



## SELF-REPORT IN MALE JUVENILE SEX OFFENDERS AND SELF-CONSCIOUS EMOTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study investigated sexual violence against women and whether or not the perpetrators were witnesses to domestic violence and/or domestic sexual violence and if there was a difference regarding the feelings of shame and guilt from other men among male university students. **Methods:** A random sample of 175 male students was selected among a total of 3,535 male students at a university in Ankara. A research questionnaire was composed of sociodemographic, as well as the Sexual Experiences Survey-Perpetration Version (SES-PV) and the Personal Feelings Questionnaire-2 (PFQ-2). **Results:** During some time in their lives, 19.9% of the participants witnessed domestic violence, and 3.5% of them witnessed domestic sexual violence. According to their self-reports in the study, the rate of being a sexually violent perpetrator among male university students was 13.5%. Alcohol (21.3% vs. 68.4%,  $p = 0.000$ ) and substance abuse (1.6% vs. 15.8%,  $p = 0.002$ ) were found to be high in the sexually violent perpetrators. the PFQ-2 Guilt subdomain scores were found to be higher in the sexually violent perpetrators ( $p = 0.018$ ). **Conclusion:** To be able to interfere with adolescent males who were sexually violent perpetrators in the past can significantly reduce the rate of sexual assault. This requires an understanding of the emotional reactions of the sexually violent perpetrator, which can help in determining adequate knowledge and qualities that may lead to the recurrence of the crime.

**KEYWORDS:** Offenders, Sexual violence, Adolescent, Shame, Guilt.

### INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence includes all the actions toward performing a sexual act, using undesired sexual words, using sexual approaches, making sexual offers, or using a person sexually for commercial purposes. Sexual violence, regardless of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, includes a direct or indirect and forced sexual act against one's sexuality in any circumstances, not limited to the house or workplace of the victim. Sexual violence includes all dimensions and grades of pressure and use of force. Such pressure also includes threats (such as psychological intimidation, physical harm, dismissal, or non-employment) other than physical compulsion.<sup>[1]</sup>

Sexual perpetrators are not a homogeneous group. However, there are some similarities in rape convicts.<sup>[2]</sup> Most male rape convicts who rape women have some of the following characteristics: negative views toward women, myths of rape, overlooked violent behaviors and male attitudes, underachievement in school, an unstable family history, and an inability to work in a job.<sup>[3-5]</sup>

Sexual abuse by young people is not uncommon. Young people under the age of 18 are responsible for 15%–20% of all sex crimes, and half of the adult sex offenders start to commit crimes during their youth.<sup>[6]</sup> There is limited research conducted with control groups on theories specifically developed for sex crimes being committed by adolescents.<sup>[7]</sup> There are known risk factors that may lead an adolescent to engage in aggressive sexual behavior, including the presence of a victim, limited sexual information of the offender, cognitive and attitudinal characteristics to maintain paraphilic behaviors, a history of drug use, a lack of empathy for the victim, rejection of the crime, a lack of a control strategy for paraphilic behaviors, a reservation in understanding sexual values, and being subjected to physical and sexual abuse.<sup>[8]</sup>

Guilt and shame are associated with depression, anxiety, hostility, and low self-esteem. An intense feeling of guilt and shame can lead an individual to violence. One may choose violence as a way of coping with intense guilt and shame. In this case, it is possible that one harms others, as well as themselves.<sup>[9,10]</sup> According to research,

shame increases as guilt increases. However, an increase in constant anger causes a decrease in the feeling of guilt. In contrast, an increase in the feeling of guilt causes a decrease in constant anger. It can be argued that people who feel high constant anger do not see themselves as guilty or even see right.<sup>[11]</sup> It is thought that guilt is parallel to empathy. It can be said that, in the presence of a mistake, an individual with advanced empathetic skills feels guilt more intensely than those who do not possess those empathetic skills.<sup>[12,13]</sup>

This study investigated the frequency of committing sexual violence against women and the type of the sexual violence among male university students and substance use, the presence of domestic violence and domestic sexual violence among young men who are sexually violent perpetrators, and if there is a difference in terms of the feelings of shame and guilt from other men. The term “perpetrators” used in this article does not refer to people who have committed sex crimes and have been legally arrested or fined. The term “perpetrators” has been used as a term for the study group distinguished according to the applied scale result.

## METHODS

In the biostatistics evaluation made before the study, the prevalence of sexual violence in Turkey and in other international publications was estimated to be 10%, and it has been estimated that the sample size should be 175 to reach this prevalence at a 95% confidence interval by predicting that there may be 10% participation rejection with a sensitivity of  $\pm 3.0\%$ .

In this study, 175 male students were randomly selected by lot from the list of a total of 3,535 male students at a university in Ankara. All 175 male students were contacted and provided with information regarding the study. The participants were invited to the Healthcare Center on campus to fill in the research questionnaire or were provided with the opportunity to make an appointment at any campus building they thought appropriate to fill in the questionnaire. Male students self-administered the questionnaire. Of the randomly selected study students, 34 (19.4%) of the students refused to participate in the study either during the first contact or during the administration of the questionnaire. The analyses were completed with 141 male students (80.6%) who participated in the research. The participants signed the informed consent form.

The research questionnaire was composed of sociodemographic questions, as well as the Turkish version of Sexual Experiences Survey-Perpetration Version (SES-PV) and the Turkish version of the Personal Feelings Questionnaire-2 (PFQ-2).

The SES-PV is a 10-item measurement tool. It targets male students and investigates four types of sexual crimes, including rape, coercion, attempt, and contact.<sup>[14-16]</sup> Necessary permission to use the original SES-PV

questionnaire had been obtained from the authors. A pilot study of the Turkish version of the SES-PV was conducted with 59 participants, and the reliability of Turkish validity was determined by adapting a pre-study scale to Turkish (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.713$ ).

The PFQ-2 is a scale that was developed to make a quantitative evaluation for differentiating the feelings of shame and guilt. The PFQ-2, which is an expansion of the PFQ, consists of 10 shame- and 6 guilt-related affective descriptors (e.g., for guilt; intense guilt, regret, remorse, and worry about hurting or injuring another; for shame; embarrassment, feeling ridiculous, feeling childish, and feeling disgusting to others).<sup>[9,17,18]</sup> The PFQ-2 is a measure adapted to Turkish population and has been demonstrated to be valid and reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.949$ ).<sup>[19]</sup>

This research has been ethically approved by the Baskent University Medical and Health Sciences Research Board.

Pearson and Fisher's Exact tests were used in the analysis of the data. The normal distribution and variance homogeneity were measured with Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Levene tests, respectively. The averages were compared with *t*-test, Mann-Whitney U test, and ANOVA test. Values of  $p < 0.05$  were considered statistically significant. Analyses were performed with IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 22.0, Armonk, NY: IBM Corporation.

## RESULTS

The mean age of the participants was  $21.8 \pm 2.5$  years. Of the participants, 30.5% of them were in their first year of university, while 22.0% of them were in their 4th year or more. In addition, 47.5% of the participants were living with their families, 57.4% of the participants were born in the Central Anatolian region, and 85.1% of them grew up in urban settlements. The family type of 83% of the participants was the nuclear family. The education level of the participants' mothers and fathers was at the university level at the rates of 56% and 58.9%, respectively. In the study, 68.1% of the participants were at a middle-income level, 14.2% of them were actively working in a job, 27.7% of them were smokers, 27.7% of them were using alcohol, and 3.5% of them were substance users. At the time of the study, 46.8% of the participants had a girlfriend. Among the participants with a girlfriend, 33.3% were smoking, 40.9% were using alcohol, and 1.5% were substance users (Table 1). The participants expressed their health state as poor (5.0%), moderate (39.0%), good (54.6%), and other (1.4%).

According to the SES-PV scale, 13.5% ( $n = 19$ ) of the participants were identified as sexually violent perpetrators. According to the SES-PV scale, 8.5% ( $n = 12$ ) of the participants were identified as sexual contact perpetrators, 2.8% ( $n = 4$ ) as rape perpetrators, 1.4% ( $n = 2$ ) as sexual compulsion perpetrators, and 0.7% as rape attempt perpetrators. In addition, seven participants

(36.8%) were included in more than one type of sexually violent act.

The distribution of the participants who have committed any type of the four sexually violent perpetrations according to the SES-PV scale was examined according to witnessing domestic violence. The results showed that 26.3% of the sexually violent perpetrators had a positive history in witnessing domestic violence, while 73.7% of the perpetrators did not have the same history. Domestic violence history was 18.9% in those without any sexual violence ( $p = 0.314$ ) (Table 2).

The distribution of the participants who have committed any type of the four sexually violent perpetrations according to the SES-PV scale was examined according to witnessing domestic sexual violence. The results showed that 15.8% of the sexually violent perpetrators had a positive history in witnessing domestic violence, while 84.2% of the perpetrators did not have the same history. Domestic sexual violence history was 1.6% in those without any sexual violence ( $p = 0.018$ ) (Table 2).

In those with domestic violence history, the PFQ-2 Shame subdomain score was median 15.5, and the PFQ-2 Guilt subdomain score was median 10.0. However, in

those participants without a history in domestic violence, the PFQ-2 Shame subdomain score was 14.0, and the PFQ-2 Guilt subdomain score was 9.0 ( $U = 1334.000$   $p = 0.199$ ,  $z = -1.285$ ,  $r = -0.108$  for Shame;  $U = 1402.500$   $p = 0.352$ ,  $z = -0.932$ ,  $r = -0.078$  for Guilt) (Table 3).

In those participants who had a history with family sexual violence, the PFQ-2 Shame field score was median 16.0, and the PFQ-2 Guilt field score was median 9.0. In those participants who did not have a history in family sexual violence, the PFQ-2 Shame field score was median 14.0, and the PFQ-2 Guilt field score was median 9.5 ( $U = 209.500$   $p = 0.145$ ,  $z = -1.458$ ,  $r = -0.123$  for Shame;  $U = 336.000$   $p = 0.964$ ,  $z = -0.045$ ,  $r = -0.004$ ) (Table 3).

According to the SES-PV scale, the PFQ-2 Shame subdomain score was median 16.0, and the PFQ-2 Guilt subdomain score was 11.0 for the participants who committed any type of the four sexually violent perpetrations. The PFQ-2 Shame subdomain score was median 13.5, and the PFQ-2 Guilt subdomain score was median 9.0 for those who did not have any violence perpetrations ( $U = 893.000$   $p = 0.107$ ,  $z = -1.610$ ,  $r = -0.135$  for Shame;  $U = 770.500$   $p = 0.018$ ,  $z = -2.356$ ,  $r = -0.198$  for Guilt) (Table 4).

**Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Participants According to the Status of Being Sexually Violent Perpetrators by Sexual Experiences Survey-Perpetration Version (SES-PV) Scale.**

Demographic Characteristics	Perpetrators	Non-Perpetrators	Total	p-value
<b>Year in the University</b>				
1	3 (15.8)	40 (32.8)	43 (30.5)	0.222*
2	5 (26.3)	33 (27.0)	38 (27.0)	
3	7 (36.8)	22 (18.0)	29 (20.6)	
4	4 (21.1)	27 (22.1)	31(22.0)	
<b>Current Living Place</b>				
With Family	10 (52.6)	57 (46.7)	67 (47.5)	0.052*
In Dorm	4 (21.1)	54 (44.3)	58 (41.1)	
At Home with Friend	3 (15.8)	7 (5.7)	10 (7.1)	
At Home Alone	2 (10.5)	4 (3.3)	6 (4.3)	
<b>Hometown</b>				
Urban	17 (89.5)	103 (84.4)	120 (85.1)	0.739*
Rural	2 (10.5)	19 (15.6)	21 (14.9)	
<b>Family Type</b>				
Nuclear Family	14 (73.7)	103 (84.4)	117 (83.0)	0.225*
Extended Family	5 (26.3)	15 (12.3)	20 (14.2)	
Single Parent Family	0 (0.0)	4 (3.3)	4 (2.8)	
<b>Mother's Education</b>				
Primary School	3 (15.8)	25 (20.5)	28 (19.9)	0.946*
High School	5 (26.3)	29 (23.8)	34 (24.1)	
University	11 (57.9)	68 (55.7)	79 (56.0)	
<b>Father's Education</b>				
Primary School	2 (10.5)	15 (12.3)	17 (12.1)	0.823*
High School	7 (36.8)	34 (27.9)	41 (29.1)	
University	10 (52.6)	73 (59.8)	83 (58.9)	
<b>Working Condition of the Mother-Father</b>				
Mother is Working	7 (36.8)	51 (41.8)	58 (41.1)	0.683
Father is Working	15 (78.9)	94 (77.0)	109 (77.3)	0.854
<b>Income Level</b>				
Low	2 (10.5)	7 (5.7)	9 (6.4)	0.087*
Middle	9 (47.4)	87 (71.3)	96 (68.1)	
High	8 (42.1)	28 (23.0)	36 (25.5)	
<b>Working Condition</b>				
Yes	3 (15.8)	17 (13.9)	20 (14.2)	0.829
<b>Habits</b>				
Smoking	10 (52.6)	29 (23.8)	39 (27.7)	0.009
Alcohol	13 (68.4)	26 (21.3)	39 (27.7)	0.000
Substance	3 (15.8)	2 (1.6)	5 (3.5)	0.002
<b>Relationship Status</b>				
Had a girlfriend	13 (68.4)	53 (43.4)	66 (46.8)	0.042
Girlfriend's Smoking status	9 (69.2)	13 (27.1)	22 (33.3)	0.008*
Girlfriend's Alcohol status	10 (76.9)	17 (34)	27 (40.9)	0.01*
Girlfriend's Substance use status	1 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.5)	0.206*

\*Fisher's Exact Test

**Table 2: Being Subjected to Domestic Violence and Domestic Sexual Violence for the Participants According to the Status of Being Sexually Violent Perpetrators by the Sexual Experiences Survey-Perpetration Version (SES-PV) Scale.**

	Perpetrators	Non-Perpetrators	<i>p</i> -value
<b>Domestic Violence</b>			
Yes	5 (26.3)	23 (18.9)	0.314
No	14 (73.7)	99 (81.1)	
<b>Domestic Sexual Violence</b>			
Yes	3 (15.8)	2 (1.6)	0.018
No	16 (84.2)	120 (98.4)	

**Table 3: Distribution of the Personal Feelings Questionnaire-2 (PFQ-2) Scores in Those that were subjected to with and without a History in Domestic Violence or Sexual Violence.**

Violence History	Yes	No	<i>p</i> -value
<b>Domestic Violence History</b>			
PFQ2 - Shame	15.5	14.0	0.199
PFQ2 - Guilt	10.0	9.0	0.352
<b>Domestic Sexual Violence History</b>			
PFQ2 - Shame	16.0	14.0	0.145
PFQ2 - Guilt	9.0	9.5	0.964

**Table 4: Distribution of the Personal Feelings Questionnaire-2 (PFQ-2) Scores of the Participants According to the Status of Being Sexually Violent Perpetrators by the Sexual Experiences Survey-Perpetration Version (SES-PV) Scale.**

	Perpetrators	Non-Perpetrators	<i>p</i> -value
PFQ2 - Shame	16.0	13.5	0.107
PFQ2 - Guilt	11.0	9.0	0.018

Levene Shame  $p = 0.831$ , Guilt  $p = 0.448$

## DISCUSSION

According to their self-reports in the study, the rate of being a sexually violent perpetrator in male university students was found to be 13.5%. There was no difference in being subjected to domestic violence and domestic sexual violence between the groups. The rates of alcohol use (21.3% vs. 68.4%,  $p = 0.000$ ), substance use (1.6% vs. 15.8%,  $p = 0.002$ ), and smoking were found to be quite high in sexually violent perpetrators compared to the controls. The PFQ-2 Shame and Guilt subdomain scores were found to be higher in young sexually violent perpetrators than in the controls; however, the difference was only significant for the Guilt subdomain ( $p = 0.018$ ).

In the Turkish Penal Code (TPC), sex crimes are considered as acts that violate the sexual immunity of people and as infringements against personal values. In the law, crimes against sexual immunity are prepared under the titles of sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual abuse of children, and sexual intercourse with a minor. The law typically defines rape as vaginal, anal, or oral intercourse with a penis, a finger, or an object without the consent of the person.<sup>[20]</sup> In the United States, every state defines rape and sexual assault in

different forms.<sup>[21]</sup> In the TPC, rape is defined as a sexual assault carried out by inserting an organ or another object into the body. In the former TPC, sexual harassment corresponds to dissing and molesting crimes committed without physical contact. The violation of body immunity (that is, an act with bodily contact) constitutes sexual assault, not sexual harassment. In the reason of the law, it is stated that sexual harassment may be carried out by sexual acts that do not have the characteristics of violation of the person's body immunity. As is, a sexual harassment crime punishes many intrusive sexual behaviors that annoy a person, including dissing without bodily contact.

As of 2008, the number of lawsuits linked to sexual intercourse in Turkey was 15,366, of which 49.3% were in the form of sexual harassment, 22.8% were sexual assault, 22.4% were sexual abuse of children, and 5.5% were sexual intercourse with a minor. In 65% of these cases, the victim was a woman. In addition, 26% of the sex offenders were in the 18–24 age group, and 9% were under 18 years of age.<sup>[7]</sup> In a study covering the years 1985–1993 in Turkey, 34% of the sex offenders were under 19 years of age.<sup>[22]</sup>

According to the Research on Family Violence Against Women in Turkey conducted in 2014, 36% of women in Turkey were exposed to physical violence, and 12% were exposed to sexual violence at some period in their lives. On the other hand, 38% of women were exposed to both sexual and physical violence. These figures were 8%, 5%, and 11%, respectively, for the last 12 months. These rates were three times higher in the 15–24 age group than in older age groups. The rate of being subjected to sexual violence was 5.8% among women who had higher education.<sup>[23]</sup>

In our study, there was no difference between the perpetrator group and control group in terms of having a history of being subjected to physical violence or sexual violence. In a meta-analysis of the differences between sexually violent perpetrators and non-perpetrators, the results showed that a history of physical violence was not associated with sexual offenders and a history of sexual violence was associated more with sex crimes committed against children.<sup>[24]</sup> There are studies in which there is and is not a relationship between a history of sexual violence and sexually violent perpetrators.<sup>[25-26]</sup> In the research conducted, it was observed that there is still a large number of adult males that express they were sexual abuse victims when they were children.<sup>[27]</sup>

In our study, the rate of both smoking and using alcohol and substances was significantly higher in sex crime perpetrators than in the controls. Alcohol use was 3 times higher ( $p = 0.000$ ) than in the controls, and substance use was 11 times higher than in the controls ( $p = 0.000$ ). Addiction to alcohol and other substances was seen as one of the accompanying conditions in juvenile sex crime perpetrators. Alcohol use was considered to be an

important risk factor for sexual aggression.<sup>[28,29]</sup> However, rates ranging from 3% to 72% were reported, showing a very wide range of frequency.<sup>[30]</sup> A retrospective study of male adolescent sexual offenses found alcohol abuse at 20% and drug abuse at 10%.<sup>[31]</sup> Sexually violent criminals have studies and reports of adolescents reported to be under the influence of substance or alcohol 25%–65% during the attack.<sup>[32,33]</sup> In a survey conducted, the rate of drug abuse during adulthood sexual offenses was 25%. When the crime was committed, there was a serious lack of information on whether or not the perpetrator was under the influence of a substance.

Lewis<sup>[34]</sup> says that the feeling of guilt focuses on a specific behavior which made or not, while the feeling of shame generally focuses on a person's self. These two emotions, which are very close to each other, are secondary emotions (that is, learned emotions). Shame and guilt are the feelings that are experienced during interpersonal relationships. They regulate thoughts and behaviors, inhibit socially undesirable behaviors, and encourage individuals to behave ethically.<sup>[35,36]</sup> Shame and guilt are also self-conscious feelings. Self-consciousness plays a key role in evaluating ourselves and developing ethical behavior. Both feelings of shame and guilt have social, cognitive, and emotional dimensions. However, there are some differences between these two emotions.<sup>[12]</sup> The feeling of guilt arises in response to the violation of internal norms.<sup>[37]</sup> In the feeling of guilt, one feels to have done something wrong. Thus, there is an internal voice that condemns, accuses, and criticizes oneself. On the other hand, the feeling of shame is felt when the current situation is inappropriate, rather it is wrong. One feels in a socially inappropriate, strange, ridiculous, or awful situation.<sup>[12,34,37]</sup> Most of the shame is about what others will think about him. Shame is an emotion that feels extremely painful and ugly with negative effects on interpersonal behaviors. Those people who are inclined to shame others are those people who are more inclined to accuse others for negative situations, be angry, have hostile offenses and pain, and generally develop less empathy with others.<sup>[12]</sup> The feeling of guilt is a feeling of responsibility that we feel for the negative consequences of our acts to others, while the feeling of shame is the discomfort and disturbance that our present form of existence has created on others.<sup>[34]</sup> Individuals inclined to feel guilty develop stronger empathy with others and accept responsibility for negative interpersonal situations. They have less anger inclination than those inclined to shame; however, when they are angry, they are more likely to express their anger and can be more constructive in this respect.<sup>[12]</sup>

Due to difficulties in their measurements, the theoretical and empirical effects of the feelings of shame and guilt are missing. These emotions are not appropriate for direct observational evaluation because they are completely internal phenomena. In addition, people do

not have a clear feeling in terms of a distinction between shame and guilt.<sup>[12]</sup>

In our study, both shame and guilt scores of the sexual offenders were found to be higher than in the controls according to the PFQ-2 scale. There was no statistical significance between the two groups for shame (13.5 vs. 16;  $p = 0.107$ ). On the other hand, there was a significant difference for guilt compared to the controls (9 vs. 11;  $p = 0.018$ ). In studies on sexually violent male perpetrators, shame was determined to be the most prominent emotional theme in the four main emotional themes, including guilt, anger, and depression.<sup>[38]</sup> There is research that supports making a discrimination between shame and guilt.<sup>[38-40]</sup> The feeling of guilt is thought to associated more with self-improvement. The emotional theme of guilt can be observed as a result of the active effort of the sexually violent perpetrator to become a better person.<sup>[38]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Juvenile sex crimes do not seem to have been investigated as much as adult sex crimes. The studies in this area have been conducted mostly on the offenders brought to prison. The difficulty of reaching unreported cases and the difficulty of assessing the adolescents make it difficult to build a strong profile. There is a need for studies to investigate adolescent guilt with adolescence dynamics in large sample groups. The emotional reactions of juvenile sex crime perpetrators have not been adequately investigated. To be able to interfere with adolescent males who were sexually violent perpetrators in the past can significantly reduce the rate of sexual assault. This requires an understanding of the emotional reactions of the sexually violent perpetrator, which can help in determining adequate knowledge and qualities that may lead to the recurrence of the crime.

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