

## ATTITUDES OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS TOWARDS DEAF PEOPLE: A UNIVERSITY CASE FROM TÜRKİYE

### SOSYAL HİZMET ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN SAĞIRLARA YÖNELİK TUTUMLARI: TÜRKİYE'DEN BİR ÜNİVERSİTE ÖRNEĞİ

#### ABSTRACT

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This study aimed to measure the attitudes of social work students in Türkiye. Although the use of hearing aids and implants is common in Türkiye, the rate of those who have severe hearing problems or who cannot hear at all is 1.1% of the total population. It is important to determine the attitudes of social work students towards the deaf, because the attitudes of social workers towards the deaf will directly affect both their clinical practice with deaf clients at the micro level and the political practices that target the deaf community at the macro level. The Attitudes to Deafness Scale (AD Scale) was administered to 299 participants online along with a socio-demographic form. The data were analysed using the SPSS statistical package. Attitudes toward deaf people were used as the dependent variable. Socio-demographic characteristics of the students and some characteristics related to knowledge, and thoughts about the participation of deaf people in social and work life were the independent variables. The results show that the participants have relatively positive attitudes towards deaf people. Additionally, students have positive opinions about the capabilities of deaf individuals in both social and work life. Gender significantly affects attitudes and female students generally have more positive attitudes towards deaf people.

**Keywords:** attitude, deaf, sign language, social work, university student

#### ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, Türkiye'deki sosyal hizmet öğrencilerinin sağır insanlara yönelik tutumlarını ölçmek amaçlanmıştır. Türkiye'de işitme cihazı ve implant kullanımı yaygın olmasına rağmen ciddi işitme sorunu yaşayan veya hiç duyamayanların toplam nüfusa oranı %1.1'dir. Sosyal hizmet bölümü öğrencilerinin sağırlara yönelik tutumlarını belirlemek önemlidir çünkü sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının sağırlara yönelik tutumları, hem mikro düzeyde sağır müracaatçılarla yürütecekleri klinik uygulamaları hem de makro düzeyde sağır topluluğu hedef alan politik uygulamaları doğrudan etkileyecektir. Araştırmada 299 katılımcıya online olarak sosyo-demografik soru formu ve Sağırlığa Yönelik Tutum Ölçeği (AD Ölçeği) uygulanmıştır. Veri analizi için SPSS istatistik programı kullanılmıştır. Bağımlı değişken olarak işitme engellilere yönelik tutumlar kullanılmıştır. Öğrencilerin sosyo-demografik özellikleri ile sağır insanların sosyal yaşama ve iş yaşamına katılımlarına dair bilgi ve düşüncelerine ilişkin bazı özellikler bağımsız değişkenleri oluşturmuştur. Sonuçlar, katılımcıların sağır insanlara karşı nispeten olumlu tutumlara sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca öğrenciler sağır bireylerin hem sosyal hem de iş hayatındaki yetenekleri hakkında olumlu görüşlere sahiptirler. Cinsiyet, tutumları önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir ve kız öğrenciler genellikle sağırlara karşı daha olumlu tutumlara sahiptir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** tutum, sağır, işaret dili, sosyal hizmet, üniversite öğrencisi,

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Attitudes as an internal state are not directly observable, but are the source of observable responses. Attitudes are a tendency to evaluate a particular asset to some degree in favor or against it (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998). Attitudes are accorded special status because of their presumed influence on people's choices and actions (Petty & Briñol, 2010).

Deafness is viewed primarily as the inability to hear, to participate in conversations, to appreciate music or birds singing or to be aware of sounds indicating warnings of danger (AÇSHB, 2019). Deafness is defined in two different ways as medical and cultural in current discussions in the literature; using the word deaf to start with a lowercase letter is an audiological based definition used to express hearing impairment. Hearing impairment refers to complete or partial hearing loss in one or both ears and having a hearing threshold below 25 dB (WHO, 2021) and this usage corresponds to the medical definition of deafness. Using the word as Deaf to begin with a capital letter is one of the ways the deaf identify themselves as a different culture. This usage, which is an opposition to the labeling (stigma) of deafness as a disability, is an expression that deafness is a subculture (Clason, 2019). Deafhood is a concept that aims to disrupt medically oriented and oppressive discourses, by offering a deaf constructed model that grows out of people's own ontologies (i.e., deaf ways of being in the world), emphasizing positive, experience-oriented views of deaf people (Ladd, 2003; Kusters & De Meulder, 2013).

Positive attitudes toward deaf individuals are critical aspects of integration into social and academic activities (Vignes et al., 2009). It is known that negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities have been prevalent throughout history (DeLambo et al., 2007) and negative attitudes towards people with disabilities are more common than expected (Tervo & Palmer, 2004). Tringo (1970) claimed that discrimination against people with disabilities may impede employment opportunities. The educational opportunities of the deaf individuals tend to be reduced when compared to the educational opportunities of hearing individuals (Breadmore, 2007; Gaustad 2000; Kargin et al. 2019). Approximately 5% of people in most countries have deafness or significant hearing loss. This significant minority is under-represented in mainstream universities across the World (Woodcock et al. 2007) and as indicated by Corlett (1991), generally poor level of services are available to deaf students. An ignorance of their required support needs and a reduced representation of deaf people within higher education also exists. A growing number of deaf students are attending higher education worldwide. Education is a fundamental human right as prescribed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948). All people have a right to equal opportunities for attaining higher education regardless of any difficulties. Higher education can provide and lead to many rewarding career choices for deaf people (Bisol et al., 2010).

Understanding attitudes towards deaf people is an important aspect of integration into a broader social world. Studies showing negative attitudes towards the deaf in the literature associate these attitudes with stereotyping, seeing deafness as an obstacle and deficiency (Coryell, 1992; Kiger, 1997). Studies that reveal positive attitudes towards the deaf show that having knowledge about the deaf and deaf culture, having experience of communicating with the deaf, learning deaf culture through direct contact and interaction with



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the deaf are factors that positively affect attitudes (Enns et al., 2010; Lee & Pott, 2018; Nikolarazi and Makri, 2005).

The cultural structure in different parts of the world has an impact on attitudes towards deaf people. Culture has a fundamental function in understanding the social, and individual differences as a part of the identities of societies. Today, identity is one of the basic processes of cultural analysis (Sharma, 2014). Different social associations and rituals formed in the communication and interaction process feed into cultural structure which has a determining effect on social life (Engelke, 2018; Wylie, McAllister, Davidson et al., 2017).

Although the use of hearing aids and implants is common in Türkiye, the rate of those who have severe hearing problems or who cannot hear at all is 1.1% of the total population (AÇHSB, 2021). In the early years of the Turkish Republic, Turkish Sign Language (TID) was taught, but in 1953 it was banned across the country. This was due to the increase in the "oralist" effect, that is the view that it is more appropriate to teach verbal language and the perspective that disabled people should be forced to speak. It was not until 1992 that a "Sign Language Guide for Adults" was prepared and it was finally published in 1995. In official education, the teaching of Turkish Sign Language (TID) was only permitted by a Law passed in 2005, 52 years after its ban. Then, in 2007, the "First Turkish Sign Language Workshop" was held. The date of June 7, when this workshop, in which the "TID Finger Alphabet" was determined, was held, has been officially celebrated as the "Turkish Sign Language Day" since then (Akalm, 2013; Kemaloğlu ve Kemaloğlu, 2012). In 2012, the "Turkish Sign Language (TID) Dictionary" was prepared by the Ministry of National Education, and it was updated in 2015. In the same year, the "Turkish Sign Language (TID) Grammar Book" was published by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. As of the 2016-2017 academic year a Turkish Sign Language (TID) Course has been taught in specialist hearing impaired primary schools. "Turkish Sign Language (TID) Teaching Materials" have been prepared for this course. In 2018, "The Department of Turkish Sign Language and Deaf Studies" was established at Ankara University Institute of Social Sciences (AÜSBE, 2020). In this context, this study examines the attitudes of university students, who are key potential agents of attitude change in relation to people who are deaf in Turkish culture.

Despite the importance of this topic, it appears that there are only a few studies investigating the attitudes of university students towards deaf people (e.g. Glintic et al, 2014; Lee & Pott, 2018; Kikuchi 2010; Lozano et al 2020) and none of these studies have been conducted with Turkish. University students who are prospective professionals with potentially important roles in the future. For this reason, their attitudes and opinions at the macro level. The purpose of this article is to reveal these attitudes so that early interventions can be made to change the social work curriculum.

### Hypothesis

The research hypothesis that guided this study are as follows:

H1. There will be a relationship between students' socio-demographic characteristics and their attitudes towards deaf people.

H1.1. It is anticipated that women will have more positive attitudes than men

H1.2. It is anticipated that individuals who are younger will have more positive attitudes

H1.3. It is anticipated that individuals who come from urban areas have more positive attitudes

H1.4. It is anticipated that individuals who are at their senior year have more positive attitudes

H2. The greater the knowledge of students have about people who are deaf, the more positive their attitudes are likely to be.

H3. Higher scores by student's on their perceptions regarding the capabilities of people who are deaf will be associated with attitudes that are more positive.

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Data was collected in October 2021. Research e-mails including the online survey, an invitation letter and the URL link was sent to four research assistants who work in Ankara University Faculty of Health Sciences Department of Social Work. The research assistants forwarded the survey to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade social work students within their network. All participants answered the research questions online. Participants were treated in accordance with the Turkish Association of Social Workers' ethical guidelines for research with human participants, and were given no special inducement to participate in the study and were assured of no penalty for not participating and told that they could withdraw from the study at any time until data analysis. They were informed that the purpose of the survey was to obtain information about their attitudes toward deaf people. They were assured of anonymity and confidentiality and asked to answer the questionnaire honestly. The form was sent to 400 students and 299 students agreed to participate in the study (74.75%). The questionnaire consisted of The Attitudes to Deafness Scale and there was a short questionnaire requesting information on a range of demographic characteristics from participants.

**The Attitudes to Deafness Scale (AD Scale)**

The Attitudes to Deafness Scale aims to measure attitudes towards deaf people and it is designed for human service professionals who may work with deaf people. This scale includes 22 statements and measures attitudes to deafness. Statements such as "Deaf couples should receive genetic counselling to avoid having deaf children" are rated on a 6-point scale that ranges from 1 (most negative) to 6 (most positive). Negatively worded items are reversely coded, such that higher scale scores indicate more positive attitudes. Internal consistency of the scale items using Cronbach's alpha is acceptable at .71 (Cooper et al., 2004). The scale has acceptable validity and reliability in its original form. Since this instrument was being used in a different cultural setting than the one in which it was originally designed, the language validity of the AD Scale was ascertained by the translation-retranslation method to develop the Turkish version. Minor modifications to the wording were made to the original set of items however the meaning remained the same. Internal consistency of the Turkish form of the scale items was examined using Cronbach's alpha and the value for Cronbach's Alfa for the whole dataset was found to be acceptable at .736. The Turkish form of the scale is given in the appendix.

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### General questionnaire

The rest of the questionnaire consists of four subgroups of questions about the characteristics of the students, including demographic information (i.e., sex, age, year in university, where they live, socioeconomic status), knowledge about deaf culture and sign language, opinions regarding the participation of deaf people in society and work life (i.e., leadership, management, working in unqualified jobs). All items are positively worded and rated on a 4-point scale that ranges from 1 (completely disagree) to 4 (completely agree).

### Data Analysis

The data were analysed using the SPSS (version 17) statistical package, Attitudes toward deaf people were used as the dependent variable. Socio-demographic characteristics of the students and some characteristics related to knowledge, and thoughts about the participation of deaf people in social and work life were the independent variables. An independent samples t-test procedure was employed to compare means across two groups (e.g. gender, where they live most). Pearson correlations coefficients were also employed in order to determine correlations between dependent and independent variables. Additionally, ANOVA was employed to compare means across more than two groups (e.g. socio-economic status - SES). The minimum acceptable level of significance was set at .01.

### Ethical considerations

The Ethics Committee of the OOO University has approved this study (code: OOO). Before participation, the participants were guaranteed of the confidentiality of their information, and informed consent was obtained from them.

## RESULTS

### Participants

Participants were 259 women (86.6%) and 40 men (13.4%), ranging in age from 18 to 43 years old ( $M = 21.26$ ,  $SD = 2.04$ ) who were attending the faculty of health sciences of a state university located in the central Anatolian region of Türkiye. All of the participants were single, some of the students (42.1%) were from rural areas, but the majority (57.9%) were from urban areas of Türkiye. 34.8% reported that they were freshmen, 25.8% were second-year students, 21.7% were third-year students, and 17.7% were senior (fourth year) students. Participants were asked to choose between low, medium or high options to determine their socioeconomic status, and they reported that the majority of the participants (88.6%) came from middle-class

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families, and none of them were overseas students (see table 1).

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of the sample

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender		
Female	259	86.6
Male	40	13.4
<i>Age (M=21.26; SD=2.04)</i>		
18	16	5.4
19	63	21.1
20	58	19.4
21	69	23.1
22	40	13.4
23	18	6.0
24 and over	35	11.6
<i>Where they live most</i>		
Rural	126	42.1
Urban	173	57.9
<i>Year in the university</i>		
1	104	34.8
2	77	25.8
3	65	21.7
4	53	17.7
<i>Socio-Economic Status</i>		
Low	25	8.4
Middle	265	88.6
High	9	3.0

The first hypothesis focused on the relationships between the demographic characteristics (e.g. gender, age, where they lived, and SES) of the students and their attitudes toward deaf people. As seen in Table 2, the scores on the AD Scale ranged 52 to 130 ( $M = 87.78$ ;  $SD=1.28$ ) and with respect to gender, the mean score for the female students on the ADS was 88.68 ( $SD = 12.0$ ), the mean score for the male students was 81.95 ( $SD = 15.62$ ). The female students had more positive attitudes toward the deaf people ( $t(298) = 3.150, p < 0.01$ ). Additionally, no statistically significant difference were found between the attitudes of students living in rural areas and students living in urban areas towards deaf individuals ( $t(298) = -0.684, p > 0.01$ ). Finally, no relationship was seen between students' socio-economic status and their attitudes towards deaf individuals ( $F(2)=2.915, p > 0.01$ ). As can be seen from Table 2, only the gender variable among the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants supports the first hypothesis of the study.



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**Table 2.** Relationships between the demographic characteristics and attitudes toward deaf people

	N	Mean	SD	Statistics	p
<b>Gender</b>					
Female		88.68	12.06	t= 3.150	.002
Male	40	81.95	15.62		
T o t a l (range=52-130)		87.78	1.28		
<b>Age</b>		21.26	3.07	r=-.085	.143
<b>Where they live most</b>					
Rural		87.19	11.77	t= -.684	.495
Urban		88.21	13.47		
<b>SES</b>					
Low	25	82.24	11.17	F= 2.915	.056
Middle		88.40	12.77		
High	9	85.00	14.30		

The second hypothesis dealt with the relationship between the knowledge of university students about deaf people and their attitudes towards them. The attitude score of students who knew deaf individuals was 88.07 (SD=12.21), while the attitude score of students who did not know deaf individuals was 87.20 (SD=13.88). There was no statistical difference between these attitude scores.

The attitude score of the students who had information about deaf culture was 89.77 (SD=14.56), while the attitude score of the students who had very little information was 87.01 (SD=12.15) and the attitude score of the students who had no information was 88.02 (SD=12.60). There is no statistically significant difference between the attitude scores of the students in terms of their level of knowledge about deaf individuals (F(2)=1.089, p>0.01).

The attitude score of the students who had adequate knowledge about sign language was 89.46 (SD=12.57), while the attitude score of the students who had no information about sign language was 83.95 (SD=13.33). There is not statistical difference between the groups (F(2)=3.592, p>0.01). As a result of these findings, the second hypothesis of the study was not supported (Table 3).

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**Table 3.** Relationships between the knowledge about deaf people and attitudes toward deaf people

	n	Mean	SD		p
<b>Know a deaf people</b>					
Yes		88.07	12.21	t= -.552	.581
No		87.20	13.88		
<b>Knowledge about deaf culture</b>					
There is little knowledge		87.01	12.15	F=1.089	.338
Yes		89.77	14.56		
No		88.02	12.60		
<b>Knowledge about sign language</b>					
There is little knowledge		87.95	12.44	F= 3.592	.029
Yes		89.46	12.57		
No		83.95	13.33		

The third hypothesis dealt with the relationship between the participant's perceptions regarding deaf people's capabilities and their attitudes toward them. As it can be seen from Table 4, there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the participants' level of agreement that deaf individuals can drive safely in traffic ( $r=.197$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), have graduate education ( $r = .137$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), live alone and take care of themselves ( $r = .197$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), 181;  $p < 0.01$ ) and that they can go shopping alone ( $r = .339$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and increasingly positive attitudes towards deaf individuals. Similarly, there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the participants' level of agreement that deaf individuals can lead in their work life ( $r=.275$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ); are able to work in qualified jobs ( $r=.162$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ); can be managers ( $r=.269$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ); and are able to work in jobs that require communication skills ( $r=.308$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) with more positive attitudes toward deaf people. As a result, the third hypothesis of the study was supported (Table 4).

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**Table 4.** Relationships between student's attitudes and their perceptions about deaf people's capabilities

		N	%	Mean	SD	Statistics	p
<i>Deaf people able to drive safely</i>	Completely disagree	17	5.7	2.58	.77	r = .197	.001
	Disagree	125	41.8				
	Agree	123	41.1				
	Completely agree	34	11.4				
<i>Deaf people can do higher education</i>	Completely disagree	2	.7	3.79	.46	r = .137	.018
	Disagree	1	.3				
	Agree	55	18.4				
	Completely agree	241	80.6				
<i>Deaf people can live alone and take care of themselves</i>	Completely disagree	1	.3	3.22	.67	r = .181	.002
	Disagree	39	13.0				
	Agree	152	50.8				
	Completely agree	107	35.8				
<i>Deaf people can go shopping alone</i>	Completely disagree	8	2.7	3.36	.75	r = .339	.000
	Disagree	25	8.4				
	Agree	117	39.1				
	Completely agree	149	49.8				
<i>Deaf people can lead in work life</i>	Completely disagree	3	1.0	3.38	.64	r = .275	.000
	Disagree	16	5.4				
	Agree	143	47.8				
	Completely agree	137	45.8				
<i>Deaf people are able to work in qualified jobs</i>	Completely disagree	3	1.0	3.74	.54	r = .162	.005
	Disagree	6	2.0				
	Agree	56	18.7				
	Completely agree	234	78.3				
<i>Deaf people can be managers</i>	Completely disagree	2	.7	3.59	.58	r = .269	.000
	Disagree	8	2.7				
	Agree	100	33.4				
	Completely agree	189	63.2				
<i>Deaf people able to work in jobs that require communication skills</i>	Completely disagree	8	2.7	3.40	.73	r = .308	.000
	Disagree	20	6.7				
	Agree	114	38.1				
	Completely agree	157	52.5				

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The first hypothesis focused on the relationships between the demographic characteristics (e.g. gender, age, where they lived, and SES) of the students and their attitudes toward deaf people. As shown in Table 2, attitude scores toward deaf people ranged 52 to 130 (Mean=87.78; SD=1.28). In our study, attitude scores of the participants were slightly lower than the Cooper, Rose, & Mason (2004) findings. This suggests that attitudes in Turkish students are comparable to health care professionals in the UK. While this finding is encouraging, the data from the UK was collected 16 years before the data in the current study and is likely to have changed over time. As a result of the research, it appears that the students have relatively positive attitudes towards deaf individuals.

In relation to the first hypothesis women participants were found to have more positive attitudes towards deaf people, and our results are consistent with previous studies in this regard. Namely, Cooper, Rose, & Mason (2004) found a significant difference between the attitudes of men and women), whereby women had more positive attitudes than men. Similar to our study, there are other studies in which women's attitudes towards deaf individuals are found to be more positive than men (Martin et al. 2005; Vignes et al. 2009; Şahin & Akyol 2010; Yıldız-Çoksan & Çoksan, 2019). No other relationships were found with demographic characteristics however this may be due to the fact that we were researching a relatively homogeneous group particularly in relation to age and socioeconomic status.

The second hypothesis considered the relationship between attitudes and knowledge of university students about deaf people and the analysis revealed no statistical difference between these attitude scores. Although studies on this subject are limited in the literature, this situation is inconsistent with the literature. At the end of the research conducted by Lee & Pott (2018), it was stated that recognizing the deaf culture and interacting with deaf people strengthens positive attitudes towards deaf people and can provide a cultural understanding. In addition, Enns et al. (2010) indicates that their respondents who had deaf friends had more positive attitudes toward deaf people than those who did not have deaf friends.

The finding in this study that there is no statistically significant difference between the groups in terms of attitudes towards deaf individuals among those who have information about the deaf population, who have no knowledge and little knowledge is again inconsistent with the literature (Hunt & Hunt, 2000; Hoang et al., 2011). The similarity between the attitudes of students with no knowledge of sign language and those with knowledge was also unexpected. This result may reflect generally positive attitudes to people who are deaf in the undergraduate population.



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The third hypothesis dealt with the relationship between the participant's perceptions of the deaf people's capabilities and their attitudes toward them. As it can be understood from Table 4, participants were given 8 propositions (e.g. deaf people able to drive safely, can do higher education) to test this hypothesis and they were asked to indicate how much they agree with each statement. In relation to all of the statements, more positive support for capabilities was associated with more positive attitudes towards people who are deaf. In the majority of cases positive and significant relationships were found between the level of agreement with the propositions and the attitude towards deaf individuals. In general, this suggests that the attitude scale is valid, with more positive scores on the attitude measure reflected in expressed support for people who are deaf.

Finally, the results show that the number of students who have a positive opinion on the participation of deaf people in work life was quite high and is encouraging. The results bode well for the future of people who are deaf in Türkiye. This result is very important because unfortunately we do not have official data on the participation of the deaf in the labor force in Türkiye, but we know that the labor force participation rate of the total population with at least 1 disability is only 35.4% (AÇSHB, 2021). These official data show that deaf employment is quite low.

The question arises as to how can students have positive attitudes in a country where sign language was banned until recently. Wouldn't they be expected to have negative attitudes? For many years in Türkiye there was almost no news about deaf people in the mass media, and deaf society was largely ignored for half a century. After the reintroduction of sign language, the increasing visibility of sign language and the deaf community has brought with it an interest in this language and the deaf community in society. Turkish Sign Language (TİD) was accepted as a language when the expression of TİD was included in a legal net for the first time in Article 15 of Law 5378 (Official Gazette, Number: 25868, 2005) in 2005. Türkiye in 2009. The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been signed by the parties (Official Gazette, No. 27288, 2019). The positive developments over the years following these developments have made significant contributions to deaf culture and promoted social awareness as a subculture. With the regulation published in the Official Gazette (No: 30915, 2019) in 2019, it has been determined as an obligation for media service providers to publish one of their main news bulletins daily with sign language translation in order to ensure freedom of expression and information. This not only allows deaf individuals to follow national news bulletins, but also contributes to the visibility of the deaf community and sign language.

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Opportunities to engage positively with deaf, and inclusion of core courses in deaf community and deaf culture in social work curriculum could be an important factor for minimising negative attitudes. In workshops at the Ankara University Faculty of Health Sciences, information is provided on sign language for deaf individuals, the mistakes known in sign language, deaf society, the culture of the deaf, the history of the deaf schools is explained and samples of sign language are given. More experiential elements include a sign language translation of a short section from a novel, information and examples of using Turkish sign language in strings ranging from daily spoken language to literary texts, basic concrete requirements and the expression of complex emotions is provided. The workshops enable students to actively participate in the process and they do not only acquire knowledge but also gain experience. One of the instructors is Deaf and this has enabled the students to use Turkish sign language and also created an opportunity for communication with someone who is deaf through the Turkish sign language. It has been concluded that the study conducted in the research affects students' attitudes towards communication with deaf individuals in a positive way (Karahan & Duyan, 2020). It is thought that the workshop has contributed to these positive results. In a study conducted in Japan, the ASL (American Sign Language) program was opened for the students of the English language teaching department. The program included lessons on the use of sign language in daily communication skills, deaf culture and deaf studies. At the beginning of the semester, it was determined that the students stated that sign languages lacked precision, subtlety and flexibility in comparison with spoken language and were inferior, and they portrayed deaf people in a negative way. At the end of the semester, the survey revealed that 85.7% of the total number of students changed their attitudes about ASL and the deaf. Since 97.1% of students who completed the ASL program accepted the importance of learning ASL, researchers stated that the ASL program had a tremendous impact on students who completed it (Kikuchi, 2010).

Knowledge of the deaf, sign language and deaf culture is a powerful factor that positively influences attitudes. The number of deaf confederations, associations, deaf sports clubs and other voluntary non-governmental organizations in Türkiye has increased rapidly over recent years. The contribution of national and international organizations and the news in mass media related to these organizations has contributed to the visibility of the deaf community and sign language. The 17th World Deaf Congress, of the World Federation of the Deaf in 2015 which deals with global deaf society policies, was held in Istanbul. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Summer Deaflympics, organized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) was held in Samsun, Türkiye, in 2017 (Deaflympics, 2017). More than three thousand athletes participated in the games, which were the widest participation Deaflympics in its history, and the games were widely reported in the Turkish national media. All of these and a range of other events are almost certainly contributing to the relatively positive attitudes that are found in the young well educated individuals in this research.

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### Limitations

The data was gathered from a single institution. The limited diversity of the participants may have contributed to more positive results regarding attitudes towards deaf individuals. Studies involving students from different universities and larger groups should be conducted to obtain more comprehensive findings on how university students perceive deaf people.

Another potential limitation relates to the demographic characteristics of participants. This study included unequal numbers of women and men, with far more women in the sample. This limitation is likely to have biased attitudes towards deaf people positively. This study utilized self-report of perspectives and attitudes, so the actual attitudes and behaviours of university students may differ from their reported ones.

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EK: Sağırılığa Yönelik Tutum Ölçeği (AD Ölçeği)

SORULAR	1- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum			6- Kesinlikle Katılıyorum		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Sağır çiftler, sağır çocuk sahibi olmamak için genetik danışmanlık almalıdır.						
2. Sağır çocuklar, işiten ebeveynleriyle iletişim kurmak için konuşmayı öğrenmelidir.						
3. Daha fazla sağır arkadaşımın olmasını isterdim.						
4. Sağır okulları ve sağır kulüpleri sağır “gettoları” yaratır.						
5. Sağır bireyler işaret dili yerine konuşmayı öğrenmelidir.						
6. Sağır bireyler engellidir.						
7. Sağırlığın tedavisini bulmak için daha fazla araştırma yapılmalıdır.						
8. Sağır çocuklara işaret dilinde eğitim verilmelidir.						
9. Sağır ebeveynlerin işiten çocukları duygusal yoksunluk riski altındadır.						
10. Sağır bireyler güvenli sürücülerdir.						
11. Daha fazla sağır meslektaşımın olmasını isterdim.						
12. Sağır bireyler dudak okumayı öğrenmelidir.						
13. İşyerlerinde sağır kişiler için tercümanlar bulunmalıdır.						
14. Sağır bireyler ev ortamlarında otomatik olarak yardım almalıdır.						
15. Tüm sağır bireylere düzeltici cerrahi tedavi önerilmelidir.						
16. Sağır müracaatçılarla çalışmak için daha fazla profesyonele eğitim vermek zaman kaybı olacaktır.						
17. Sağır bir meslektaşımın olması işyerinde sorunlara neden olacaktır.						
18. Sağır bireyler fizyolojik olarak engellidir.						
19. Sağır bireyler “engelli” olarak görülmemelidir.						



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20. Katıldığım kulüplerde/topluluklarda daha fazla sağır bireyler görmek isterdim.						
21. Sağır bir arkadaşına sahip olmak zor olurdu.						
22. Sağır bireylerin kendilerine ait kültürleri vardır.						