9
Reasons for Not Donating		
Family do not approve of organ donation	61	11.2
Do not want body integrity to be destroyed after death	72	13.1
Not a candidate for organ donation because of health	12	2.2
Religious reasons	78	14.3
Do not trust health institutions	22	4.0
Fear organ will end up in the hands of organ mafia	3	0.6
Negative news from the media	6	1.1
Since I have never thought of it until now	210	38.6
I don't want to say a reason	119	21.9

According to the socio-demographic characteristics of the students who participated in the study, in order to compare whether organ donation is religiously appropriate, 6.8% of the female students and 13.2% of the male students stated that they did not find the organ donation appropriate in terms of religion. A statistically significant difference between religious approaches of male and female students to organ donation has been found ($p=0.036$). When age groups were compared whether the organ donation was religiously appropriate, the relationship between age and approval was found to be statistically significant, and students in the 22-23 age group were determined as responsible for this difference ($p=0.047$).

When the students' knowledge of organ donation and their religious approval for organ donation were compared, 65.8% of knowing students and 49.5% of not-knowing students stated that they found it appropriate. The difference between knowing about organ donation and religious approval was found to be significant ($p=0.001$). When students' father's education level and their religious approval for organ donation were compared, the difference was found to be statistically significant ($p=0.009$). When marital status of students, their classes, their mother's education levels and and their religious approval for organ donation were compared, the difference was not statistically significant ($p>0.05$).

Table 4: Comparison of students' finding organ donation religious appropriate according to their socio-demographic characteristics.

Characteristics	Appropriate		No Appropriate		No idea		p
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Gender							
Female	239	56.0	29	6.8	159	37.2	0.036
Male	70	57.9	16	13.2	35	28.9	
Age							
≤19	80	51.9	10	6.5	64	41.6	0.047
20-21	112	52.3	21	9.8	81	37.9	
22-23	76	67.3	6	5.3	31	27.4	
≥24	41	61.2	8	11.9	18	26.9	

Marital Status							
Married	18	72.0	3	12.0	4	16.0	0.147
Single	287	56.1	40	7.8	185	36.1	
Other	4	36.4	2	18.2	5	45.5	
College year							
Preparation	44	53.0	9	10.8	30	36.1	0.222
1st	91	56.2	10	6.1	61	37.7	
2nd	67	64.4	6	5.8	31	29.8	
3rd	41	62.1	8	12.1	17	25.8	
4th	66	49.6	12	9.0	55	41.4	
Status of knowledge about organ donation							
I have knowledge	152	65.8	17	7.4	62	26.8	0.001
I dont have knowledge	157	49.5	28	8.8	132	41.6	
Father Education Level							
Illiterate	5	35.7	5	35.7	4	28.6	0.009
Literate	21	70.0	1	3.3	8	26.7	
Primary school	120	60.9	12	6.1	65	33.0	
Secondary school	63	53.4	14	11.9	41	34.7	
High school	56	55.4	7	6.9	38	37.6	
Universty and above	44	50.0	6	6.8	38	43.2	
Mother Education Level							
Illiterate	81	59.1	10	7.3	46	33.6	0.611
Literate	44	55.7	4	5.1	31	39.2	
Primary school	130	59.1	16	7.3	74	33.6	
Secondary school	33	47.1	9	12.9	28	40.0	
High school	16	48.5	5	15.1	12	36.4	
Universty and above	5	55.6	1	11.1	3	33.3	

When the sources of information about organ donation of the students participating in the research were

questioned, they stated that 35.4%, 28.1% and 11.9% of them obtained information from television, internet and school, respectively.

Table 5: Knowledge source of students about organ donation.

Knowledge Source	n	%
TV	194	35.4
Journals or newspaper	63	11.5
Internet	154	28.1
Radio	9	1.6
School	65	11.9
Friends	44	8.0
Health organization	59	10.8
Family	37	6.8
Book	53	9.7
Conferences, seminars, meeting	37	6.8
Other	13	2.4

When knowledge of applicable organ and tissue donations by the participants were questioned, they responded 'yes' for kidney, liver, heart, skin and bone marrow (91.2%, 75.5%, 79%, 45.1%, 72.4% respectively).

Students stated that they did not aware that transplantations of pancreas, lung, small intestine, cornea, bone, nerve and tendon are possible (78.3%, 49.3%, 73.2%, 59.1%, 60.0%, 69.0%, 88.9%, respectively).

Table 6: Answers of students to the question, which organs and tissues can be transplanted?

Organs and tissues	Yes		No		No idea	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Kidney	500	91.2	5	0.9	43	7.9
Liver	414	75.5	21	3.8	113	20.7
Heart	433	79.0	27	4.9	88	16.1
Pancreas	55	10.0	64	11.7	429	78.3
Lung	225	41.1	53	9.7	270	49.2
Small bowel	43	7.8	104	19.0	401	73.2
Cornea	178	32.5	46	8.4	324	59.1
Bone	105	19.2	114	20.8	329	60.0
Skin	247	45.1	64	11.7	237	43.2
Nerve	44	8.0	126	23.0	378	69.0
Bone marrow	397	72.4	15	2.7	136	24.9
Tendon	26	4.7	35	6.4	487	88.9

Discussion

The need of donations for organ transplantation increases day by day and but the donations made are insufficient. This is a common problem not only for Turkey, but also for the rest of the world. Although legal and religious aspects of the permitted use of cadaveric donors in Turkey, religious reasons were identified as the main reason to reject the organ donation in the many studies conducted in Turkey and other Muslim countries (5, 12-16). In various studies conducted in Muslim countries have shown that a significant number of participants did not know whether organ transplantation was appropriate according to Islam (14, 17-19). When considered in this point of view, knowledge, attitude and behavior of religious officials about organ transplantation are of great importance.

Only four of the attending students (0.7%) stated that they donated their organs. Study of Türkyılmaz et al. showed the same ratio of organ donation (0.7%) (20). A study

conducted in Kahramanmaraş with religious officials stated that only 1.4% of them volunteered to donate their organs (21). When the non-donating participants were asked if they consider to donate their organs; 25.9% of them responded 'yes', %16.2% 'no' and 57.9% of them said they were undecided. In another similar study on religious officials, it was seen that the number of individuals who are undecided about organ donation (68.8%) or who are not willing to donate (17.1%) were high (21). When the reason was questioned, their stated that they had never thought about if before, they did not want to specify a reason, they did not want it because of religious reasons, they did not think about it because of the fear of deterioration of their body integrity or their families did not consider organ donation as appropriate.

Although many studies have reported that organ and tissue transplantation is appropriate according to Islam (22, 8); the

students of theology refused to donate organs due to religious reasons or were undecided about organ donation. In Turkish society, although there are studies indicating that rejection of organ donation for religious reasons has decreased in the last twelve years (23), it is still mentioned in various studies that rejection of organ donation for religious reasons was frequent (5, 12, 15). In another study, it was mentioned that there was lack of knowledge and interest among students and this situation could be resolved by the education about the importance of organ donation. In addition, since participants are students of the Faculty of Theology and will be religious officials in the future, the necessity of training programs and informative studies by the Presidency of Religious Affairs is put forward. It is also remarkable that the students have never thought of organ donation before. This situation shows us that students' awareness was low or they showed perceptual selectivity. The fact that the majority of the students (89.2%) do not know how to follow a procedure for organ donation was another finding strengthens the need for education.

Although 74.1% of the students reported that they were undecided about organ donation or did not intend to donate, almost all of them (95.4%) also said that organ donation was a necessary behavior for humanity. More than half of the students stated that they were undecided or negative about donating their organs/tissues. But considering that they or their families were in need of organ transplantation, they stated that they approved organ donation (79.0%, 87.6%, respectively). This situation revealed that they could not feel an empathy with other people, and that empathy should absolutely take part in education and information activities for organ donations. Similarly, in the study of Turkyilmaz et al., although the number of volunteers in organ donation was very low, the number of that seeking organ donation was found to be quite high if the seeker is themselves (20). In

the similar study of Ozer et al., the number of those who accepted organ donation for themselves was found to be higher than the number of people who found organ donation eligible (21). In the study of Sakallı et al., it was reported that female students had more positive views about tissue and organ donation compared to male students (24). In our study, it was found that female students were found to be more sensitive about organ donation eligibility in terms of religious aspects.

When knowledge of organ donation and finding organ donation appropriate in terms of religion were compared, more than half of the students who knew about organ donation and less than half of the students who did not know about organ donation, stated that they found organ donation appropriate in terms of religion. This situation, once more, enlightens the importance of education. In a cross-sectional study on the Palestinian people, the positive attitude towards organ donation has been shown to be related to the level of knowledge (25).

Students stated that they gathered information from five main sources. These were television, internet, school, newspaper/magazine and health facilities. In different researches, the same information sources were reported (26-28).

When the knowledge of transplanted organs and tissues was surveyed, they stated that they knew that kidney (91.2%), heart (79.0%), liver (75.5%), bone marrow (72.4%) and skin (45.1%) could be donated. The vast majority of students stated that they did not know whether pancreas, lung, small intestine, cornea, bone, nerve and tendon could be donated or not. Similar to our study, it was reported in the study conducted by Ozer et al. That the most known organs/tissues to be transplanted were kidney, liver and heart (21). The limitation of the present study is that it was conducted in one university only.

Conclusion

Although the students in the study group found organ donation religiously appropriate, the rate of organ donation was found to be very low. In addition, it was seen that students, males and those in the higher

age group, who stated that they had low level of knowledge and knowledge about organ donation, found organ donation appropriate at a higher rate.

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