

Dimension, causes and effects of violence against academicians

Akademisyenlere yönelik şiddetin boyutu, nedenleri ve etkileri

Besey Ören¹, Ayşe Çuvadar², Sibel Yüçetürk³, Hayriye Ercan⁴, Saliha Arı Yalman⁵

¹ İstanbul Sağlık Bilimleri Üniversitesi Hamidiye Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi Ebelik Anabilim Dalı, besey_oren@yahoo.com, 0000-0002-8528-2232

² Trakya Üniversitesi Sağlık Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Koroner Anjio Ünitesi, aysecuvadard@hotmail.com, 0000-0002-7917-0576

³ 19 Mayıs Üniversitesi Sağlık Hizmetleri Meslek Yüksek Okulu/ Samsun sibelduman8771@gmail.com, 0000-0003-0820-6997

⁴ Fenerbahçe Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi Ebelik Anabilim Dalı / İstanbul hayriyeer8987@gmail.com, 0000-0002-9385-2805

⁵ T.C Sağlık Bakanlığı Pendik Devlet Hastanesi/ İstanbul Saliha-ari@hotmail.com, 0000-0002-4392-1585

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Violence is an important human problem that affects individuals at every educational level of society and has serious consequences, both individually and socially. **Objective:** The objective of the study was to determine the severity of violence against academicians, the type of violence experienced and the factors that affect violence. **Material and Method:** Target population of the cross-sectional study covers 2666 academicians from a state university in the Central Black Sea region, and from a private university in Istanbul, Turkey. The study that intends to reach the target population was conducted with participation from 350 academicians who agreed to take part in the study from 30.06.2019 to 30.09.2019. Data was analyzed with descriptive analysis and chi-square tests via SPSS 20.0 programme. Statistical significance level is defined as $p < 0.05$. **Results:** When violence is analyzed according to gender, 69.7% of women and 66.7% of men reported that they were exposed to violence at least once during their lifetime but there was no statistically significant difference between gender and violence. ($p = 0.542$). It was seen that the individuals between the ages of 41-50 are exposed to violence more than expected and encounter this situation more often than people in other age groups. **Conclusion:** Gender was not an important factor in terms of being subjected to violence ($p = 0.542$), but when examined according to the type of violence they experienced, it was found that men were significantly more exposed to physical violence than women ($p = 0.001$).

ÖZ

Giriş: Şiddet toplumun her eğitim seviyesindeki bireyleri etkileyen ve hem bireysel hem de toplumsal ciddi sonuçları olan önemli bir insanlık sorunudur. **Amaç:** Araştırmanın amacı akademisyenlere yönelik şiddetin ciddiyetini, yaşanan şiddetin türünü ve şiddeti etkileyen faktörleri belirlemektir. **Yöntem:** Kesitsel olarak yapılan çalışmanın evrenini, Türkiye'nin Orta Karadeniz Bölgesinde yer alan bir devlet üniversitesi ile İstanbul'da bulunan bir özel üniversitede çalışan toplam 2666 akademisyen oluşturdu. Evrenin tamamına ulaşılması hedeflenen çalışma; 30.06.2019/30.09.2019 tarihleri arasında araştırmaya katılmayı kabul eden 350 akademisyen ile yürütüldü. Verilerin analizi ise SPSS 20.0 programında tanımlayıcı analizler ve ki kare testleri ile yapıldı. İstatistiksel anlamlılık düzeyi $p < 0.05$ olarak belirlendi. **Bulgular:** Çalışma grubundaki kadınların %69,7'si ve erkeklerin %66,7'si yaşamları boyunca en az bir kez şiddete maruz kaldığını bildirmiş ancak cinsiyet ile şiddet arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark bulunmadı. ($p = 0.542$). 41-50 yaş arasındaki bireylerin diğer yaş gruplarındaki kişilere göre beklenenden daha fazla şiddete maruz kaldıkları ve bu durumla daha sık karşılaştıkları görüldü. **Sonuç:** Cinsiyet, şiddete maruz kalma açısından önemli bir faktör değildi ($p = 0,542$), ancak yaşadıkları şiddetin türüne göre incelendiğinde erkeklerin kadınlara göre anlamlı düzeyde daha fazla fiziksel şiddete maruz kaldıkları bulundu ($p = 0.001$).

Key Words:
Academician, Mobbing,
Violence.

Anahtar Kelimeler:
Akademisyen, Şiddet, Mobbing

Corresponding Author/Sorumlu Yazar:

Trakya Üniversitesi Sağlık Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Koroner Anjio Ünitesi, aysecuvadard@hotmail.com..

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of violence, which has never lost its importance from the past to the present, is an important human problem faced both in the individual and social dimensions. It has been one of the most remarkable issue in recent years because of its social and psychological economic results that make itself felt not only in

the national dimension but also in the international dimension (1).

Various definitions are made about the concept of violence. In addition to the physical or indirect pressure and difficulty of violence against individuals and their ideas, the question of whom they are being applied to and for which purpose they serve has led to the

handling of violence in many different ways. According to the definition of World Health Organization (WHO) violence is; “the use of physical force or influence in a voluntary manner, by threat or against the person himself, another person, a group or society, resulting in or likely to end in injury, death, psychological harm, impairment of development or decline in development” (2).

According to the definition of Center for Disease Control (CDC) violence is; “the application of power or vis in person or by threat to another person, self, group or society, which results in injury, death and loss, and which is likely to end” (3). According to the Ecological Model developed in the 1970s in order to better understand the causes of violence; it is a complex problem that results from the combination of multiple factors. The causes of violence arise as a result of a combination of individual, relational, social, environmental and cultural factors. According to another statement, violence is the result of an interaction between psychobiological factors and the external environment (4,5). In the CDC’s definition, violence is classified in three ways. Physical violence, psychological violence and domestic violence (3).

Physical violence is the use of physical force to injure, kill or harm. Psychological violence involves behavior that is often verbally intended to control, embarrass, humiliate, or frighten another person’s personality. Domestic violence is related to the person who is in a communal life (3). Economic violence; is to deprive the person of the economic opportunities he / she needs in order to survive. It is the regular use of economic resources and money as a means of sanctions, threats and control over the person (4). Actions such as not giving money or giving limited money, not giving information about the savings, income and expenses of the family, preventing them from working, seizing their earnings if they are working, allowing them to benefit from their earnings only as receiving allowances, seizing existing assets are considered as economic violence. When the causes of violence at workplace are examined, it is stated that psychological violence behaviors in the workplace stem from both personal and organizational characteristics (6).

Regardless of the cause and the form of violence all over the world, the incidence of violence is very high and the consequences can be quite devastating. 1.6 million people die every year due to violence. Worldwide, the rate of deaths caused by violence between the ages of 15-44 is 14% for men and 7% for women. Millions of people affected by the consequences of violence are injured, crippled or have mental health problems (7,8).

There are approximately 8.1 million violent crimes per year in the United States; more than 20,000 victims of

domestic violence and almost ¼ (23%) of students in public school are victims of violence (9). The violence rates in some countries where the frequency of violence at workplace is known are as follow; sexual harassment against women (7.5% in North American countries), physical violence and assault against men (2.7% in Western European countries), physical violence against women (4.6% in North American countries) (10). Of workplace violence in Turkey (only physical violence, tendency to violence, disturbing or threatening behavior) incidence in 2013 was found to be 2% (11).

Exposure to violence can lead to deterioration in the health and well-being of individuals. Even, as a result of exposure to violence and victimization, individuals’ tendency to become a perpetrator may increase (12,13,14,15,16). When the causes of violence are examined; being at a young age, female gender, inexperience, character, behavior and ethnicity are among the risk factors for violence at work. In terms of perpetrators of violence, history of violence, male gender, young age, alcohol and mental illness are among the main risk factors (10).

In the 2000 European survey of 21,500 people on workplace violence, 2% (3 million) of the employees were exposed to physical violence at work, 4% (6 million) were exposed to physical violence outside the workplace, 2% (3 million) were exposed to sexual harassment, and 9% (13 million) were exposed to bullying and threats (17).

Studies on violence in the workplace are not at the expected level in our country. In a study conducted with academics, 90% of academics stated that they had been exposed to one or more psychological violence in the last 12 months and 7% thought that it was sometimes suicidal because of the psychological violence they were exposed to (18). The World Health Organization (2) and member states, through the World Health Assembly, Resolution 49.25, acknowledged that violence (including violence against women) (VAW) is a serious public health problem. Urgent action has been called for by governments and health agencies to address this problem (19).

When the literature is examined, it is seen that psychological violence is mostly handled, mobbing was the most studied type of violence especially in business life (20,21,22). In addition, the studies conducted on violence in academicians have more focused on the violence suffered by researchers (23), and no research has been found covering academics at all academic levels and examining all forms of exposure to violence. This study was planned based on this deficiency in the literature. This study was planned to determine the level of violence experienced by academicians at all levels, the

type of violence experienced and the factors that affect violence and to examine the reflections of the increasing violence in recent years in the academic society.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Target population of the cross-sectional study covers 2666 academicians from a state university in the Central Black Sea region, and from a private university in Istanbul, Turkey. The study that intends to reach the target population was conducted with participation from 350 academicians who agreed to take part in the study from 30.06.2019 to 30.09.2019. For data collection, a data collection form made of 21 questions devised by researchers based on the literature survey has been used. Data was collected by way of e-mail extension sbu.edu.tr. n=350 members could be reached despite having sent 3 reminder e-mails to the academicians. Data was analyzed with descriptive analysis, Pearson Chi-square test and Fisher's Exact test (Follow-up Chi-square test was used for group comparisons) via SPSS 20.0 programme. For all statistical analyses, the statistical significance level is defined as $p < 0.05$.

2.4 | Ethical Aspects of the Research

The study was conducted in compliance with the Helsinki Human Rights Declaration, and the written permission of the Rectorate of the universities included in the scope of the study was obtained from the Clinical Research Ethics Committee on 24/05/2019 and the written approval of the ethics committee B.30.2ODM.0.20.08 / 445 and written consent was obtained from the participants.

RESULTS

88% of the respondents work in public institutions and 43.4% are female. Approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of them are between 20-30 years old and 56.9% of them are married. 68.5% of the public institution and 64.3% of the private institution academicians stated that they were subjected to violence at least once in their lifetime. When violence is analyzed according to gender, 69.7% of women and 66.7% of men reported that they were exposed to violence at least once during their lifetime but there was no statistically significant difference between gender and violence. ($p=0.542$). When the violence of the academicians participating in the study according to their age is examined; it was seen that 52.4% of those in the 20-30 age range, 66.5% of those in the 31-40 age range, 72.7% of those in the 51-60 age range, 42.9% of those over the age of 60, and 42% of those in the 41-50 age range 91.5 were exposed to violence. A statistically significant difference was found between the age groups in terms of exposure to violence ($p < 0.001$). In the follow-up analysis method,

which was used to determine the group that caused the difference, it was seen that the individuals between the ages of 41-50 were different than the other age groups. It can be said that people in this age range are exposed to violence more than expected and encounter this situation more often than people in other age groups.

According to the marital status of academicians, it was seen that 76.9% (153/199) of the married, 51.9% (69/133) of the single and 88.9% (16/18) of the divorce status were exposed to violence. Significant difference was found between the marital situations in terms of exposure to violence (test statistic value= 26.711, $p < 0,001$). In the advanced analysis method used to determine the group that caused the difference, it was observed that single individuals were different from those in divorce status. It is possible to say that single persons are exposed to violence at a lower rate than expected and they are less likely to encounter this situation than people with other marital status.

Due to their titles, there was a statistically significant difference between titles in terms of exposure to violence ($p < 0.001$). In the follow-up analysis method applied to determine the group causing the difference, it was seen that "research assistant" and "Dr. Lecturer" titles were different from other titles. It is possible to say that the research assistants are exposed to violence at a lower rate than expected and they face this situation less frequently than people with other titles (Table 1).

Looking at the types of violence that academics are exposed to, it was seen that 94.1% stated that they were exposed to verbal violence, 50.8% were subjected to physical violence, and 39.5% were subjected to economic violence. When the participants' verbal violence exposure was examined according to their marital status, it was seen that 96.7% (148/153) of the married, 87.0% (60/69) of the unmarried, and all (16/16) of the other group were exposed to verbal violence. Significant difference was found between marital status in terms of exposure to verbal violence ($p=0.021$). In the follow-up analysis method used to determine the group that caused the difference, it was seen that single individuals were different from those in other marital status. It is possible to say that single persons are exposed to verbal violence less than expected and this situation is less frequently than other marital status persons. 41 (38.7%) of the women and 80 (60.6%) of the 132 men stated that they were exposed to physical violence. As a result of statistical analysis, a statistically significant difference was found between male and female gender in terms of exposure to physical violence ($p=0.001$). Male participants are exposed to higher levels of physical violence than women.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants

Variables	n	%	Status of Exposure to Violence				χ^2/p
			Yes		No		
			n	%	n	%	
Institution							
Public Institution	308	88	209	68.5	96	31.5	0.305/0.581
Private Institution	42	12	27	64.3	15	3.7	
Total		100					
Gender							
Female	152	43.4	106	69.7	46	30.3	0.372/0.542
Male	198	56.6	132	66.7	66	33.3	
Total		100					
Age							
20-30	84	24.1	44	52.4	40	47.6	30.0/< 0.001*
31-40	164	47.1	109	66.5	55	33.5	
41-50	71	20.4	65	91.5	6	8.5	
51-60	22	6.3	16	72.7	6	27.3	
Over the age of 60	7	2.0	3	42.9	4	57.1	
Total		100					
Marital Status							
Married	199	56.9	153	76.9	46	23.1	26.711/< 0.001*
Single	133	38.0	69	51.9	64	48.1	
Divorce	18	5.1	16	88.9	2	11.1	
Total		100					
Title							
Professor	22	6.3	12	54.5	10	45.5	3.713/< 0.001**
Associate Professor	36	10.3	28	77.8	8	22.2	
Dr. Lecturer	82	23.4	68	82.9	14	17.1	
Research Assistant	75	21.4	35	46.7	40	53.3	
	135	38.6	95	70.4	40	29.6	

Pearson Chi-Square test

When the physical violence exposure of the participants was examined according to their age, a statistically significant difference was found between the age groups in terms of physical violence exposure ($p=0.034$). In the follow-up analysis method, it was seen that the individuals between the ages of 41-50 were different than the other groups. It was seen that people between the ages of 41-50 were exposed to physical violence more than expected and encountered this situation more frequently than people in other age groups. When the physical violence exposure of the participants was examined according to their title, it was seen that a statistically significant difference was found between the participants' titles in terms of exposure to violence ($p=0.017$). In the follow-up analysis method, it was seen that the persons with the other titles and then the associate professors were different. It is possible to say that people with other titles are exposed to violence at a lower rate than expected and that they face this situation less frequently than people with other titles.

When the economic violence exposure of the participants according to their age is examined the analysis showed a statistically significant difference in economic violence exposure among age groups ($p<0.001$). In the advanced analysis method applied to determine the group that caused the difference, people in the 41-50 age range

were found to be different compared to other age groups. It is possible to say that people in the 41-50 age range are exposed to economic violence at a higher rate than expected and are more likely to experience it than people in other age groups.

Examining the participants' marital status according to their exposure to economic violence, the analysis showed a statistically significant difference in economic violence exposure among marital status ($p=0.029$). In the advanced analysis method applied to determine the group that caused the difference, other marital status people and secondly single people were different. It is possible to say that people in other marital situations are exposed to economic violence at a higher rate than expected, and that they experience this situation more often than people in different marital situations. Single persons suffer economic violence at a lower rate than expected and experience it with a lower frequency than other marital persons (Table 2).

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in a descriptive and cross-sectional manner in order to determine the situations of violence, the type of violence experienced by academicians at all levels, the effective factors of violence experienced and to examine the repercussions of the

Table 2. Distribution of the type of violence suffered by demographic characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Verbal Violence			Physical Violence			Economic Violence		
	Yes			Yes			Yes		
	Count	%	p	Count	%	p	Count	%	χ^2/p
Public Institution	196	93.8	1.000 ^a	106	50.7	0.012	79	37.8	1.077/
Private Institution	26	96.3		14	51.9	/0.912	13	48.1	0.299
Female	102	96.2	1.535/	41	38.7	11.30/	35	33.0	3.355/
Male	122	92.4	0.215	80	60.6	0.001*	59	44.7	0.067
20-30	39	88.6		20	45.5		12	27.3	
31-40	101	92.7		47	43.2		30	27.5	
41-50	64	98.5	5.624/	43	66.2	9.803/	41	63.1	26.960/
51-60	16	100.0	0.180 ^a	9	56.3	0.034* ^a	9	56.3	<0.001* ^a
Over the age of 60	3	100.0		2	66.7		2	66.7	
Professor	12	100.0		8	66.7		8	66.7	
Associate Professor	26	92.9	5.149/	20	71.4		18	64.3	
Dr. Lecturer	66	97.1	0.213 ^a	38	55.9	12.024/	27	39.7	17.022/
Research Assistant	30	85.7		18	51.4	0.017*	7	39.5	0.002*
	90	94.7		37	38.9		34	20	
Married	148	96.7		84	54.9		64	41.8	
Single	60	87.0	7.490/	27	39.1	5.666/	20	29.0	7.022/
Divorce	16	100.0	0.021* ^a	10	62.5	0.059	10	62.5	0.029*

Pearson Chi-Square test

increasing violence events in our society in the academic environment in recent years.

In the literature review, it was seen that psychological violence was mostly addressed in violence studies. Studies conducted in academicians showed that there were studies related to research assistants, but studies involving all academic degrees were insufficient. In addition to psychological violence, physical, verbal, economic and other types of violence were also investigated and academics at all academic levels were included in the working group. 68% of the academicians who participated in the study stated that they were subjected to violence at least once in their lifetime. It is considered that the high rate of exposure to violence among academicians is due to the high tendency towards violence in Turkish society. Similarly, in a study conducted for academicians working in the field of health, 43% of the participants stated that they experienced verbal, 54 of them experienced physical violence and 90% of them experienced psychological violence (18). In our study, when we looked at the situation of being subjected to violence according to the age of academicians, it was found that those who were in the 41-50 age range were the most vulnerable age group with 91.5%, and those who were older than 60 were the least exposed age group. This finding suggests that, depending on the patriarchal structure of Turkish society, the middle-aged and older group is more respected and less exposed to violent behavior. Paralell with our finding, in the study of Özyer & Orhan (2012), the exposure of the lecturers to psychological harassment varies according to age. Accordingly, the minimum

age range of the lecturers affected by psychological harassment is less than 25 years. In addition, the age range where lecturers are most affected by psychological harassment is 25-45 years. This effect decreases as the age range increases. However, in the study of Einarsen & Skogstad (1996), it is seen that elderly workers are exposed to more psychological abuse than younger workers in terms of age distribution. This finding is inconsistent with our research results and suggests the reality of cultural differences.

When the exposure of violence according to their gender is examined, it was found that male academicians were exposed to more physical violence than women and there was a statistically significant difference. Similarly, in the studies conducted in the field of education, it is stated that men are exposed to more mobbing (24,25) and are more stressed than women. In the study of Gusmeoes et al. (26) it was seen that boys applied more physical violence than girls when they examined physical violence. Palaz et al. (27) found that 58.6% of women and 41.4% of men were subjected to psychological violent. Men may be exposed to violence due to their own sex.

Violence in women is more psychological violence than physical violence depending on the type of upbringing. In their study, Rashidah et al. (19) stated that women exposed to violence were the most exposed to psychological violence, physical violence was second and sexual violence was third. In contrast to our study, Elçi et al. (28) examined the relationship between Mobbing Organizational Silence and intention to quit, and it was found that men were exposed to more mobbing than women, and when they were evaluated on an

institutional basis, it was found that public employees were slightly more exposed to mobbing.

Implications for practice

It will contribute to the literature on increasing the visibility of violence in society. At the same time, as a result of the fact that academics, who are among the most educated groups of the society, are exposed to many types of violence, it will help to develop policies in universities to protect educated groups from violence by revealing that violence is not directly associated with the education of individuals. Attention will be drawn to the fact that the academic group should also be taken into account while developing national policies on preventing violence.

Limitations

As the results of this study are valid for the academicians working in two universities, it can't be generalized to all academicians.

CONCLUSION

Gender was not an important factor in terms of being subjected to violence, but when examined according to the type of violence they experienced, it was found that men were significantly more exposed to physical violence than women. Our research has shown that regardless of gender, title and education, every academician may encounter any type of violent behavior in the work environment. To this end, it may be suggested to create institutional awareness, to take measures to prevent all kinds of violence in work place, to identify and implement the necessary institutional sanctions in cases of violence, to ensure the functioning of the relevant legal regulations and to increase awareness by conducting more studies examining different aspects of this issue. Depending on the results of this study, a comparison between universities can be made by including different universities in the scope of the research in future studies. Another application to be made on this subject in the future may be to choose the interview technique instead of the survey method. In this way, in-depth information can be obtained and more information about the problem can be obtained.

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