



Children and Families: Health and Wellness
Instances of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Among the Young in Turkey

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to find out the origin and emotional and intellectual process of violence among young people. Interpretative phenomenological analysis method was used in the research. In-depth interviews were held with young adolescents and emerging adults that have committed violence to reveal their experiences of perpetrating violence, thoughts and sensations that could lay the groundwork for emergence of violence in this age group. The study group consisted of fifteen young adolescents and emerging adults. As a result of the interpretive phenomenological analysis using MAXQDA computer program, three study themes were obtained: 1) Childhood experiences 2) Relationship with partner and occurrence of violence, 3) Post-violence experiences. According to the young adolescents and emerging adults who have committed intimate partner violence; intimate partner violence was triggered by jealousy, mistrust, uncontrolled anger, and desire to control the partner's life.

Key words: Intimate partner violence, young adolescents and emerging adults, domestic violence.

Intimate partner violence appears in physical, psychological, or sexual context or in the form of stalking (CDC, 2006). This research particularly discusses physical violence in dating relations. Foshee et al. (2007) describe physical dating violence as scratching, slapping, pushing, biting, strangling, burning, or beating. Feminist literature defines intimate partner violence as a coercive behaviour performed to gain control and power over the partner (Mitchell & Magdalena, 2009). The World Health Organization (2012) has declared that aggression has a continuing course from childhood to adolescence and from adolescence to adulthood, conducting to a permanent pattern of violence. In Turkey, the Adolescent Profile 2008 survey has revealed that 21.2% of adolescents have perpetrated physical violence, 33.3% have perpetrated verbal violence, and 2.9% have perpetrated sexual violence (Ministry Directorate General of Family and Social Research, 2010). In research conducted on university students by Hatipoğlu, (2010), 94.0% (205/218) of the participants reported perpetrated violence in their previous dating relationships. In a study conducted on 3153 young adolescents and emerging adults by the Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence, it has been found that 44% of the youth have experienced dating violence (Öztürk, Karabulut, & Sertoğlu, 2018). In Turkey, dating violence is increasing daily and is also occurring among high school age youth (Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence, 2018). In the study conducted in Turkey on young people by SEKAM (2013) it is seen that 44% of the young people have applied physical violence to their friends, siblings, partners and 60% approve of the judgments sentence of “The right of those who do not listen and follow one's nose is beaten.” (p. 201). In the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was conducted on 9900 students, 20.9% of the female students and 10.4% of the male students stated that they were exposed to partner violence (Vagi, Olsen, Basile, & Vivolo-Kantor, 2015). In Fidan and Yesil's (2018) research carried out in Turkey, school girls normalized the violence they experience by referring to the social environment, the character of the partner, and their own attitude. Male students consider violence they use as ownership.

According to The Grand National Assembly of Turkey Parliamentary Research Commission (2007), when the statistics of the world and regions are examined, young people are among the disadvantaged groups affected by violence. Studies show that youth violence is an ongoing and increasing problem. It is observed that the death rates related to violence are high among young people in the world. There are children who died in the 5-14 age group due to suicide and violence, and this rate increases even more in the 15-29 age group. Agents encouraging dating violence have been listed as drug abuse (Offenhauer & Buchalter, 2011), sociodemographic structure (Foshee et al., 2004), being raised in a young family, lower socio-economic level, education level of the family (Foshee et al., 2009), witnessing or exposure to domestic violence (Foshee et al., 2004; Offenhauer & Buchalter, 2011), and peer influence (Chase, Treboux & O'Leary, 2002). In Turkey, researchers (Avcı & Güçray, 2013; Haskan, 2009; Özgür, Yörükoğlu & Baysan-Arabacı, 2011; Şen, 2011), showed that young people witness or are exposed to violent acts within family besides the larger social environment, education is not sufficient, and

lower socio-economic level and unsatisfactory parental love and interest add to likelihood of appearance of violence. According to the World Health Organization (2012), the factors leading to violence in the youth period include individual (biological and psychological-behavioral), relational (family and peer influence) communal (gang, possession of arms, substance use, social integration) and social (demographic and social changes, income inequality, political and cultural) factors.

Violence can be figured out as it is, only by examining its roots and nature (Arendt, 2006). Revealing the sources and so-called justifications of violence is considered to have an important place in breaking this cycle (Lucas, 2013). Dating violence during youth is such an assault that it may lead to physical and psychological injury, developmental deterioration, suicide, low academic performance, drug abuse, involvement in crime, and domestic violence in later years.

Since young people are at a critical stage of identity development, it seems essential for future preventive studies to explore culture-specific facts as to the source of violence by means of qualitative interviews if it is intended to break the cycle of violence. It should be noted that although violence occurs everywhere in the world and in different forms and areas, it also has culture-specific aspects. This research was conducted with a phenomenological approach with the purpose of uncovering perpetration experiences of young people but also their thoughts and emotions that might have paved the way for violent acts.

Method

In this research, interpretive phenomenological design, which is the qualitative research design used with the aim of studying in detail young adolescents' and emerging adult's experiences of perpetrating violence against their partners and revealing the basic characteristics that are common to some or all the participants.

Interpretive phenomenological research was particularly useful for this research as it allowed a detailed examination of the experience, the effect of the participant's interpretation of the experience on her/himself, how the participants made sense of the experience, and how they form their perceptions about their personal and social worlds (Jeong, & Othman, 2016). In this regard, interpretive phenomenological framework seems important in obtaining information about the experiences of young individuals who perpetrated violence on their partner (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Jeong, & Othman, 2016).

Participants

In this research, participants were selected by using criterion and snowball sampling methods among purposeful sampling methods, which allow in-depth study (Creswell, 2015). The basic understanding in criterion sampling is to study all situations that meet a set of predetermined criteria. The criterion mentioned here can be set by the researcher (Patton, 1990). The criteria here included perpetrate violence on the partner, signing the informed consent form for taking part in the research, and being unmarried young people from both genders. In snowball sampling, one individual is determined as a reference considering the subject of the study and

contact is made with other participants through this person (Creswell, 2015). Many of the people interviewed in this research stated that they were exposed to violence but did not perpetrate violence. During the selection of the participants, it proved relatively easy to reach the abused persons, while it was quite a challenge to access young people who have committed intimate partner violence. In addition, the latter avoided accepting their violent acts unless such acts were in police records or there were legal actions against them. It was seen that during the interviews, female participants spoke out that they acted as abusers, but male participants had difficulty uttering the same. It is thought that there is less social stigma around women perpetrating violence against men. On the other hand, the males avoided doing so because they were probably concerned about being criticised harshly for perpetrating violence on someone weaker than themselves. Therefore, the researchers had difficulty in reaching the male participants. In general, due to the focus on personal experience of the individual in phenomenology, homogeneity of the study group consisting of a small number of participants allows a thorough study of circumstantial similarities and differences (Chawla, 2006; Smith, & Osborn, 2008). The sample size was determined against these criteria in the current research. The variables related to the participants' sociodemographic characteristics are given in the tables below.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Education	Medical or psychological condition	Previous attempt for self-harm
P1	16	Female	At high school	Difficulty in controlling anger and thus receiving psychological support	Slitting wrists/ Suicide attempt
P2	16	Female	At high school	Startled by azan (sounds of prayer calls) for one year, believing that supernatural beings are bothering her, not receiving psychological support	Throwing a fist on a wall, breaking her finger
P3	17	Male	At high school	None	Suicide attempt
P4	17	Female	At high school	None	Slitting wrists/ Suicide attempt
P5	16	Male	At high school	None	Throwing a fist on a wall, breaking the little finger
P6	17	Female	At high school	Was on medication for 2 years due to anger problem	Slitting the arms with glass

P7	18	Female	High school graduate	Was on medication for 2 years due to anger problem	Drug intake / suicide attempt at the request of her boyfriend
P8	17	Female	At high school	None	None
P9	24	Male	High school graduate	None	Self-mutilation Scars left on the body
P10	24	Female	University graduate	Was on medication for 2 years due to anger control and neurologic problems	Drug intake/ suicide attempt
P11	21	Female	At high school	Psychiatric treatment and antidepressant drugs at intervals of 2 years	Drug intake/ suicide attempt
P12	22	Male	High school graduate	None	Verbal reference to suicide but no attempt
P13	23	Female	University graduate	None	None
P14	23	Female	University graduate	Therapeutic support for 2 years	None
P15	24	Female	Master's degree	Was on medication for a short period in psychiatry clinic and therapeutic support for 2 years	None

It can be seen in the tables above that most of the participants have a history of psychological and psychiatric support, self-mutilation, and suicidal attempt; they are at close ages with their partner, they have not used drugs during or after the violence; and some participants have reported ending of their violent romantic relationship, while some others have reported the opposite.

Data Collection

In this research, the semi-structured interview was used as a type of interview commonly used within qualitative research. The questions were first used in a pilot study on one female and one male. As a result of the feedback obtained from the pilot study, the interview questions were revised, some items were omitted if they did not help explore the phenomenon properly. Also new questions were included for valuable data on the phenomenon, the questions were put in order, and the wording of the questions was finalised by taking the opinion of a psychological counselor who specializes in domestic violence. The sample questions about the interview were as follows: 1) When you look at the violence experienced during the relationship, what happened

before the violence appeared? 2) If you had the chance to go back in time and go back to that day of violence, would you behave differently? 3) What would be the reason for you to behave differently? The interviews were held by the researcher face to face and voice-recorded using a digital voice recorder with the permission of the participants. Informed consent was obtained from the participants approving their voluntary contribution, and the interviews lasted an average of 60 minutes. All interviews were conducted by the first author of the study at a time and place convenient for the participants.

The research was carried out in the biggest city of Turkey, and the participants were contacted using the researchers' professional networks, social connections, and the participants' recommendations. It was identified that the interviewees who perpetrated violence against their partner often had difficulty talking about it and tended to justify and legitimise their violent acts. Another observation during the interviews was that the female participants could speak of perpetrating violence with ease unlike the males.

Data Analysis

The research data was analyzed using the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) proposed by Smith et al. (2009) in the MAXQDA program. The researchers chose IPA to understand how participants perceive the personal and social world and to provide insight into how a particular person makes sense of a particular phenomenon in a particular context. Moreover, IPA brought researchers as close as possible to the perspective of participants experiencing a particular phenomenon (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The stages involved in the interpretive phenomenology analysis are realized in the following order (Willig, 2001). The audio records of the interviews were transcribed by the researcher and transferred onto MAXQDA. The text obtained from each interview was read repeatedly. At the same time, the audio recordings were replayed to make sure there was agreement between the audio and written records. Also, notes were made on the text of each participant.

At the next stage, focus was placed on the notes and themes that were created. The themes were created for each participant separately. Next, the themes obtained from all participants were listed and the ones that were compatible with the phenomenon were determined. As a result of the comparison of the themes obtained from all participants, the main themes that were seen common and reflected the experience of the participants were obtained. Apart from that, the resulting main themes, sub-themes, and codes were reviewed by three independent experts who have taken qualitative research courses. They were found to be consistent at a great extent and thus finalised by the researcher following the experts' opinions. Furthermore, the researcher went through training on trauma and violence for a more fruitful analysis process. The validity of the research was provided by making exact quotations from the opinions of the participants.

Findings

The main themes and sub-themes which were obtained from interviews are outlined in this section.

Childhood Experiences

This main theme, which defines the background of the participants and social composition of the neighborhoods, emerged with three sub-themes: *self-description*, *family relations* and *experiences of violence*.

Self- description. This sub-theme consists of four codes: *low tolerance to errors*, *getting angry easily*, *being compliant and jealous*.

P15: “I don’t get angry easily, but once I get angry, something too bad comes out of me...I don't remember what I did when I was angry. At that moment I can do anything, you know.”

P12: “I am very jealous... I am extremely sensitive and emotional.”

Strangely enough, some participants described themselves as “compassionate, easy-going, too tender-hearted to hurt other living things”. Yet, in the course of the interview, they said that they perpetrated violence because of not being able to keep their temper; however, they seemed to be unaware of their violent acts.

Family relations. This sub-theme consists of three codes: *father says the last word*, *mother says the last word* and *close relation with mother but distant relation with father*. It was worth noting that the participants outlined the mother as the parent, which is easy to communicate with, shouldering the household responsibility, and warmer in relations, while they overall attributed a distant figure of communication to the father.

P8: “Mom was good. But my father and I sometimes don't get along. Because he, you know, gets mistrustful. For example, he never lets me out of the house. He's always putting pressure... Yeah, but mom's not like that. She is listening to all what I tell. She's trying to understand. Rather, dad is approaching with anger.”

P9: “My father used to drink all the time, he always had these problems. Lastly, they got divorced... Well, of course, we weren't brought up with the love of parents....”

The participants stated that the last word belongs to the mother in their family. As another finding about their *intrafamilial* relations, they stated that the father is often away from home, and they have only weak relations with the same because of imprisonment or heavy workload of him as applicable. In the case of others, the father was reported to be an active member of the household, often having the last say. The relevant participants presented this by using expressions such as “like in all households” or “father is the breadwinner”, which suggests that such participants readily consent to this situation and do not see it as unacceptable.

Experiences of violence. This sub-theme consists of three codes: *exculpating violence against children*, *exposure to domestic violence* and *violence in the social circle*.

P1: “Well, there isn't usually a calm person around me... when people around me usually fight. There is an iron stuff called knuckle ring that is put on fingers. With it, with a chopping knife, etc.”

P3: “When I heard the words he said... I jumped from the desk and put down one punch. I remember it...”

P9: *"In front of our eyes, you know 3-tined forks which are big and wide, (he) heated it up on a camp cylinder and, I can remember clearly, he put it out on my mother's belly."*

As an example, physical violence against children was excused for mischief as a child and recalled by remarking, *"I haven't been exposed to that much violence, she just pulled my hair, slapped my face or something, I deserved it"* (P13). In addition, it was understood that participants became eyewitnesses to violence perpetrated by the father to other family members, they were exposed to violence from the mother and father during childhood, and they do not have warm or close kinship relations.

Moreover, it was inferred that violence perpetrated by the father to other members of the family (mother or sibling) was widespread in the families of the participants. The participants tended to normalise violence, underestimate it with expressions like *"not something extreme"*, and exhibit the same attitude regarding violence against their social circle with comments like *"just for fun to deliberately hurt (others)"*.

Relationship with Partner and Occurrence of Violence

This main theme, which focuses on the experiences before and during violence emerged with four sub-themes: *internal factors that trigger violence, external factors that trigger violence, description of the act of violence, and violence fantasies.*

Internal factors that trigger violence. This sub-theme consists of four codes: *anger, jealousy and desire to control, disappointment and self-protected.* Basically, participants had difficulty managing their anger. They reported a heavy desire for hurting the other, but they resorted to physical violence because they could not perform it in speech, as they were unable to express themselves verbally.

P7: *"I wanted him to suffer. Because I was suffering tremendously at the time ... But I couldn't upset him with my words ... So I acted that way ... I think people resort to violence when they are helpless. I see I can't do anything with words. Nothing. ... It is the way I do when I cannot do it by speaking."*

P4: *"I'm being beaten, you know, my body, and I have a say on my own body. He can't simply touch me. If he touches me, I will touch him, too. I have to protect myself."*

It was seen that intervention in the partner's clothing and behaviours was perceived as normal and jealousy was taken as a sign of strong emotions and an indicator of love. Love was described to be correlative of intervention in the partner's life, keeping her/him under control, jealousy, and owning.

P11: *"It's wrong. The wrong thing is that he goes with girls. Why does he go? I am not going with men, why is he going with the opposite sex?"*

P14: *"At that moment, I wanted to beat him. I wanted to rub his head against the wall. I was extremely angry at that moment. I was too jealous."*

Anger and inability to control anger seem to have considerably triggered violence among the participants in this research. The participants were seen not to remember the moment just before

the occurrence of violence and there are missed moments including emotions, thoughts, and behaviors during the violent acts. It was predominantly said, *“I do not know what I was talking about, I do not remember what I did, I just passed out”*. In short, it was found that they felt intense anger and could not think of anything other than harming and hurting the other person. Based on their statements like *“nervous breakdown, passing out”* and their failure to identify the cause of the anger in some cases, it was concluded that they failed to keep their nerves under control.

External factors that trigger violence. This sub-theme consists of four codes: *physical violence perpetrated by partner, frustration, boredom of quarrels and being cheated*. In participants, partner’s behavioural patterns and cheating were noted as external triggers of violence. P10: *He kept me waiting for an hour and then I was angry, and he would accept it normally. That was what triggered me... And that's when he voiced that it was ridiculous for him to be angry, it's triggering me... After saying that I was exaggerating ... I said that everything is permissible...”*

As one exception, physical violence and psychological pressure exerted by the partner were found to be an outstanding variable for some participants unlike the others.

P6: *“I hardly ever hit him because if I hit him, the result is usually too big against me. My arm was quite bruised for a while... I stopped seeing my boyfriend. Then he came and beat me (laughing)”*

It is inferred that violence was not a one-time occurrence, the abused persons were exposed to violence in different times and places. They justified the violence with the partner’s family problems, so they tried to sympathise with the partner, and they expected the violence to gradually disappear. It was understood that the partners intervened in the participants’ everyday life, clothing, and behaviours; they made them feel valueless, they did not recognise their right to decide for their own life, and they tried to keep the participants’ life under control. It was added that physical and psychological violence by their partner somehow motivated them to apply physical violence, too.

P5: *“Oh, jealousy. Texting someone else, talking with her/him. You know, as I love her so much, I don’t talk to anyone else, she says she loves me very much but talking with others. It made me mad...”*

It can be deduced that cheating and lies were recurrent throughout the relationship and the young people who have committed intimate partner violence resorted to violence as the last choice in readiness for coming of the relationship to an end. The participants attempted to rationalise the violent acts by saying *“How come does he do that although I love him?”* (P2) In addition, intolerance and violence were noticed when a new romantic relationship was started by the other party, with the fear of rumours even when the romantic relationship discussed here had ended earlier.

Description of the act of violence. This sub-theme consists of four codes: *not describing the act as violent, physical violence, self-destructive behaviour, and self-defence*. When the participants’

statements were examined, they tended to recall the anger they experienced at that moment rather than the act, and they had difficulty in remembering their feelings and thoughts experienced at that moment. There was a lack of awareness of violence and self-destructive behaviours that took place.

P1: "There I started hitting him. Because I was hurt. I slapped him and kicked him. I mean I hit a lot in that way. I had a stick with me, and I hit with the stick. You know I wasn't able to satisfy my anger..."

Moreover, the participants seemed not to develop insight about the violence they perpetrated, and they did not call it violence.

P8: "No, I am usually quite against fighting, so I can't beat... I used to shout or hit. Okay, I've pushed but I haven't beaten anyone at the extent of hurting a lot..."

Apart from these, most of the participants reportedly exhibited self-destructive acts at the time of anger, especially punching the wall in anger.

P2: "But I realise later that I have already hit the wall. I notice it after my hand swells like this..."

Violence fantasies. This sub-theme consists of two codes: *wishing to kill* and *dreaming of harming more*.

P1: "At that moment, I just wanted her/him to die. I said, God, kill her/him so that s/he can't go out with anyone except for me. Suppose that s/he is dead, and I am done. I wished that s/he cannot to go out with someone else than me..."

P8: "...I wanted to scream. I wanted to beat him to death. I was getting so mad..."

P10: I wished if I had had a knife at that moment, I could have stabbed the knife. Because I went blind..."

Post-violence Experiences

This main theme focuses on perception after perpetrated violence, emerged with three sub-themes: *perception of others' judgement*, *perception regarding the consequence of the violence* and *perception of violence*.

Perception of others' judgement. This sub-theme consists of two codes: *positive impression* and *negative impression*.

P4: "If one watched it all along, he would think I was doing self-defence, but he would wonder why we went that far. Why we had to fight. You know, in general, those who fight outside are lovers or something like that..."

Participants believe that men perpetrating violence against women would be judged unfavorably by others because of perpetrating violence to someone weaker than them. Participants expect some people to approve the violence and others to reject it. Again, the majority of the participants were found to expect others to have a negative judgement of them and consider them as insane.

P9: "They would think I was a weak person. I'm hitting the girl after all..."

Perception regarding the consequence of the violence. This sub-theme consists of two codes: *persisting in certain behaviours* and *wish of changing certain behaviours*. Participants insisted on their violent behavior as long as the reasons did not change. The participants grounded their violent acts on their partner's certain behaviours and intense affection felt for her/him.

P5: "...You know the other side must have thought, look at what he did, what sort of a man he is. He hits someone weaker than himself. But that thought is not right for that moment, I believe, because it is a girl, why should I beat unless she does something (bad)? Because I love (her) so much. I used to in fact."

Again, the interviewees explained that they wanted to stop their violent acts on the grounds that violence is not remedial at all. They indicated their preference for negotiation and listening to the other party rather than violence. Nevertheless, though intention for changing that behavior was reported by both groups, they sounded unsure about being able to control their anger.

P7: "I left my course after that incidence because my friends there saw that and so on. That's why... And my mother figured out. Mom got angry with me. That's why I didn't have to experience these. I mean if I had known then what I know now, I wouldn't have done such a thing."

Perception of violence. This sub-theme consists of three codes: *incapability*, *can be used depending on the situation*, *it arises anywhere and suddenly*. Looking at the statements of the interviewees, violence was commonly interpreted as incapability, harmful, and arising from desperateness.

P13: "I don't think it makes anyone superior or anything like that. What would you gain when you hurt a person? I believe that's even more incapable. I don't think it's power, I think it's desperation."

Some of the participants said, "There is something like that at school. No one can harm whoever is powerful" (P4). It suggests that such participants recognise violence as an instrument for behavioural change specific to the surrounding conditions.

It was also stressed that violence can break out suddenly and, in any place, and that violence exists in every sphere of life.

P5: "I've been exposed to violence at home, just occasionally, not so much albeit. I compare it to the family because I've seen a few times. Because it happens in every family. I don't think it never happens. Actually, violence is the world, so I tell you. Because there is violence in the parliament. It's in place in school. It's in place in the family. It is in place among friends. Even in nature. It is even in place among animals."

As another finding, some of the participants, referred to the provoking part played by the other party in occurrence of violence as understood from the statement "they similarly provoke people. This is how violence takes place" (P12). It was implied that violence breaks out as a result of provocation.

It is assumed that violence is enjoyed as a means of higher status in their schools and violence is functional for social acknowledgement. It is equally noteworthy that the woman was referred to as the weaker person in the generalisation about not perpetrating violence to a weaker person.

Discussion

In this research, three major themes were obtained, and the results were discussed associatively. The first main theme of the study "*childhood experiences*" describes how anger was evident as a part of self-description in participants. Anger was described as a trait which is not a behavior that needs to be corrected. Another interesting finding is that low tolerance was exhibited against errors and jealousy emerged as an important construct in the case of anger. Anger was termed as a feeling aroused by the other party's provocation and no responsibility was taken by the participants in this regard. On the one hand, the participants did not see being angry as a mistake; on the other hand, they sounded unaware that they perpetrated violence, or they were reserved to disclose such facts. In a research study carried out on those perpetrating intimate violence, Wilkins (2011) found that the young people who have committed intimate partner violence considered themselves non-violent. There is also evidence in the literature that lower self-esteem increases bullying and aggressive acts (Paulson, Coombs & Landsverk, 1990; Russell & Hudson, 1992). Drawing on the reported views, it was understood that negative attributions such as being angry, jealous and their behaviours are overshadowed by such perception being manifested in perpetrating intimate partner violence.

In terms of family relationships, establishing a closer relationship with the mother while the father is in distance appeared as one of the most visible common characteristics of the participants in our case. In a research conducted by the T.R. Ministry of Family and Social Policies (2013), intrafamilial ill-communication has been noted as an important area of problem. It is a widely accepted fact that the father is liable for the household subsistence. Due to his working hours and working regime, he is often the secluded member of the family. While close and intimate relationships are established with the mother, the father often embodies authority offering only a distant relationship. Similar results were obtained in the present research. As inherent in traditional gender roles; while the mother is considered responsible for rearing children and taking charge of the house, the father oversees maintaining the livelihood of the family and assumes the role of a remote communicator who avoids sharing his feelings.

If an individual experiences affectionate relationships with family members during childhood, secure attachment takes place. On the contrary, domestic relationships based on denial or rejection give rise to avoidance as a style of attachment. In the middle, those who experience a blend of denying and loving relationship with their parents adopt the style of anxious and unstable attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Our findings revealed broken intrafamilial relations and distant non-family relations, frequent appointment of the mother as the model parent, searching for a figure of affection outside the family because of the lack of domestic affection, and existence of intrafamilial problems and violence. The participants in this research might have adopted the anxious-unstable attachment style due to the reasons in the literature as mentioned above. Therefore, they might have been tied to their partners with intense fear of loss

and preoccupied attachment, and such attachment might be the driver of the jealousy and violence.

Although participants remarked that domestic violence does not exist in their families; they continued the interviews by mentioning violent happenings, they underestimated and excused violence they were exposed to during their childhood, and they accepted it as a deserved punishment for their misbehaviour. In other research conducted on the agents of intimate partner violence, violence by parents has also been dealt with tolerance (Barış, 2015; Watt, 2011). The fact that the participants regard parents' violence as a means of discipline or rearing children seems to pave the way for them to take violence in the same way.

The findings of this research showed that the participants were exposed to domestic violence, they witnessed domestic violence, such violence was mostly perpetrated by the father, and violence is commonplace in their social circle. Similarly, previous research studies have asserted that violent individuals experienced domestic violence considerably (Barış, 2015; Haskan, 2009; Şen, 2011), the father was the family member that perpetrated violence more often than any other (Şen, 2011; T.R Ministry Of Family And Social Policy, 2013), witnessing violence in the social circle increased incidence of violence (Avcı & Güçray, 2013; Özgür, Yörükoğlu & Baysan-Arabacı, 2011; Şen, 2011), and dating violence occurs in part due to the presence of violence in the social circle, school and peer relationships (Chase, Treboux & O'Leary, 2002; Offenhauer & Buchalter, 2011). Much in the same vein, we found out that the interviewees perpetrated violence to solve their problems with their partner. They said, "only if I can talk or I can express myself, I won't do it", and that violence was seen as a path to social recognition.

The second main theme of the study, *relationship with partner and occurrence of violence*, proved the domain where expectations from partner and disappointment breed a hostile meaning loaded on the partner, ultimately being a vital agent in incidence of violence. Like in previous studies (Avcı, & Yıldırım, 2014; Berkowitz, 1990; Eatough, Smith, & Shaw, 2008; Watt, 2011), the young people who have committed intimate partner violence in our research were convinced to apply violence by a blend of numerous components including anger, jealousy and desire to keep the other under control, disappointment, desire to protect oneself, intention to end the relationship, incapability of expressing oneself verbally, psychological violence by partner, frustration, weariness of quarrels, lies, and being cheated. According to DeWall et al. (2012), behaviours become vulnerable to the impact of scenarios, beliefs, expectations, attributions, and observational learning. Specifically, hostile attribution onto the other party plays a remarkable instrumental role in occurrence of violence. There are some studies showing that romantic affairs founded on owning the other person and altruistic and passionate love are associated with negative emotions, and these features constitute a substantial predictor of the end of the relationship (Bugay & Tezer, 2008; Lee, 1973). Hazan and Shaver (1987) studied projection of attachment styles on adults and found out that adults who developed anxious-unstable attachment were worried about being let down by their partners, they were jealous and went through ups and downs throughout the romantic affair. In addition, among participants who confessed perpetrating violence to protect themselves, a positive attitude towards dating violence was noted

like in the previous research (Eatough, Smith, & Shaw, 2008; Hatipoğlu, 2010; Yumuşak, 2013). The literature suggests that individuals apt to perpetrate violence exhibited higher levels of loneliness but weaker social support networks (Avcı & Yıldırım, 2014). Some of the participants here initially approached their partner as a source of affection, which is supposed to originate in family; they experienced intense feelings of happiness but showed signs of depression including difficulty in eating and sleeping upon ending of the relationship. Apart from that, the participants perpetrated violence so abruptly that they could hardly remember that moment and they almost experienced loss of consciousness. According to some participants, the harshness of quarrel sometimes reached a higher level soon leading to complete loss of control. But in some cases, violent acts were planned beforehand.

As for the participants, they regard it as a given right to steer the partner's life and actions and to interfere with her/his life. This finding seems to be consistent with many other research studies (Hyden, 2005; Yumuşak, 2013). They further hold the other party's attitude and behaviours responsible for the breaking out of violence. Love was described as an equivalence of intervention in the partner's life, controlling her/him, jealousy, and owning her/him. It proved as a marked reasoning among participants that they were expecting to be exposed to violence as a response to their certain acts and they deserved it just because they kept acting in the same way. Loue (2001) argues that in evolutionary psychology, if the principal value in a community is obedience and children are expected to behave accordingly, obedience might come into view as a major value in intimate relationships alike. In that context, violence can be abused to maintain obedience. Given that the child's unconditional obedience to parents and adults prevails as an established cultural behaviour in the whole nation, this phenomenon may significantly account for occurrence of violence. In this research, participants did not show tendency to regard certain acts of them as a sign of violence. Consistently, other research conducted indicated that the agents of intimate partner violence were ready to underestimate their violent acts (Flinck & Paavilainen, 2008; İlhan, 1992; Foshee, et al., 2007; Watt, 2011). It is an interesting finding that the participants condemn others for violence, but they display poor discernment in identifying their own violent acts. The interviewees stated that anger did not fade away despite their perpetrating violence and they found themselves dreaming of further hurting the partner as a reaction to the intense anger. The adolescents even indicated their wish for the death of the partner/killing her/him beyond hurting. It seems that an individual transforms her/his anger at both parties into dreaming of murdering the partner when s/he cannot manage the relationship embedding mutual violence.

The third main theme of the study was noted as *post-violent experiences*. Participants articulated concern about being criticised harshly for perpetrating violence on someone weaker than themselves. Moreover, although both groups mentioned their wish for stopping violent behaviours, they were not confident about controlling their anger. In a study by Eatough et al. (2008), participants reported experiencing a flow of multiple feelings rather than one single feeling following the embodiment of anger. The justifications were given as being cheated, jealousy presented as an indicator of intense love, lack of explanation by the partner, provocation

by partner, and being treated unjustly. It was added that intense love might cause violence even though such reaction should be ideally avoided.

The participants shared views about violence. They hold the view that violence is a sign of incapability, it is detrimental, and it replaces the right reaction as a remedy to desperation. According to the report by the The Grand National Assembly of Turkey Parliamentary Research Commission (2007), young people resort to violence because they are unable to solve problems they face in any other way. The current research also showed that the participants perceived violence as a scene of incapability or weakness; still, they hinted at sustaining violent acts and associated emergence of violence with provocation by the other party. According to our participants, violence can be used to gain power and respect, or discipline someone else. Support in the literature exists that reflect violence is not disdained for the sake of enforcing discipline (Şahin, Dişsiz, Sömek, & Dinç, 2008). This study examined how violence is exercised as a means of higher status and social acknowledgement in school and social life, respectively. It is particularly interesting that the woman is placed in the target when referring to not abusing violence against a weaker person in that the woman is considered as a weak or vulnerable entity. There is an argument that if violence is to be performed, it should be between the members of the same sex. The participants regarded abusing women as a sign of weakness but a sign of power in the case of perpetrating violence against men. This perception nurtures gender inequality and is based on perceived difference of power (Dökmen, 2012).

Limitations

The limitations of the research are as follows. The purposive sample for this study came from within the largest city in Turkey. The participants were also well educated, and participant characteristics may vary depending on the level of education. Limited numbers of male participants were reached. Also, it has been observed that women express their violence experience more easily and men have difficulty in expressing this. Therefore, the responses of male participants to the interview questions may have differed.

Conclusion and Implication

Violence was legitimised and justified from the participants' point of view in our research. In addition to this, acceptability and abusability of violence is introduced by an incentive perception which argues that violence can be performed as an instrument of discipline like in all areas of life and it can be a well-deserved punishment for certain behaviours. As another aspect worth noting, the male participants spoke too discreetly about their violent acts at the beginning of the interviews owing to the fact that abusing a weaker person has negative connotations in society; however, females sounded more relaxed in the role of perpetrator. Based on the data obtained here, it is proposed to investigate the perceptual loadings that determine acceptance levels of the agents of intimate partner violence in future research. It is also recommended to plan psycho-educational trainings on conflict resolution skills, communication skills, anger management, healthy relationships, and gender equality in governmental and non-governmental organizations. When we look at the international programs on intimate partner violence (IPV) in adolescents, examples are seen at the national scale and studies are tailored to particularly assess those

programs. In Turkey, also, it seems crucial to design nationwide programs to prevent intimate partner violence. Also, it is seen that most of the women participants in adolescence are exposed to violence and use violence to protect themselves. The participants stated that they need psychological support. For this reason, it is recommended to establish mental health units that will support violence prevention.

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