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## Academician’s Attitudes towards Honor

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### Abstract

Honor is an important concept that can affect lives and life-styles of many women, even end up with death case in Turkey. This research was carried out to determine the attitudes of university teaching staff towards honor and violence committed against women in the name of honor. This descriptive study was conducted with 294 academicians at Karadeniz Technical University, Turkey. Academicians strongly stated that it is quite unreasonable for a woman’s honor to be under the responsibility of her father or her brothers, women faced oppression due to the value given to their honor depending on virginity and they agreed about the item suggesting that a woman’s honor is not something about the man or her family but it concerns the woman herself. The fact that the level of academicians’ “attitudes towards honor” was found low is a positive outcome in terms of weak negative attitude towards honor. That is, it shows that a woman's honor cannot

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### 1. Introduction

In many countries, the concept of honor is considered as morality, integrity, honesty, and positive behavior for men and women. (Kulwicki 2002; Işık & Sakallı Uğurlu, 2009). However, in the countries like Turkey where the majority of the population is composed of Muslims, it is mostly perceived as sexual purity (Khafagy, 2005; Mutluer, 2007; Sakallı Uğurlu & Akbaş, 2013). Sexual purity/cleanliness means not having a premarital sexual relationship with

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another man because a woman's sexual purity is seen as a proof of her "honorable women" image. Therefore, when the expression "honorable woman" is uttered in our country, various situations including sexual behavior may come to one's mind such as a woman who has no premarital sexual relationship, has no flirting, has good manners, has decent clothing style, does not come together with unfamiliar men, does not hang around, is not sprightly and obeys her husband's decisions (Sever & Yurdakul, 2001; Kardam, 2005). In this context, honor is the wife, sister, mother of a man or other women in the family, even women around him. Such an understanding puts women not only under the surveillances of their fathers, elder brothers, their husbands if they are married but also men around her. Under these circumstances, the responsibility of men expands and the pressure on women increases (Baker et al., 1999; Arin, 2001; Vandello & Cohen, 2003; Şenol & Yıldız, 2013).

In our country, there are many studies regarding perceptions of honor. In Sır's study (2006) called "Perception of Honor", honor is defined with concepts such as "decent clothing, being well-behaved, obeying men, and sexual purity" for women and "being honest and trustworthy and protecting the honor of women they are responsible for" for men. Similarly in other studies, it has been emphasized that honor is used in the sense of not having an extramarital sexual relation. It is necessary to protect virginity, especially men are against the idea of a woman having a premarital sexual relation, people take a dim view for the girl/woman having an extramarital sexual relation and the honor of women is associated with sexual behavior (Vargün, 2002; Gürsoy and Vural, 2003; Okyay, 2007; Bora and Üstün, 2008). The results of the related studies show that despite this multidimensional variety of honor, the only parameter remaining constant is the fact that women are punished, even murdered in case of violation of the border line of honor by them (Şenol & Yıldız, 2013; Kaypakoğlu, 2004). In general, although the concept of honor has been determined by the related studies, there are no studies revealing the view of academicians who are pioneers of the society on this subject. It is necessary to examine the basis of the mentality which affects women's life so negatively and even takes away their right to live and find out how the concept of honor generating these results is perceived among academicians as they are one of the most important dynamics involved in the development and changes in the structure of a society. Based on these targets, this research was conducted to determine the attitudes of academicians with regard to the concept of honor towards women and the factors affecting them.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Type of Research*

This study is cross-sectional and descriptive.

### *2.2. Research Location and Time*

The research was carried out from 1 September to 31 December 2015 at Karadeniz Technical University. Karadeniz Technical University located in the northeast of the country is among the most important universities in Turkey with its 2299 academic staff and about 55 thousands students throughout the country and from many different countries.

### *2.3. Population and Sample*

The research universe consisted of all the faculty permanent members (2299) who worked in 2015-2016 school year at the Black Sea Technical University. To calculate the minimum sample size of the study, sample selection formula was used when the number of individuals was known. (Sümbüloğlu & Sümbüloğlu, 2002). According to this formula, the sample of the research was determined to be at least 246 individuals. ( $2299 * 3.84 * (0,50 * 0,50) / 0,0025 * 2298 + 0,96 = 246$  people). However, considering the possible data loss on various reasons and to improve the reliability of the survey, the research was completed with 294 academicians.

### *2.4. . Data Collection Tool*

The data were collected through face to face interview by researchers and questionnaires filled by academicians. In collecting the data, the Personal Information Form and "Attitudes towards Honor Scale (AHS)" were used.

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