

# An Insight Into The Changing Attitudes Of Male And Female University Students Toward Social Issues In The New Millennium

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## Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore the general attitudes of some Turkish university students toward social issues in a developing society. The data was collected from 604 students in the members of seven of the university faculties in two different locations, the Universities of Osmangazi and Anatolia in Eskisehir between December 1st 2002 and February 31st 2003. Responses were analyzed, using Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test and percent (%) ratios, according to gender. Differences were considered significant for  $p < 0.05$ . Analysis of the study revealed that there were clear differences in gender attitudes toward child care, harmful industrial institutions, homosexuality, censorship, Darwin's theory, dangerous nuclear energy switchboards, a happy world, the death penalty, curettage, beating, a high life standard, and arabesque music, all of which constitute 12 of 20 propositions. We concluded that some attitudes might be specific to Turkish culture, and also that it is impossible to try to understand through just the psychological methods at our disposal an individual's social life and personal points of view. It is important to first consider an individual's actions, ideas and opinions within society in order to realize the characteristics of an individual's beliefs and attitudes, and to understand their effect on humane personality.

## INTRODUCTION

As humane scientists, it is important for us to be aware of factors that may have an impact on the ways youngsters think and feel about social events. Age, education, religion, ethnic and socioeconomic background, place of residence, parental values, changes over time, characteristics coming from creation and peer pressures are just a few of the variables that may influence students' or youngsters' knowledge, perceptions and attitudes (DeRose 1984; Kelley and Evans 1995; Kelley 2001; Silva and Schensul 2003). An example of this can be found in Sri Lanka, which like the other societies in this region, is a place where strong norms persist that prohibit premarital sexual contact between young men and women (Silva and Schensul 2003). In 1984, homosexual behaviour was clearly morally condemned by a substantial majority of the population. Moral censure of homosexual behaviour declined drastically between 1984 and 2000- 64 per cent of Australians held homosexual behaviour to be 'always wrong' in the middle 1980s, a view held by only 48 per cent of the country by the beginning of the new century. To put it in other words, throughout the

wide spectrum of countries, each nation has moral reservations about homosexuality (Kelley and Evans 1995; Kelley 2001).

One variable that has been proven to have a major effect on how students perceive the world or community in which they live is gender (DeRose 1984). How does a student's sex affect his or her attitudes toward social issues? Indications suggest that divergences in attitudes between the sexes are dependent on the characteristics of brain: Brain structure and functions show changes related to sex. There are significant differences between male and female brains from physiological, structural and biochemistry points of view. Men and women, due to the different formation of their brains, perceive the world differently, and hence attach different norms to the same events and objects. These differences influence not only the way the genders think but also the way they behave (Oztas 2003).

It is a fact that all civilizations up to the present day have been built on male aggressiveness and dominance, and as a consequence of this, women have secondary status in the

nearly every culture and community. Women see the marital relationship in the axis of moving communication and mutual dependence, whereas those men who see themselves as responsible for providing a home want to maintain their independence (Van Goozen, Cohen-Kettenis, Gooren Frijda and Van de Poll 1995).

In social hierarchy, reaching a high echelon and a passion to be dominant is a universal characteristic for men. Men see money as the mark of success. While men are pursuing success, power, and status, they do not refrain from neglecting their relationships and health (DeRose 1984, Oztas 2003 and Van Goozen, Cohen-Kettenis, Gooren, Frijda and Van de Poll 1995)

In some circumstances, significant differences were observed between the sexes. Some studies indicated that there are a higher percentage of drinkers among male than among female collegians (Glassco 1975; Strange and Schmidt 1979; Biber, Hashway and Annick 1980; Walfish, Wentz, Benzing, Brennan and Champ 1981). Preston (1964) similarly asserted that drinking is often a symbol that differentiates the sexes. In a study related to coping, males scored higher on the ability to cope than females (Min and Bell 2001). Windham and Aldridge (1965) additionally pointed out that women traditionally tended to be economically dependent on, and subordinate to men. In some situations, however, no significance was observable. In one study which analyzed results collected from 354 traditional undergraduate college age students, findings indicated that there is no significant interaction between gender and death experience (Marshall 1999).

In Turkey, rapid urbanization and industrialization as well as an increase in channels of communication with the West have profoundly influenced young people's sociocultural norms, traditions, customs and usages, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. This in turn has brought about a change in life style, which in itself has caused difficulty to individuals in their adaptation of the new position.

Turkey has a young population, with the young constituting a quarter of the total population. Of the total population of 70 million, those of university age represent about 1.5 million. However, even with this scarce proportion, the university youth have always been at the forefront in terms of characteristics such as political activity, and sensitivity to social and cultural issues (Yorukoglu 1986; Sencer 1990; Sayil 1994; Ortas 2004).

In this study, we aimed to discuss the attitudes toward social issues such as child behaviour, homosexuality, censorship, punishment system, sexual education, curettage, music, goals and ideals, prejudice, and theories.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION ON ESKISEHIR**

Eskisehir, a city situated in the west of Turkey, has a population of 600,000. It includes two universities called Osmangazi and Anatolia, with student capacities of 13,000 and 20,000, respectively. The city is of an average level socioeconomically when compared to the other cities of the country. It also has a cosmopolitan structure as people of other ethnic denomination reside within it, for instance Tatar, Manav, Macur, Kurdish, Circassian, etc.

### **SUBJECTS, AND SELECTION OF FACULTIES, CLASSES AND STUDENTS**

This prospective study recruited 604 university students in two universities in the city of Eskisehir, Turkey. The study was conducted between December 1st 2002 and February 31st 2003.

Within the universities of Osmangazi and Anatolia, there were 8 and 13 faculties during the study, respectively. Of these 21 faculties we selected seven using a simple random method, thus: the Education; Chemistry; Science-Literature; Economics-Managerial; Engineering and Architecture; Fine Arts; and Medical Faculties. The total number of students in these faculties was some 2,350. In order to ease accessibility and obtain homogeneity, we selected the 1st and 4th classes of the university faculties, with the exception of the medical faculty where we selected the 1st and 5th classes. At the time of the survey, the total number of students attending these classes was 1214, all of whom were asked if they were willing to participate in a study on students' thoughts toward social issues.

Due to lack of attendance during the period of study (n=227), and unwillingness to participate in the study (n=373), 610 students did not participate, leaving 604 participating students.

### **PROCEDURES**

A quiet atmosphere was provided to ensure maintenance of the quality of the research protocol and to enable interviewees to reveal their feelings about difficult questions. All participants in the study were voluntary, and were informed that this study was being conducted in order to aid

understanding of students' current situations. All of the respondents gave their informed consent prior to their inclusion in the study and were promised anonymity. Respondents were told that their responses would not become part of their school record, nor any other type of record. The interview stage was first completed, with students then going on to complete the social attitude questionnaire. This was constructed using information from a study by Gokay and Topcu (1971) in Turkey, which included social issues, as well as Eysenck and Wilson (1975)'s social and political attitudes questionnaire. Some of the original questions were revised and a few were added in order to introduce the actual matters. In this way, our questionnaire consisted of 20 questions, which respondents were asked to mark as “completely disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, and completely agree” according to their response choice.

As an addition, we also identified those demographic characteristics of students deemed to be significant factors related to the social matters.

The local authorities of the city, such as the Osmangazi University and Anatolia University, approved this study.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical differences were analyzed using the Pearson's chi-square statistical test ( $\chi^2$ ) where appropriate. This is a test frequently used when examining whether a difference exists between the responses of two independent groups of respondents. The level of significance was set at 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results are given as means with standard deviation (SD) or 95% confidence intervals (95% CI).

## RESULTS

To compare differences in the attitudes of university students, this study gathered data among respondents from two groups: male and female students.

A total of 977 social attitude questionnaires were distributed to students studying in the seven chosen faculties. 604 students, whose ages ranged from 17 to 24 with a mean of 19.96 [standard error (s.e.)=0.25] responded, representing an overall response rate of 61.8%. There were in total 296 male students (21.23±0.27; mean±s.e) and 308 female students (20.12±0.17; mean±s.e), consisting entirely of unmarried students. The difference between the age means of male and female students was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

The relationship between the sexes and attitudes of the university students is presented in Table 1.

**Figure 1**

Table I: The relationship between the sexes and social attitudes of the university students (n=604)

Stances on social issues	Completely disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Completely agree		$\chi^2$ and p
	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	
1.(Child care and housework) Women have an instinctive ability and acquired tendency to housework and child care	30 (4.9)	20 (3.3)	35 (9.5)	30 (4.9)	19 (3.1)	16 (2.7)	139 (22.9)	156 (25.3)	62 (10.3)	74 (12.6)	$\chi^2$ :12.07 $p=0.011$
2.(Harmful industrial institutions) Harmful industrial institutions which pollute the natural environment must be closed until necessary precautions can be considered	9 (1.5)	14 (2.3)	32 (5.3)	49 (8.1)	37 (6.1)	21 (3.4)	130 (21.6)	91 (15.1)	100 (16.6)	140 (23.2)	$\chi^2$ :18.88 $p=0.001$
3.(Punishments) Heavier penalties must be put on the agenda to decrease the rate of offence in society	19 (3.1)	23 (3.8)	48 (7.9)	33 (5.5)	31 (5.1)	29 (4.8)	114 (18.9)	107 (17.7)	96 (15.9)	104 (17.3)	$\chi^2$ :3.53 $p=0.47$
4.(Nuclear weapons) I worry very much about the armament race, and especially about nuclear weapons in the world	20 (3.3)	29 (4.8)	16 (2.6)	17 (2.8)	17 (2.8)	31 (5.1)	117 (19.4)	96 (15.9)	138 (22.8)	123 (20.3)	$\chi^2$ :8.46 $p=0.076$
5.(Homosexuality) Homosexuality is a offence that must be punished by law	103 (17.4)	76 (12.6)	100 (16.5)	92 (15.2)	49 (8.1)	50 (8.3)	56 (9.3)	34 (5.6)	18 (3.0)	44 (7.3)	$\chi^2$ :15.71 $p=0.003$
6.(Censorship) Censorship must be completely abandoned in every field	49 (8.1)	46 (7.7)	108 (17.9)	75 (12.5)	63 (10.3)	47 (7.8)	56 (9.3)	69 (11.5)	32 (5.3)	36 (6.0)	$\chi^2$ :14.92 $p=0.005$
7.(Euthanasia) Those having fatal illness must be given the right to end his/her life through medicine	44 (7.3)	51 (8.4)	38 (6.3)	73 (12.7)	17 (2.8)	31 (5.1)	102 (16.9)	94 (15.6)	47 (7.8)	57 (9.4)	$\chi^2$ :7.74 $p=0.101$
8.(Darwin's evolutionary theory) Darwin's evolutionary theory is the most plausible theory explaining the appearance of mankind	72 (11.9)	112 (18.5)	70 (11.6)	51 (8.4)	98 (16.2)	73 (12.1)	73 (12.1)	45 (7.4)	21 (3.5)	13 (2.2)	$\chi^2$ :16.14 $p=0.003$
9.(Obligatory military service) Obligatory military service is a sacred duty to the country	39 (6.4)	56 (9.3)	49 (8.1)	46 (7.7)	49 (8.1)	40 (6.7)	110 (18.2)	84 (13.9)	64 (10.6)	66 (10.9)	$\chi^2$ :7.12 $p=0.129$
10.(Bringing up children) I am in favour of allowing independence rather than discipline and obedience while bringing up children	29 (4.8)	25 (4.1)	36 (5.3)	73 (12.1)	61 (10.1)	39 (6.4)	110 (18.2)	110 (18.2)	22 (3.6)	29 (4.8)	$\chi^2$ :0.714 $p=0.714$
11.(Social problems related to moral reasons) Today's social problems result from moral reasons	22 (3.6)	35 (5.8)	44 (7.3)	41 (6.8)	38 (6.3)	41 (6.8)	128 (21.3)	116 (19.2)	62 (10.3)	63 (10.6)	$\chi^2$ :4.73 $p=0.316$
12.(Dangerous nuclear energy switchboards) Dangerous nuclear energy switchboards should be closed since they cause hazards	22 (3.6)	40 (6.6)	69 (11.4)	72 (11.9)	93 (15.4)	70 (11.6)	83 (13.7)	65 (10.8)	41 (6.8)	46 (7.7)	$\chi^2$ :11.20 $p=0.024$
13.(A Happy world) The opinion "A world in peace and happiness" would remain fantastic and infinitum	25 (4.1)	42 (6.9)	65 (10.8)	43 (7.1)	38 (6.3)	36 (6.0)	129 (21.3)	100 (16.6)	33 (5.3)	75 (12.6)	$\chi^2$ :16.17 $p=0.003$
14.(The Death penalty) The Death penalty is necessary owing to its dissuading effect in some penalties	46 (7.7)	41 (6.8)	66 (10.9)	49 (8.1)	45 (7.4)	34 (5.7)	106 (17.5)	78 (12.9)	43 (7.2)	94 (15.5)	$\chi^2$ :27.61 $p=0.000$
15.(Sex education) It is obligatory that optional sex education lessons in schools should be put into effect in today's Turkey	27 (4.5)	27 (4.5)	27 (4.5)	23 (3.7)	35 (5.8)	31 (5.1)	147 (24.3)	117 (19.4)	72 (11.9)	98 (16.2)	$\chi^2$ :7.71 $p=0.103$
16.(Respect to elders) Those aging generally the best things are our mothers, fathers and children	46 (7.7)	54 (9.0)	31 (5.1)	81 (13.4)	45 (7.4)	52 (8.7)	71 (11.7)	76 (12.5)	28 (4.6)	33 (5.5)	$\chi^2$ :6.99 $p=0.136$
17.(Curtage) Abandonment of the laws concerning curtagge is a kind of progressiveness	40 (6.7)	48 (7.9)	67 (11.1)	51 (8.6)	60 (9.9)	51 (8.3)	114 (18.9)	83 (13.8)	27 (4.5)	34 (5.7)	$\chi^2$ :16.54 $p=0.002$
18.(Beating) If some people can not be persuaded by speaking, they must be beaten	75 (12.4)	45 (7.4)	98 (16.2)	60 (9.9)	44 (7.3)	48 (7.9)	69 (11.4)	87 (14.4)	22 (3.6)	36 (6.0)	$\chi^2$ :33.48 $p=0.000$
19.(Attaining a high standard of living) My most important goal as a individual is to be able to attain a high standard of living	17 (2.8)	35 (5.8)	43 (7.1)	23 (3.8)	18 (3.0)	30 (5.0)	131 (21.7)	96 (15.9)	99 (16.4)	112 (18.5)	$\chi^2$ :21.2 $p=0.000$
20.(The prohibition of arabesque music) The prohibition of arabesque music on TV and Radio is an appropriate process	41 (6.8)	62 (10.3)	119 (19.7)	85 (14.0)	72 (11.9)	46 (7.5)	49 (8.1)	30 (5.0)	27 (4.5)	33 (5.5)	$\chi^2$ :37.83 $p=0.000$

$\chi^2$ : statistically significant

12 of 20 questions concerning attitudes (63.6%) suggested clear differences between male and female attitudes; namely those of child care, harmful industry institutions, homosexuality, censorship, Darwin's evolutionary theory, dangerous nuclear energy switchboards, a happy world, the death penalty, curettage, beating, a high life standard, and arabesque music. There was an equal response rate of “agree”, which included the “certainly agree” response to all the questions in general, for males and females (10 and 10 questions, respectively). Most students either expressed an attitude of agreement or disagreement for each question, but a student proportions of between 5.6% (35 students) (stance 1) and 27.0% (120 students) (stance 12) expressed no attitude through indicating the “unsure” response.

The total of female students who indicated that they “completely disagreed” with the statements concerning child care and housework numbered more than that of their male counterparts (4.9% and 3.3%, respectively), with their attitudes being more negative than those of their male

counterparts (10.3% and 12.6%, respectively). There were significant differences between social attitudes of the university students toward child care and housework ( $p < 0.05$ )

Female students had significantly more positive attitudes towards homosexual people than did male students (12.6% and 17.4, respectively) ( $p < 0.05$ ).

In the female student group, the opinion that censorship must be completely abandoned in every field was more powerful than men's (9.3% and 5.2%, respectively) ( $p < 0.05$ ).

While 50.4% (305) of the sample reported that they completely disagreed with Darwin's evolution theory, this rate varied as completely agree from 11.9% and 18.5% among female and male university students, respectively. Approximately 50% of the students [46.1% female (142/308) and 55.1% male (163/296)] reported having negative attitudes (including disagree and completely disagree) towards Darwin's evolutionary theory. ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The rate of female students in complete disagreement with the closure of nuclear power plants was more than that of male students (6.6% and 3.6%, respectively). Furthermore, over 50% of students [60.6% (366/604)] completely disagreed, disagreed or was unsure about the closure of potentially dangerous nuclear power plants ( $p < 0.05$ ).

More than 50% of both female and male students combined [59.1% (182/308)] and [59.1% (175/296)] (including agree and certainly agree) believed in the opinion "A world in peace and happiness would remain fantastic ad infinitum" ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Compared to the respondents' attitudes to reporting as completely agree that the death penalty is necessary, the proportion of female respondents were more than that of males (15.5% and 7.2%, respectively,  $p < 0.001$ ). Students approved of the death penalty at a rate of 48.4% (149/308) female students and 58.1% (172/296) of males

Female students had completely more negative thoughts about curettage than did male students (4.5% and 8.9%, respectively,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Reports of both agree and certainly agree toward beating were more prevalent among boys than among girls (14.4 vs. 11.4% and 9.3 vs. 3.6%, respectively,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Exactly 72.0% ( $n=438$ ) of the students believed that

attaining a higher standard of living, including agree and completely agree responses, was important. The rate of those certainly agreeing varied between 16.4% and 18.5% among male and female students, respectively ( $p < 0.001$ ).

51.9% (160/308) of females and 56.4% (167/296) of males either disagreed or completely disagreed that the prohibition of Arabesque music on media is an erroneous process ( $p < 0.001$ ).

## **DISCUSSION**

Until this present report, no other has been conducted as comprehensively with regard to attitudes toward social issues. Consequently, this research has added to our understanding of male and female students' attitudes toward social issues.

Upon investigation of the results received from the "Social Attitudes Questionnaire", approximately 75% of the attitudes seem to locate in central or near-central regions (the columns of disagree, unsure, and agree). This may reflect these students having less razor-sharp attitudes, as well as indecision towards social issues. We can suggest the following as a possible explanation for this: In recent years complex changes occurring in social life, as well as a shifting ideological atmosphere could be eroded the students' feelings of certainty in their attitudes and thoughts. Moreover, the diminution of cultural and social activities such as the declining rate of reading, decreasing newspaper sales, a failure to react to wrongdoing within the community causing students to remove themselves from social events, and the need for youngsters to find a job quickly because of increasing unemployment, could be restrained young people from having decisive opinions and attitudes.

When interpreting answers given to the proposition "Women have an instinctive ability and tendency concerning housework and child care", they may show that there is uncertainty in which duties are attributed to males and females in the community. These findings are consistent with the study indicating that there were significant unfavourable distinctions for women in the response patterns of men and women toward childcare and housework (Voorhees, Ryan, Hopping, Berman, Brin and Levinson 1997). This may reflect that female students who are attributed these duties perceive them as obligatory. Ever since the feminist movement in the 1960s, women have been gaining more and more independence and equality in gender roles. However, some people still hold the traditional view

of women, such as “If a woman goes out to work her husband should share the housework: such as washing dishes, cleaning, and cooking.” Because society does not “okay” these kinds of stereotypes, many people will not admit to them (Spence and Hlemriech-Stapp 1973).

Male students had significantly more positive attitudes towards homosexual people than did female students. However, this finding is not consistent with other studies showing that male students were still generally quite conservative in their attitudes towards gender roles and homosexuality compared with women, and also reporting that women were more comfortable in working closely with homosexuals (Erkmen, Dilbaz, Solar, Kaptanoglu and Tekin 1990; Lim 2002; Herek and Gonzalez-Rivera 2006). In similar, studies mainly conducted in the United States and Hong Kong have found that students with positive attitudes towards homosexuality are more likely to be female than male (Thompson, Grisanti and Pleck 1985 ; Kite 1984; Hon, Leung, Yau, Wu, Wan, Chan, Yip and Fok 2005). A reason for this difference between Turkish students and the others could be that male students advocate instinctively their same kinds.

In this study, the number of males indicating that they believed censorship in every form should be completely abandoned was higher than that of females. This may be explained with the notion that compared to women, men do not accept prohibitive mentality more, and also a reason for this difference could be the discrepancies between their personal and societal values such as freedom.

That 50.4% (305) of the sample reported that they completely disagreed and disagreed with Darwin's evolution theory may be explained by the influence of Islamic religion on youth, in that Darwin's theory is in direct contradiction with the Islamic religion (Koktas 1997).

Female students agreed or completely agreed to possess a more negative attitude than did males toward nuclear power plants. This result is compatible with Huppe and Weber (1999)'s study showing that women reported attitudes that are more negative. The result is best explained by men's conviction that the use of nuclear power is a necessity for social development and thus a benefit. In addition, women respond emotionally rather than intellectually to risks (Hendee 1991). Moreover, 60.6% of students gave complete disagreement, disagreement of uncertainty responses toward the closure of potentially dangerous nuclear energy

switchboards. This may reflect the notion that they believe in the benefits of the use of nuclear power by countries such as France and the Netherlands, due to these countries industrialization or development, and wish the same for Turkey (Wiegman, Gutteling and Cadet 1995).

Most students believed in the opinion that “A world in peace and happiness would remain fantastic ad infinitum”. This may support the thought that the peaceful atmosphere of Turkish communities is degenerating day by day, that the possibility of war breaking out at any minute exists and the opinion that relationships among people always convert to dilemmas.

In our survey, men demonstrated a more negative attitude toward the death penalty than women. This suggests that women's moral judgments are linked to empathy and compassion to a greater extent than are men's. When this attitude was evaluated, students approved of the death penalty at a rate of 48.4% (149/308) female students and 58.1% (172/296) of males. These high proportions may be interpreted through the proverb “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”, a reflection that man's primitive mind still influences today's students. This opinion is consistent with a previous study related to the gender gap in capital punishment attitudes (Whitehead and Blankenship 2000).

Male students supported curettage more than female students. This finding may be explained with the comment that boys have an inclination to not taking responsibility for matters related to sexuality, baby care, childbearing, the rearing of a child, etc.

The number of those agreeing and completely agreeing toward hitting or kicking was higher in young men than women. The inclusion of one within the other with beating, hitting, kicking, bully and victim problems of boys in the community may be the reason for this (Boulton and Underwood 1992; Price, Telljohann, Dake, Marsico and Zyla 2002).

Most students indicated that their most important goals as individuals were to be able to attain a high standard of living. This may show the belief that the search for happiness in the future might be provided by material satisfaction, and the concept that they want to live in an atmosphere of quality.

More than 50% of both young women and men disagreed and completely disagreed that the prohibition of Arabesque

music in the media is a wrong process. The reason for this may arise from the youngsters' reaction against prohibitive attitude. The prohibition of arabesque on state TV continued until competition was created by private TV companies in the 1990's (Ozbek 1996). Our other suggestions for this outcome could be that students, just like any other group of people in Turkey, react to prohibitive attitude that they want to distance themselves from the distress caused by indefinite politics, or their fears for a degenerated community caused by listening that kind of music.

Compared to female students, male students reported more absolute attitudes such as "completely agree" and "certainly do not agree" towards "harmful industrial institutions", "punishments", "dangerous nuclear energy switchboards", "a happy world", "curettage", "attaining a high living standard", and "the prohibition of arabesque music". Since most of these attitudes were evaluated as radicalism in the 1970's by Gokay and Topcu (1971), these results may indicate that boys have spiritual or unstable attitudes.

When the attitudes toward "homosexuality", "a happy world", "the death penalty", and "beating" were taken into consideration, it may be said that young men have strict or aggressive attitudes, compared to females.

Furthermore, the reason that some students, especially males, reported that they completely agreed to the attitudes about the abandonment of censorship and the laws that prohibit curettage may be in the way that students want to satisfy their impulsive desires.

As to female students, we may understand that they want to change conventional roles attributed to them such as childcare and housework. In addition, compared to boys, they reported more moderate attitudes towards the statements. This finding may explain that they have more empathy and compassion.

We concluded that some attitudes might be specific to Turkish culture. It is impossible to try to understand through just the psychological methods at our disposal an individual's social life and personal points of view. It is important to first consider an individual's actions, ideas and opinions within society in order to realize the characteristics of an individual's beliefs and attitudes, and to understand their effect on humane personality.

Thus, to evaluate only the behaviour of university youth individually within changing economic and social conditions

is not enough. It is also necessary to put forward one's social and thus individual behaviour within the environment, in the forming of culture perspective and create a changing world order.

Unfortunately, research conducted in this area in Turkey is at best sketchy and limited, and it is difficult to make broad generalizations from the existing studies alone (Yorukoglu 1986; Sencer 1990; Sayil 1994 and Ortas 2004; Dilbaz, Erkmen, Seber, Kaptanoglu, Baysal and Tekin 1992). Furthermore, Due to the unwillingness to participate in the study 373 students did not participate. This may be an indicator of the fact that many students have insensitivity toward to social issues. Thus, since being low of the participation may affect the reliability of the results, their participation should be increased by means of their participation to social activities, and discussion spheres or providing their participation in organizations, associations, clubs or political parties. Nevertheless, current research does suggest important relationships between gender and attitudes towards social issues.

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