

# The Cultural Closet: Masculinity Tested by Sexuality in Turkey

Ayşegül Bakır<sup>1</sup> and Özlem Haskan Avcı<sup>2</sup>

Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey

[aysegulbakir@hacettepe.edu.tr](mailto:aysegulbakir@hacettepe.edu.tr)

[ozlemhaskan@gmail.com](mailto:ozlemhaskan@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the experiences of Muslim Turkish men who hide their romantic relationships from their families. The study was carried out according to the phenomenological design and through semi-structured interviews. Participants were Turkish male university students aged between 18-33 years. The data was analyzed involving an inductive system of categories and codes. Four themes emerged from the analysis: Family attitudes towards romantic relationships, reasons for hiding sexual experiences from family, consequences of the prohibition of premarital sex, and indirect sources of information about sexuality. According to the findings, families' pressure and control practices related to gender norms lead men to hide their romantic relationships and sexual experiences from their families. Families' prohibitive attitudes towards premarital sexuality result in Turkish men lacking family guidance in sexuality education. These attitudes have adverse effects on individuals' mental health and romantic relationships. Socially, there are risks such as hasty and early marriages.

**Keywords:** Cultural closet, Gender, Men, Romantic relationships, Masculinity

---

## 1. Introduction

Romantic relationships and sexuality are essential elements of masculinity. The critical study of men and masculinities has emerged as a field of academic inquiry and policy concern (Connell, 2005). Concurrently, research on the critical study of premarital sex and romantic relationship, too, has emerged as a distinctive field of research, as opposed to traditional, quantitative sex research focusing on sexual dysfunctions (Dowsett, 2015). It is essential to recognize that studying sex, sexuality, and sexual health raises important methodological issues. Likewise, studying men and masculinities raises methodological concerns about the methods used (Hearn, 2013; Pini and Pease, 2013). However, there is a bit of methodological reflection on studying sex, sexuality, masculinity, and men's health, especially in Turkey.

Although many changes have occurred as part of Turkey's modernization, cultural and traditional views of sexuality seem resistant to some of these influences (Hatipoglu-Sumer, 2013). In most parts of Turkey, sexuality is not yet accepted as a natural and healthy human function (Cicek et al., 2022; Evcili and Golbasi, 2017). Premarital sexual intercourse is prohibited by the religion of Islam (Fauk et al., 2021; Khalajabadi-Farahani et al., 2018), which is prevalent in the country. Although studies show that the attitudes to the sexuality of men and women are different (Boratav and Cavdar, 2012), some studies show that men avoid premarital sexual experiences (Adhikari and Tamang, 2009; Mohtasham et al., 2009). For many men, premarital sex is affected by their level of religiosity and conservative approach to virginity in marriage (Adhikari and Tamang, 2009; Ghaffari et al., 2016). More religious people experience older ages of first sexual intercourse (Kuperberg, 2019). The fact that the Abrahamic religions encourage suppression of sexuality plays a role in this (Leeming, 2003). This incentive to suppress sexuality leads people to experience their sexuality secretly from their families and society (Khera and Ahluwalia, 2021).

The closet metaphor, used by the LGBTQ community in the past, refers to same-sex attraction and that others do not know about the current relationship. It arose from the need to protect itself from harm, such as stigma or hostility (Ponse, 1976). On the other hand, the metaphor of the cultural closet refers to the fact that a person in a romantic relationship with someone keeps it secret from his family for reasons such as parental disapproval (Khera and Ahluwalia, 2021). For boys from conservative Muslim families in Turkey, the cultural closet may apply to sexuality in romantic relationships before marriage.

There are two-way expectations from men about romantic relationships in Turkey. On the one hand, he is expected to prove with his behavior and lifestyle that he can be with a woman; also, he is heterosexual and can be sexually competent. On the other hand, a Muslim man is expected to stay away from women before getting married (Duyan and Duyan, 2005). While men are encouraged to have intercourse, they may also be subject to strict rules regarding their premarital relationships. It is estimated that this paradox may cause adverse effects on the well-being of the individual. In this respect, the romantic relationship experiences of Muslim men living in Turkey are curious. Although there are studies on women's romantic relationship experiences in the literature, the field of "masculinity" is relatively new in Turkey. There are not enough publications and studies on

masculinity. In this respect, this study is focused on dealing with masculinity experiences in the context of sexuality.

This study aims to explore the nature of the experiences of Muslim Turkish men who hide their romantic relationships from their families. For this purpose;

- What do men who hide their romantic relationships from their families experience individually and relationally?
- What are the effects of conservative Turkish families on men's experiences of romantic relationships and sexuality?

answers to these questions are sought.

## **2. Methodology**

In order to explore the nature of Turkish men's experiences of romantic relationships before marriage and to obtain in-depth information on the subject, a phenomenological research design was used.

Creswell (2020) states that some criteria can be defined in phenomenological research to select participants when many individuals are experiencing the same phenomenon. Therefore, the study participants were determined by the purposive sampling method. The inclusion criteria were a) being over 18 years of age, b) being single c) identifying their family's faith as Islam. The study participants were 15 male university students aged between 18 and 33 ( $M=25.86$ ;  $SD=4.95$ ). The education levels of the participants ranged between bachelor's degree and doctorate. Three of the participants live with their families; 12 live separately from their families. 13 participants expressed the conservatism level of their families as five and above on a scale of 1-10. Although there were no criteria in this regard, since the sexual orientation of all participants was heterosexual, the statements in the interviews and analyzes proceeded in this direction. The parents of most of the participants had arranged marriages. Six participants had romantic relationships.

The data collection tool consists of two parts. The first part includes categorical and open-ended questions to collect demographic information about the participants. The second part includes open-ended questions that allow participants to describe their experiences of romantic relationships before marriage and the attitudes of their families. In order to protect confidentiality in the data collection tool, real names were not taken from the participants. During the preparation of the data collection tool, the opinions of three experts, including an expert working in the field of qualitative research and two academicians with publications in the field of gender and masculinity studies, were obtained. In line with the feedback given by the experts, the questions were made more understandable and appropriate for the subject. After the questionnaire form was prepared, a pilot interview was conducted with a participant, the questions were revised, and the interview form was finalized. The final version of the form consisting of 15 questions was used in individual interviews with the participants. In the final version of the form, the participants were asked questions such as "- How does your family approach romantic relationships? -How do you view sharing relationship or sexual issues with family members?" In addition to 15 questions, the participants were asked probing questions during the interview due to the nature of semi-structured interviews (Patton, 2018).

First, the form, including the ethical approval and informed consent form obtained from Hacettepe University Ethics Commission for the study, was delivered to the potential participants via online channels (social media, WhatsApp, etc.). Due to the topic's sensitive nature, individual interviews were preferred for data collection. Participants were asked whether they requested a male interviewer in the study form. Before the interview, they were informed that they could terminate the interview if they felt discomfort. The interviews were conducted between October 27, 2022, and November 16, 2022. The in-depth interviews lasted 40-95 minutes and were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Participants were given the opportunity to review and correct transcriptions from the data analysis to fulfill participant control requirements (Bailey, 2007). Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously until data saturation was completed (Patton, 2018). After the interviewer completed the coding after each interview, the other researcher independently coded, and the codes were compared. The opinions of 2 experts conducting qualitative research were obtained for the codes and themes reached. A researcher's diary was kept during the data collection process. The diary includes notes on events that may have affected the researcher's mood or reactions during the interviews and comments on the process (Creswell, 2020).

### 3. Findings

As a result of the analysis, four themes emerged. Family attitudes towards romantic relationships, indirect sources of information about sexuality, reasons for hiding sexual experiences from the family and consequences of the prohibition of sex before marriage. Tables 1–4 outline the four themes and representative quotes.

*Family Attitudes towards Romantic Relationships:* The attitudes of the family towards romantic relationships and sexuality are pretty different. Participants generally stated that their families were oppressive and controlling regarding romantic relationships and sexuality. Some of these pressures are based on moral reasons. For example, premarital sex is considered shameful, and men are generally expected not to be intimate with any woman (even if they are relatives). In addition, some participants are also told that premarital sex is haram from a religious point of view. In this respect, participants from conservative Muslim families reported more pressure and control. Premarital sex is also easily stigmatized, and men fear this stigmatization. Stigmatization is often based on protective sexism; for example, three participants reported that their parents would say, "Is it okay if another man does this to your sister." Here, there is a perception that women need to be protected and that sexuality "defiles the honor" of women. According to this perception, a woman who has had sex before marriage is a "bad girl," and the man who makes her experience this is guilty. In this respect, participants stated that the fear of being blamed controls their sexuality. Some families also warned the participants about pregnancy outside marriage. In addition, the participants' families do not see men having sex as part of a healthy sex life but as a situation that prevents them from their education and leads them astray. In addition, sex is also seen as proof of a man's heterosexuality; in this respect, it is tacitly approved. However, it is undesirable before marriage or not discussed within the family. One participant stated that even if his family did not object to him having sex, he never talked about it and did not want to be seen as approving.

**Table 1: Family Attitudes Towards Romantic Relationships**

<p><b>The premarital sexual experiences of the participants are controlled through stigma and pressure. Rules about sexuality are conveyed through implicit messages.</b></p>	<p>"My father expects that sexuality should be experienced only in halal relationships, only in marriage. So he doesn't mind me going out with my girlfriend. However, if I invite my girlfriend home and we have coffee, my father might have prejudices against her"</p> <p>"I was slapped by my father once because he saw me walking around with a girl. She was a normal friend of mine from middle school, we were walking arm in arm and my father felt angry"</p> <p>"If a girl becomes pregnant, his boyfriend excluded by everyone. He is not invited to meetings, coffee, even he can not employ anywhere. He falls into a lower segment"</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

*Indirect Sources of Information about Sexuality:* Participants attributed their families' uneasiness about their romantic relationships to "families' fear of premarital sexuality." Participants' statements show that premarital sex is also a taboo for men in Turkey. However, unlike women, men are not asked to have sexual intercourse only with the women they will marry. Generally, male sexuality is tolerated in Turkey; for example, a man may have his first sexual experience with a sex worker. However, as soon as a man becomes an adult, he is expected to find and marry a partner suitable for the family and have sexual intercourse with this person after marriage. Men learn about sexuality indirectly (e.g., by observing how their families or people around them treat others), through direct family discourse, through the internet, and from their friends. It was stated that sexuality and porn are prevalent topics of conversation among men's male friends.

**Table 2: Indirect Sources of Information About Sexuality**

<p><b>Participants reported that they have learned about sexuality by observing how their families or people around them behave towards others and through the internet and from their friends.</b></p>	<p>"I talk about it with my girlfriends, I mean with my normal friends, we exchange information about sexuality from time to time, but it is difficult to get information from my family about this. It is difficult to get information that will take me to a further point. On the contrary, they would have the image that I'm doing wrong about me"</p> <p>"I think I got information by observing, social learning for that this subject should be kept confidential, because she concealed her sexual relationship with my father"</p> <p>It was a very secret adolescence period, finding answers to puberty-related questions was something you talk to your friends and stuff, but I've never talked to my family. Well, you know, like topics that shouldn't go into much. After that, when I started to experience it, it became a subject that I interpreted a little more myself.</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Reasons for Hiding Sexual Experiences from the Family:** The most common answer given by the participants as to why they hide their romantic relationship is that they do not yet have economic independence. Participant statements show that families control male sexuality through economic dependence. Participants also said that by hiding from their families, they expanded their range of action and acted comfortably. Some participants stated that if they told their families that they had a girlfriend, they would be pressured to marry her. Participants were especially afraid of getting into conflict with their families. Some participants said they would violate their boundaries if their families knew they had a girlfriend. They do not provide information to intervene and prevent boundary violations, such as asking questions frequently and telling them what to do. In Turkey, parents' controlling and interfering with their children may not be considered boundary violations. On the contrary, not controlling the child may be seen as an indifferent parental attitude.

**Table 3. Reasons for Hiding Sexual Experiences From the Family**

<p><b>Participants hide their romantic relationships and sexual experiences in order to prevent border violations that they may be exposed to by their families and society.</b></p>	<p>"...a romantic relationship may normally end in two or three years, but this mobbing would seat me at the marriage table in about six or seven months"</p>
	<p>"If I lived in a village, of course I would have submitted to those pressures. But there are economic reasons why I don't give in to the pressures right now"</p>
	<p>"I try not to talk or text too much on the phone with my girlfriend at home because when my mom hears, she's a lot more questioning"</p>

**Consequences of the Prohibition of Sex Before Marriage:** Participants who had a romantic relationship struggled with hiding it from their families. For example, they experience behavioral burdens such as hiding the fact that they have a girlfriend, speaking self-censorship when communicating with their girlfriends in front of their families, lying about where they go, hiding their girlfriend's belongings at home after she comes home, and collecting hair strands. They fear that if caught, they will be kicked out of the house, stigmatized, negatively evaluated, subjected to verbal violence, and married to partners they do not know well enough. They are also terrified of their partners getting pregnant. Because if this is revealed, they will be socially stigmatized. They experience guilt, shame, and worthlessness because of their sexual intercourse. They experience boredom and stress due to hiding it. Some participants also expressed that they felt regret. It was also observed that the participants experienced cognitive conflict due to keeping secrets and tried to reduce it. Many of the participants felt under pressure due to "sinning." They also experience gender role conflict intensely.

On the one hand, they have ideas that sexuality should be experienced freely and oppose traditional norms. Besides, they also strive to fulfill societal expectations. It was also observed that some participants adopted their families' ideas as they were and had problems regarding separation and individuation. According to the participants, keeping secrets also prevents them from having sincere and uncensored communication with their families.

Participant statements regarding the consequences of families' prohibition of premarital sex show the prevalence of early marriage. Men tend to hasty marriage in order to have a legitimate sex life; their families may force them to marry relatives; they avoid having sex with their partners; they experience indecision in choosing a partner (e.g., they distance themselves from a woman who is open to premarital sex); and their interactions with their partners are restricted. In addition, they expect their partners to behave following gender roles, which may pressure them to be suitable spouses for their families. Two participants stated that the prohibition of premarital sex could also result in honor killings.

**Table 4: Consequences of the Prohibition of Sex Before Marriage**

<p><b>The prohibition of premarital sex leads to negative consequences in terms of individual, romantic relational and social aspects.</b></p>	<p>"When I was at university, for example, when I did something with my partner, for example, when I got little close, when I kissed her... then when I went to my room in the dorm, I feel guilty about it, so I was praying or something"</p>
	<p>"Whenever I like someone, questions come to my mind. Okay, adorable girl, beautiful girl...But I am worried about... if my family will submit our relationship? Will our families get along? I have to think about marriage while getting closer to a relationship"</p>
	<p>"My family mostly want me to marry their acquaintances and they mostly want it to be relative, they have also had pressure in the past, they have had discourses and pressures about me marrying my cousins"</p>

#### **4. Discussion**

The study's findings show that the view on the sexuality of men from more conservative families is based on two grounds. The first one is to see sexuality as a total prohibition and to accept it because they consider premarital sex to be religiously forbidden. The second is to see sexuality as forbidden before marriage unless the intention is to marry the person with whom they have sexual intercourse. These people choose romantic partners who conform to the wishes of their families and see romantic relationships as stepping stones to marriage and a process of getting to know each other. Men from less conservative families, on the other hand, see sexuality as an essential element in romantic relationships. These participants consider sexuality as a way of interaction and intimacy within a romantic relationship. Therefore, they state that prohibitions on sexuality before marriage restrict romantic relationships. The participants' families have a "sin" and "shame" understanding of all issues related to sexuality. Therefore, they do not provide sexual education to their children. Men learn about sexuality by observing their families' attitudes towards others, talking to their friends, or through the internet. Families see their children's romantic partners as obstacles and corrupters to their children's education. They worry about the possibility of pregnancy and the possibility of the girlfriend's family hearing about it. With these thoughts in mind, they use religious teachings as a tool of domination. Boys also hide their romantic relationships from their families for reasons such as living their romantic relationships more comfortably, preventing interference in romantic relationships and partners, finding the family's guidance on sexuality and relationships inadequate, and fearing reactions and violence from the family. Family attitudes toward sexuality affect men's burden, negative emotions such as fear, guilt, shame, tension, and negative emotions and their choice of romantic partners. Early marriage, demand for consanguineous marriage, honor killings, and perpetuation of gender roles were considered social consequences of the sexuality taboo in families.

Although Turkish families and all areas of society have experienced and overcome Westernization and modernization since the beginning of the Republic, the members of this society are still influenced by radical religious concepts of Islam (Acevedo, Ellison, and Yilmaz, 2015). In Turkey, sex is taboo, and premarital sexual relations are still harmful. Marriage is the only way to a generally correct manner of having sexual relations (Sakalli, 2002). In particular, Turkish culture-oriented with Islamic values points clearly to gender differences (Öngen, 2007). As mentioned earlier, women's premarital sexuality can be seen as a loss of dignity. However, premarital physical intimacy is a dilemma for both the female and the male partner. His social position in the code of honor and shame encourages him to have a less risky and burdensome approach to sexuality. The male is concerned that the cultural imperative of virginity is relevant to his sisters and cousins, not to his lover. Accordingly, he is acting upon his sexual desires when he is with his lover and upon the socially accepted cultural imperative when he is with his related females (Ghanim, 2015). Restriction of men's sexuality may be related to ambivalent sexism. One dimension of ambivalent sexism is that men can approach women with sexual aggression at any time (Ayan, 2016). This issue may explain the family's control and supervision of male sexuality.

Family is the institution where the initial sexual information arises and is formed. It is known that Turkish society has a traditional and conservative structure regarding sexual education and that talking about sexuality is considered shameful and sinful and thus forbidden. Given the effect of religion on individuals' attitudes toward sex before marriage, it is possible to say that traditional and religious Turkish families have conservative attitudes toward premarital sex regardless of generational gaps. Several studies indicate that traditional gender roles continue to impact attitudes toward premarital sexuality (Harbaugh and Lindsey, 2015; Hu and Li, 2019; Sakalli-Ugurlu and Glick, 2013). Traditional gender roles in many cultures majorly affect liberal sexual relations. However, tradition is not only the predictor of attitudes toward sexual relations; religion also affects the attitudes (Karaman et al., 2022). Sexuality in Islam is not limited to procreation, unlike in most other monotheistic religions. Islam distinguishes sexuality between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' sexuality dependent on marital status (Smerecnik et al., 2010). This issue is supported by previous studies that found that religion is an essential factor that negatively influences attitudes toward premarital sex (Cochran et al., 2004; Jung, 2016). First, sex before marriage or any sexual activities outside marriage is strictly prohibited, regardless of whether with a girlfriend/boyfriend. Sex outside marriage is considered fornication (Zina) (Bello, 2011). Sexuality within marriage is permitted and is accepted socially, legally, and religiously by society; sexuality outside marriage is prohibited and socially unacceptable. Sexuality is thus not only subject to moral laws but also has implications for people's social, economic, and public standing of citizens (Smerecnik et al., 2010).

This study shows that boys only try to conform to the expectations of their families in terms of experiencing sexuality with their future spouses. The findings of this study are consistent with the finding that adolescents in Turkey view their sexual partners as future spouses (Dagdeviren et al., 2008). Although the male participants accepted their families' prohibitions on premarital sex, the situation changed when their partner became their

wife. Here, sexual desires and the wife's sexual chastity and fidelity are combined for the husband's benefit. The participating men did not seem bothered by their paradoxical position regarding the cultural dichotomy between sister and lover. They did not seem to seriously question the contradictory and discriminatory prevailing cultural system affecting their lives and romantic relationships. However, men are overly blamed and condemned for merely responding to their natural sexual impulses. Cultural imperatives complicate the nature of the love bond by condemning premarital love and sex.

## 5. Conclusion

The participants of the present study come from conservative families of the Islamic religion. Therefore, the results do not claim to be generalizable to how all Turkish men are influenced by gender. However, the research reveals how Turkish men from conservative families are influenced by gender and religious teachings in their romantic relationships and sex before marriage. Accordingly, men are prohibited from having sexual relations before marriage, especially with their romantic partners. In addition, religious and traditional rules often determine relationships between men and women, and families do not communicate openly and comfortably with their children about sexuality.

On the contrary, their direct or indirect statements cause them to perceive threats such as stigmatization, exclusion, and psychological violence. In the face of their parents' prohibitions, men make an effort to hide their romantic relationships and sexuality from their immediate environment in order to give themselves room for maneuver. This situation causes both themselves and their partners to feel anxious, stressed, and stuck in their romantic relationships. One of the significant contributions of the study to the literature is that it shows that patriarchal and taboo structures in society negatively affect and oppress women and men. Restriction of premarital sexuality may lead to early marriages or marriages without knowing the partner well enough and thus to marital problems.

The findings of this study show that male participants are limited in terms of sexual information sources. It was observed that this led to a situation where sexual conversations played a leading role in male socialization. Teenagers and adult boys who can receive the information they need in neither their families nor systemic and organized education try to obtain such information through informal means. This effort can result in obtaining harmful, incorrect, or incomplete information and thus having negative experiences. Among these negative experiences, grave examples such as early sexual experiences, addiction to pornography, misogyny, unwanted pregnancies, early marriages, deliveries and abortions in unhealthy and unsafe environments, sexual function disorders, and maternal and infant mortality can be mentioned (Zeren and Gursoy, 2018).

## 6. Limitations and Future Research

Despite making essential contributions to the literature on male sexuality in the context of gender, the study has some limitations. First, the study's participants are limited to undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students. However, they do not represent those who have not completed post-secondary education and who are likely to have more difficulties in terms of sexual experiences. Second, this was a cross-sectional study, and data were collected simultaneously. Third, the retrospective study may have introduced recall bias due to the memory factor. In addition, due to the nature of the phenomenological design, the study was conducted with individuals who directly experienced the event/phenomenon. A longitudinal study with parents and their children who experienced the process is recommended in future research.

## References

- Acevedo, G. A., Christopher G. E. and Yilmaz, M. (2015) Religion and Child-Rearing Values in Turkey, *Journal of Family Issues*, Vol 36, No. 12, pp 1595–1623.
- Adhikari, R. and Tamang, J. (2009) Premarital Sexual Behavior among Male College Students of Kathmandu, Nepal, *BMC Public Health*, Vol 9, No. 1, pp 1-9.
- Ayan, S. (2016). Sexism: Ambivalence toward Men, *International Journal of Human Sciences*, Vol 13, No. 1, pp 1452-1459.
- Bello, A. H. (2011) The Punishment for Adultery in Islamic Law and Its Application in Nigeria, *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture*, Vol 13, No. 2-3, pp 166-182.
- Boratav, H. B. and Cavdar, A. (2012) Sexual Stereotypes and Practices of University Students in Turkey, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, Vol 41, No. 1, pp 271-281.
- Cicek, O., Bilgic, D. and Alus T.M. (2022) Investigation of Nursing Students' Perceptions and Protective Approaches to Premarital Sexual Experience and Virginity by Sex, *Fenerbahçe Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi*, Vol 2, No. 3, pp 579-590.
- Cochran, J. K., Chamlin, M. B., Beeghley, L. and Fenwick, M. (2004) Religion, Religiosity, and Nonmarital Sexual Conduct: An Application of Reference Group Theory, *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol 74, No. 1, pp 70-101.

- Connell, R. (2005) *Masculinities*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.
- Creswell, J. W. (2020) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, Sage Publications, New York.
- Dagdeviren, N., Set, T., and Akturk, Z. (2008) Sexual Activity among Turkish Adolescents: Once more the Distinguished Male, *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, Vol 20, No. 4, pp 431–439.
- Dowsett, G. W. (2015) The Price of Pulchritude, The Cost of Concupiscence: How to Have Sex in Late Modernity, *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, Vol 17, No. 1, pp 5-19.
- Duyan, V. and Duyan, G. (2005) Turkish Social Work Students' Attitudes toward Sexuality, *Sex Roles*, Vol 52, No. 9/10, pp 697-706.
- Evcili, F. and Golbasi, Z. (2017) Sexual Health Information Test: Developing, Reliability and Validation, *ACU Saglik Bilimleri Dergisi*, Vol 1, pp 29-33.
- Fauk, N.K., Ward, P.R, Hawke, K. and Mwanri, L. (2021) Cultural and Religious Determinants of HIV Transmission: A Qualitative Study with People Living with HIV in Belu and Yogyakarta, Indonesia, *PLoS One*, Vol 16, No. 11.
- Ghaffari, M., Gharghani, Z., Gharlipour, M.Y., Ramezankhani, A and Movahed, M. (2016) Premarital Sexual Intercourse-Related Individual Factors among Iranian Adolescents: A Qualitative Study, *Iranian Red Crescent Medical Journal*, Vol 18, No. 2.
- Ghanim, D. (2015) *Virginity and Premarital Intimacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Harbaugh, E. and Lindsey, E. W. (2015) Attitudes toward Homosexuality among Young Adults: Connections to Gender Role Identity, Gender-Typed Activities, and Religiosity, *Journal of Homosexuality*, Vol 62, No. 8, pp 1098 -1125.
- Hatipoglu-Sumer, Z. (2013) Effects of Gender and Sex-Role Orientation on Sexual Attitudes among Turkish University Students, *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, Vol 41, No. 6, pp 995-1008.
- Hu, K. and Li, X. (2019) The Effects of Media Use and Traditional Gender Role Beliefs on Tolerance of Homosexuality in China, *Chinese Sociological Review*, Vol 51, No. 2, pp 147-172.
- Jung, J. H. (2016) A Cross-National Analysis of Religion and Attitudes toward Premarital Sex: Do Economic Contexts Matter?, *Sociological Perspectives*, Vol 59, No. 4, pp 798-817.
- Karaman, N., Alagoz, R. and Fidan, A. (2022) Gender Roles, Religion, and Attitudes towards Homosexuality and Premarital Sex in Turkey, *Pamukkale University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, Vol 52, pp 253-268.
- Khalajabadi-Farahani, F., Månsson, S.A. and Cleland, J. (2018) Engage in or Refrain from? A Qualitative Exploration of Premarital Sexual Relations among Female College Students in Tehran, *The Journal of Sex Research*, Vol 56, No. 8, pp 1009–1022.
- Khera, G.S. and Ahluwalia, M.K. (2021) The Cultural Closet: The South Asian American Experience of Keeping Romantic Relationships Secret, *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, Vol 49, pp 18-31.
- Kuperberg, A. (2019) Premarital Cohabitation and Direct Marriage in the United States: 1956–2015, *Marriage & Family Review*, Vol 55, No. 5, pp 447-475.
- Leeming, D. (2003) Religion and Sexuality: The Perversion of a Natural Marriage, *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol 42, No. 2, pp 101-109.
- Mohtasham, G, Shamsaddin, N, Bazargan, M, Anosheravan, K, Elaheh, M. and Fazlolah, G. (2009) Correlates of the Intention to Remain Sexually Inactive among Male Adolescents in an Islamic Country: Case of the Republic Of Iran, *Journal of School Health*, Vol 79, No. 3, pp 123-129.
- Öngen, D.E. (2007) The Relationships between Sensation Seeking and Gender Role Orientations among Turkish University Students, *Sex Roles*, Vol 57, pp 111-118.
- Patton, M. Q. (2018) *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*, Sage Publications, New York.
- Pini, B. and Pease, B. (2013) *Gendering Methodologies in the Study of Men and Masculinities*, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire.
- Sakalli, N. (2002) The Relationship between Sexism and Attitudes toward Homosexuality in a Sample of Turkish College Students, *Journal of Homosexuality*, Vol 42, No. 3, pp 53-64.
- Sakalli-Ugurlu, N. and Glick, P. (2003) Ambivalent Sexism and Attitudes toward Women who Engage in Premarital Sex in Turkey, *Journal of Sex Research*, Vol 40, No. 3, pp 296-302.
- Smerecnik, C., Schaalma, H., Gerjo, K., Meijer, S. and Poelman, J. (2010) An Exploratory Study of Muslim Adolescents' Views on Sexuality: Implications for Sex Education and Prevention, *BMC Public Health*, Vol 10, No. 1, pp 1-10.
- Zeren F. and Gursoy E. (2018) Why Sexual Health Education?, *Journal of DU Health Science Institute*, Vol 8, pp 29–33.