

Participatory Educational Research (PER)
Vol.13(5), pp. 1-21, September 2026
Available online at <http://www.perjournal.com>
ISSN: 2148-6123
<http://dx.doi.org/10.17275/per.26.61.13.5>

Id: 1873632

Gender-Role Egalitarianism and Dating Violence Rejection in Turkish University Students: Distinct Fairness Facets of Proportionality and Equality

Çiğdem Sudan

Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Women's Studies, Kocaeli University, Kocaeli, Türkiye

ORCID: 0009-0004-8245-2672

Osman Nejat Akfırat*

Faculty of Education, Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Kocaeli University, Kocaeli, Türkiye

ORCID: 0000-0002-6748-9539

Article history

Received:
09.02.2026

Received in revised form:
10.04.2026

Accepted:
02.06.2026

Key words:

dating violence; dating violence rejection; gender-role egalitarianism; Moral Foundations Theory; proportionality; equality.

Dating violence remains a significant concern in emerging adulthood, yet rejection of dating violence may not be fully explained by gender-role egalitarian beliefs alone. Moral foundations were also considered as potential explanatory factors in understanding attitudes toward dating violence. Drawing on Moral Foundations Theory and the distinction between equality-based and proportionality-based fairness, this cross-sectional study examined whether proportionality-based fairness judgments are involved in an indirect association linking gender-role egalitarianism to dating-violence rejection among Turkish university students. Participants were 356 Turkish university students (18–28 years) who completed self-report measures assessing the study variables. Regression-based indirect-effect models with bootstrap confidence intervals were used to examine the proposed associations between these variables. The results indicated that more egalitarian gender beliefs were strongly associated with rejecting dating violence, and proportionality-based fairness showed a modest but statistically significant indirect association. In concurrent models, the two fairness facets showed distinct patterns, supporting the value of conceptualizing fairness as multidimensional. Because the design is cross-sectional and based on self-report measures, the findings do not establish temporal ordering or causal mechanisms. The results point to the need for future vignette-based and longitudinal studies in university populations to further examine these relationships and clarify their development over time.

INTRODUCTION

Universities are not only academic settings but also powerful socialization contexts where emerging adults negotiate norms about intimacy, conflict, power, and the perceived legitimacy of coercion. In this developmental period, dating violence (DV)—physical, sexual,

* Correspondency: nejat.akfirat@kocaeli.edu.tr

psychological, or controlling behaviors enacted within nonmarital romantic relationships—remains a salient concern. Meta-analytic and narrative reviews indicate that DV is not rare in adolescent and young-adult populations and that it is associated with adverse outcomes, including poorer mental health, impaired relationship functioning, and increased risk for subsequent victimization or perpetration patterns (Matud et al., 2023; López-Barranco et al., 2022). From a prevention perspective, this evidence underscores a practical point: reducing DV requires not only identifying who is “at risk” but also understanding the belief systems and moral evaluations that make DV feel clearly unacceptable versus excusable in particular situations.

This is educationally relevant because universities are teaching–learning environments in which norms about relationships, conflict, and legitimacy are shaped through coursework, peer interaction, and the broader campus climate. In higher education, students’ judgments about dating and sexual violence are also addressed through prevention communication and peer discussions, making rejection attitudes and fairness-based moral appraisals directly relevant to student development in university populations (Hoxmeier et al., 2023; Wong et al., 2023). In this sense, identifying which moral appraisals make justificatory narratives persuasive can help specify testable targets for student-centered educational design and evaluation (Hoxmeier et al., 2023).

Prior work in higher-education settings indicates that intimate partner/dating violence experiences can be associated with academic disruptions, including academic impacts and disengagement behaviors (e.g., missing class), among college students (Wood et al., 2020). Although the present study did not assess academic achievement or procrastination directly, the current model motivates testable hypotheses for future research examining whether dating-violence rejection and fairness-based moral appraisals relate to educational outcomes such as engagement, persistence, and self-regulatory difficulties (including academic procrastination) in university populations.

An important conceptual and intervention target in this regard is dating violence rejection—the degree to which individuals view coercion and aggression as wrong, unjustified, and unacceptable within romantic relationships. Rejection attitudes matter because they are closely tied to how people interpret ambiguous episodes (e.g., jealousy framed as love, control framed as protection, retaliation framed as justice) and whether they perceive coercion as a legitimate means of resolving relational conflict. When DV is rejected in principle, justificatory narratives lose persuasive power. When DV is viewed as potentially “understandable,” the threshold for tolerating or endorsing coercion may become lower. Relatedly, beliefs about romantic love can normalize or justify controlling and abusive behaviors in adolescent and emerging-adult relationships, making rejection attitudes a meaningful prevention target (Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2021; Martín-Salvador et al., 2021).

One robust explanatory strand in the literature emphasizes gender ideology and gender-role socialization. Social role theory argues that culturally shared expectations regarding masculinity and femininity shape preferences, behaviors, and perceived entitlements, including how power and autonomy are negotiated within intimate relationships (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Traditional gender-role beliefs can normalize dominance, jealousy, and control—particularly when masculinity is tied to authority and femininity to compliance—thereby making coercive behaviors appear less morally problematic. Conversely, gender-role egalitarianism supports autonomy and mutual respect, fostering an interpretive frame in which coercion and aggression are more readily recognized as violations. Empirically, gender-role



attitudes have been linked to dating violence dynamics and related attitudes, and this pattern has been documented in Turkish samples as well (Şahin et al., 2024). For example, in a Turkish university study, attitudes toward gender roles were associated with attitudes toward dating violence, and men tended to report more supportive attitudes toward dating violence than women (Yildirim-Hamurcu & Terzioğlu, 2023). Turkish public-health oriented work has similarly highlighted DV as an issue requiring systematic attention and prevention approaches attuned to the local context (Avşar Baldan & Akış, 2017).

At the same time, focusing on gender-role egalitarianism alone often leaves an explanatory gap. Endorsing egalitarian principles does not guarantee a firm rejection of coercion across all situations, especially when DV is presented with justificatory cues such as provocation, retaliation, humiliation, or “restoring balance” (Bandura, 1999; Reyes et al., 2015). Everyday moral reasoning about relationship conflict frequently revolves around questions of deservedness (“Who started it?”), reciprocity (“Was that a fair response?”), and proportionality (“Was the reaction too much?”). This is where broad social beliefs (e.g., egalitarianism) intersect with concrete moral judgments, and where individuals who appear similar in ideology can diverge in the moral weight they assign to coercive acts. Longitudinal evidence supports the idea that ideology may need a “carrier” mechanism—normative or moral processes that translate general beliefs into situation-specific judgments. For instance, among adolescent boys, traditional gender-role attitudes predicted later dating violence perpetration primarily when acceptance of dating violence was high (Reyes et al., 2015).

Crucially, many real-world DV judgments are made in the presence of ambiguity and competing narratives. The same controlling act can be framed as “care,” “protection,” or “setting boundaries,” and aggressive behavior can be narrated as “self-defense,” “retaliation,” or “teaching a lesson.” In such moments, what often differentiates firm rejection from conditional tolerance is not only one’s general stance on gender equality but also the moral rule used to evaluate the legitimacy of a response. Specifically, judgments often hinge on whether a reaction is seen as warranted, balanced, and proportionate to the situation. In ambiguous scenarios, moral appraisals about legitimacy and proportional response may shape how people evaluate coercion and justificatory narratives (Graham et al., 2011; Haidt, 2012).

This translation problem may be especially visible in contexts where cultural change produces mixed moral signals. In Turkey, emerging adults navigate a landscape in which egalitarian language is increasingly available in education and public discourse, yet relationship norms can still be shaped by expectations around authority, reputation, and relational “order.” In this context of mixed sociocultural signals, judgments about conflict and legitimacy may lean heavily on locally resonant fairness vocabularies—such as reciprocity and “hakkanîyet”—that regulate what counts as a reasonable response between partners. Theoretically, this suggests a sharpened question: beyond endorsing equality in the abstract, do individuals also rely on proportionality-oriented fairness intuitions that make coercion feel like an illegitimate and excessive violation within a dyadic exchange? Framing the mechanism at this level motivates examining proportionality-based fairness as a psychologically proximal bridge between egalitarian beliefs and unequivocal DV rejection (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2017; Graham et al., 2013).

This framing highlights a translation question: how do broad gender-ideological beliefs become situation-specific judgments when coercion is presented with justificatory narratives? We approach this by treating fairness-related moral appraisals as proximal evaluation rules that can accompany egalitarian beliefs in everyday conflict scenarios. Moral Foundations Theory provides a parsimonious framework for specifying such appraisal tendencies,

particularly within the multidimensional fairness domain.

Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) provides a useful perspective for understanding and specifying such mechanisms. Individual differences in reliance on moral concerns are well documented and have been shown to systematically relate to broader social and ideological judgments (Graham et al., 2009). MFT proposes that moral judgments are grounded in multiple intuitive concerns (e.g., care/harm, authority/subversion, and fairness-related intuitions), which people draw upon—often rapidly—when evaluating social behavior (Graham et al., 2011; Graham et al., 2013). Importantly, MFT helps explain why individuals can share a broad worldview yet differ in which moral cues become psychologically salient in a given context. In dating and relationship settings, where acts are evaluated not only for harm but also for legitimacy, responsibility, and respect, fairness-related intuitions are particularly relevant.

Recent advances within MFT have sharpened the fairness domain by distinguishing equality-based and proportionality-based fairness. The revised Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ-2) explicitly separates Equality (fairness as equal treatment and equal rights) from Proportionality (fairness as equity, deservedness, and reciprocity), reflecting the idea that “fairness” is not a single psychological motive (Doğruyol et al., 2024; Zakharin & Bates, 2023). This distinction matters for DV rejection because equality-based fairness aligns naturally with egalitarian gender ideology, whereas proportionality-based fairness captures a different moral logic: whether responses and outcomes are perceived as balanced and warranted given individuals’ contributions and behavior. In intimate relationships, proportionality concerns can plausibly cut in two directions. On one hand, proportionality sensitivity may strengthen condemnation of DV by flagging coercion as an excessive, illegitimate response to conflict—particularly when a partner claims “payback” or “discipline.” On the other hand, proportionality language can be used to rationalize punitive reactions (“They deserved it”), making its role in DV judgments theoretically complex and therefore an empirical question rather than an assumption.

Against this background, equity-based fairness (conceptualized here as the MFQ-2 proportionality facet) is a plausible factor that may modestly help account for the link between egalitarian gender beliefs and DV rejection. Egalitarianism may provide a general normative stance—valuing autonomy and mutual respect—while proportionality-based fairness may supply a situational moral rule that evaluates coercion as an illegitimate and disproportionate way of “balancing” relational conflict. If so, individuals who are more egalitarian may also be more likely to endorse an equity-based fairness standard that supports rejecting coercion even when it is framed as understandable or deserved. At the same time, because DV rejection is shaped by multiple forces (e.g., prior exposure, peer norms, and relationship experiences), any indirect association of equity-based fairness should be framed as modest and non-causal in cross-sectional data.

The present study examines these ideas in a sample of Turkish university students by testing whether gender role egalitarianism is associated with dating violence rejection and whether equity-based fairness accounts for a statistically detectable indirect association between them. In doing so, the study contributes to the DV attitudes literature by bringing a moral-cognitive mechanism into a domain often dominated by demographic and ideology-centered explanations. It also leverages contemporary measurement developments in MFT by focusing on proportionality-based fairness as a theoretically sharp, fairness-relevant construct. Equality-based fairness was included as a secondary facet to acknowledge the broadened



fairness domain in MFQ-2, whereas the focal indirect pathway was specified through equity-based fairness. Importantly, we treat the tested pathways as statistical associations (not causal effects) and frame implications as testable directions for future student-engaged educational design (e.g., scenario-based discussion or vignette-based reflection tasks) rather than claims about current program effectiveness.

Hypotheses

- (H1) Gender role egalitarianism will be positively associated with dating violence rejection.
- (H2) Gender role egalitarianism will be positively associated with equity-based fairness (proportionality).
- (H3) Equity-based fairness (proportionality) will be positively associated with dating violence rejection.
- (H4) Gender role egalitarianism will show a statistically significant indirect association with dating violence rejection via equity-based fairness (proportionality).

Secondary analysis (exploratory)

Equality-based fairness will also be examined as a distinct fairness facet; however, it is not expected to show a unique positive association with dating violence rejection when modeled alongside proportionality (Doğruyol et al., 2024; Zakharin & Bates, 2023). This analysis is exploratory and should be interpreted cautiously.

Analytic mapping

H1 examined the overall association between gender role egalitarianism and dating violence rejection ($X \rightarrow Y$). H2 was tested using the mediator equation as the association between gender role egalitarianism and Proportionality ($X \rightarrow M$). H3 examined the unique association between Proportionality and dating violence rejection while controlling for egalitarianism ($M \rightarrow Y \mid X$). H4 was tested by evaluating the bootstrapped indirect effect (ab) with 5,000 resamples. Planned sensitivity analyses further examined the distinction between Proportionality and Equality by modeling the two facets concurrently, re-estimating models under covariate adjustment, and re-running the concurrent models across DVAS subscales to examine outcome dimensionality.

Method

Design and Participants

This study employed a cross-sectional, correlational design. Participants were recruited from a large state university in northwestern Turkey through convenience sampling based on voluntary participation. Students were recruited through course-based announcements and in-class invitations, supplemented by an online survey link circulated within the same university. No monetary incentives were offered; participation was entirely voluntary. Eligibility criteria included current university enrollment and an age between 18 and 28 years. A total of 360 students participated; after excluding four participants outside the predefined age range, the final analytic sample was $N = 356$ ($M_{age} = 20.81$, $SD = 2.04$; range = 18–28). All participants reported their gender (women: $n = 260$, 73.0%; men: $n = 96$, 27.0%). Demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1. Most participants reported middle socioeconomic status (83.4%), were enrolled at the undergraduate level (57.6%;

32.9% associate, 9.6% graduate), and reported being in a relationship at the time of data collection (69.7%). These characteristics indicate a predominantly undergraduate sample with substantial relationship experience, which should be considered when interpreting effect sizes and generalizing to other university contexts.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 356)

Variable	Groups	N	%	M (SD)	Range
Age		356		20.81 (2.04)	18–28
Gender	<i>Female</i>	260	73.0		
	<i>Male</i>	96	27.0		
Socio-economic Status	<i>Low</i>	38	10.7		
	<i>Middle</i>	297	83.4		
	<i>High</i>	20	5.6		
	<i>Missing</i>	1	.3		
Education Level	<i>Associate</i>	117	32.9		
	<i>Undergraduate</i>	205	57.6		
	<i>Graduate</i>	34	9.6		
Relationship Status	<i>In a relationship</i>	248	69.7		
	<i>Not in a relationship</i>	108	30.3		

Note. Age data were provided by 356 participants.

Procedure and Ethical Considerations

Data were collected in March 2025 after obtaining ethical approval from an institutional ethics committee in Turkey. Participants reviewed an informed consent form outlining the study purpose, confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of participation before completing the measures.

Data collection was conducted through both online and face-to-face formats using identical instructions and the same measurement set. Because the mode of administration was not retained as a participant-level variable in the final analytic dataset, results are reported as pooled associations. Therefore, administration mode could not be included as a covariate in robustness checks. Given the potentially sensitive nature of items related to dating violence attitudes, participants were reminded that they could skip any item and withdraw from the study at any time without penalty; they were also encouraged to seek support from available psychological support resources (e.g., university counseling services) should participation raise discomfort.

Measures

Personal Information Form. A brief form developed by the researchers assessed demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, perceived socio-economic status, relationship experience, and academic level).

Dating Violence Attitude Scale (DVAS). Attitudes toward dating violence were assessed using the DVAS, which was developed and validated in Turkish university student samples by Terzioğlu et al. (2016). In the original development/validation study, the internal consistency for the total DVAS score was reported as $\alpha = .91$, supporting its reliability for the



target population. The scale consists of 28 items rated on a 5-point Likert-type response format and covers five dimensions: physical, economic, sexual, emotional, and general violence. Items were coded (reverse-coded where applicable) so that higher scores indicate stronger rejection of dating violence. Primary analyses used the DVAS total score (sum across 28 items), and supplementary analyses re-estimated the focal models using each DVAS subscale as the outcome (Supplementary Table S1). DVAS items assess the acceptability of coercive or aggressive behaviors in dating contexts (e.g., controlling behaviors or physical aggression; paraphrased).

Gender Perception Scale (GPS). Gender role egalitarianism was measured using the 25-item, unidimensional GPS (Altinova & Duyan, 2013). Items were coded such that higher scores indicated more egalitarian gender perceptions. The GPS was developed and validated in Turkish samples to assess individuals' perceptions of gender roles along an egalitarian–traditional continuum. In the original validation study, the scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$), supporting its use for assessing gender-role egalitarianism in this context.

Moral Foundations Questionnaire–2 (MFQ-2). Moral foundations were assessed using the MFQ-2 (Atari et al., 2023), which was adapted into Turkish by Doğruyol et al. (2024). The MFQ-2 assesses individual differences in core moral concerns, including multidimensional fairness (Equality and Proportionality). In the Turkish adaptation study, internal consistency coefficients across the MFQ-2 subscales ranged from $\alpha = .82$ to $.89$ (Doğruyol et al., 2024). The MFQ-2 contains 36 items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale and yields six subscales: Care, Equality, Proportionality, Loyalty, Authority, and Sanctity (6 items each). Internal consistency coefficients in the current sample were: Care ($\alpha = .84$), Equality ($\alpha = .80$), Proportionality ($\alpha = .74$), Loyalty ($\alpha = .82$), Authority ($\alpha = .76$), and Sanctity ($\alpha = .70$).

Data Analysis Plan

Prior to the main analyses, cases outside the predefined age range (18–28) were removed. The cleaned analytic dataset contained complete responses for the primary study measures; there were no missing values on the focal scale items (GPS, MFQ-2, and DVAS). Missingness was confined to demographic variables (socioeconomic status: 1 participant; relationship duration: 77 participants), largely because relationship duration was not applicable to some participants. Accordingly, no imputation was required for the model variables; primary analyses used complete data for the focal constructs, whereas demographic descriptives were based on available responses. Preliminary screening included checks for distributional assumptions, potential outliers, and influence diagnostics. Potential univariate outliers were screened using standardized z-scores ($|z| > 3.29$), and influential observations in regression models were evaluated using leverage and Cook's distance as descriptive diagnostics. No additional participants were excluded beyond those removed based on the predefined age criterion. Given the large sample size, skewness and kurtosis values were used as practical criteria and were considered acceptable within ± 2 and ± 7 , respectively (West et al., 1995).

To address potential common method variance, Harman's single-factor test was conducted; the first factor accounted for less than 40% of the variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Multicollinearity was evaluated using the variance inflation factor (VIF), tolerance, and the condition index. In the concurrent fairness model, collinearity diagnostics were within acceptable ranges (Proportionality: Tolerance = .919, VIF = 1.088; Equality: Tolerance =

.915, VIF = 1.093; Egalitarianism: Tolerance = .969, VIF = 1.032; maximum condition index = 1.371), suggesting that predictor overlap was unlikely to inflate standard errors.

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliability analyses were conducted in SPSS 26.0. The mediation hypothesis (Gender Role Egalitarianism → Dating Violence Rejection via proportionality-based fairness, conceptualized as equity-based fairness) was tested using a regression-based mediation approach with ordinary least squares (OLS) estimation. Indirect effects were evaluated via nonparametric bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples to obtain 95% confidence intervals (Hayes, 2018). In line with recommendations for mediation inference in nonexperimental data, interpretation focused on the size and precision of the *a*, *b*, *c'*, and *c* paths and on the bootstrapped 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect (*ab*), rather than on any overall model-evaluation statistic. As a planned secondary analysis to probe the MFQ-2 fairness split, Proportionality and Equality were entered simultaneously as predictors of dating violence rejection to estimate their unique contributions. In addition, a parallel-mediator model including Proportionality and Equality as simultaneous mediators was evaluated using the same nonparametric bootstrapping procedure (5,000 resamples).

Supplementary subscale analyses. Because the DVAS is multidimensional, we conducted planned supplementary analyses in which the joint outcome model and the parallel mediation model (*X* = gender role egalitarianism; *M1* = Proportionality; *M2* = Equality) were re-estimated for each DVAS subscale (general, physical, emotional, economic, and sexual violence rejection). Full results are reported in Supplementary Table S1.

Robustness checks using covariate-adjusted models are reported in Supplementary Table S2. These checks evaluate whether the concurrent fairness pattern is preserved under covariate adjustment.

Results

Preliminary analyses

Analyses were conducted on the final analytic sample (*N* = 356, ages 18–28). Internal consistencies were acceptable to strong across the focal study variables: gender role egalitarianism ($\alpha = .93$), equity-based fairness operationalized as MFQ-2 Proportionality ($\alpha = .74$), and dating violence rejection ($\alpha = .86$). Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations for study variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Internal Consistencies, Distribution Indices, and Correlations Among Study Variables (N = 356)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	Skewness	Kurtosis (excess)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender role egalitarianism	103.57	15.79	.93	-1.236	1.413	—							
2. Equity-based fairness (Proportionality)	23.88	4.37	.74	-1.039	1.700	.13*	—						
3. Equality	16.83	5.69	.80	.072	-.715	.15**	.27***	—					
4. Care	21.70	5.04	.84	-.424	-.195	.07	.49***	.41***	—				
5. Loyalty	23.95	4.98	.82	-1.066	1.189	.00	.53***	.22***	.52***	—			
6. Authority	20.13	4.90	.76	-.231	-.043	-.26***	.40***	.20***	.50***	.61***	—		
7. Sanctity	20.43	5.19	.70	-.356	-.322	-.26***	.34***	.20***	.49***	.47***	.67***	—	
8. Dating violence rejection (DVAS total)	125.10	12.78	.86	-1.850	4.123	.58***	.18***	-.01	.05	.06	-.17**	-.16**	—

Note. Pearson correlations are presented below the diagonal. α = Cronbach's alpha. Skewness and kurtosis (excess) are from SPSS Descriptives. Higher scores indicate higher levels of the respective constructs; higher scores on dating violence rejection indicate stronger rejection of dating violence. DVAS showed a high mean level and a negatively skewed distribution (Skew = -1.850; Kurtosis = 4.123); 2.81% scored the maximum (140) and 19.38% scored ≥ 135 . * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

H1: Association between gender role egalitarianism and dating violence rejection

To test H1, we first examined the bivariate association between gender role egalitarianism and dating violence rejection. As shown in Table 2, gender role egalitarianism was strongly and positively correlated with dating violence rejection ($r = .58, p < .001$). This association was further supported by regression analyses: gender role egalitarianism significantly predicted dating violence rejection (total effect; $B = .470, SE = .035, \beta = .58, p < .001$; 95% CI [.401, .539]), accounting for 33.7% of the variance in dating violence rejection ($R^2 = .337$; Table 3, Model 1). Together, these findings support H1, indicating that more egalitarian gender perceptions are associated with stronger rejection of dating violence.

Table 3. Hierarchical regression predicting dating violence rejection (N = 356)

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>
Model 1						
Gender role egalitarianism	.470	.035	.58	13.41	< .001	[.401, .539]
Model 2						
Gender role egalitarianism	.458	.035	.57	13.07	< .001	[.389, .527]
Equity-based fairness (Proportionality)	.321	.127	.11	2.53	.012	[.072, .570]

Note. Outcome variable = dating violence rejection. *B* = unstandardized coefficient; β = standardized coefficient.

H2–H4: Indirect association via equity-based fairness (Proportionality)

To test H2–H4, we examined whether equity-based fairness (MFQ-2 Proportionality) was involved in an indirect association linking gender role egalitarianism to dating violence rejection. This regression-based indirect-effect model is depicted in Figure 1.

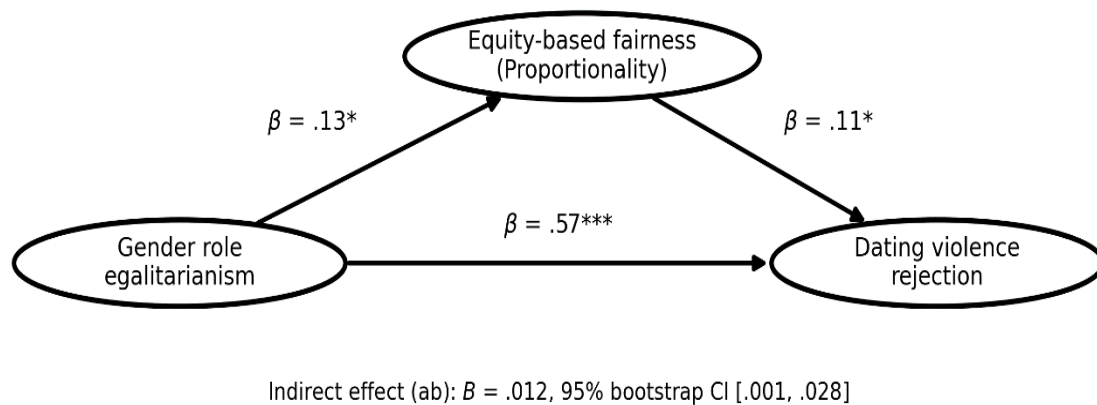


Figure 1. Regression-based (observed-variable) indirect-effect model linking gender role egalitarianism to dating violence rejection via Proportionality.

Note. Standardized path coefficients are shown on arrows. The indirect effect (ab) is reported as an unstandardized estimate with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval (5,000 resamples).

Because the indirect-effect hypothesis was evaluated using OLS regression with nonparametric bootstrapping, inference focuses on the bootstrapped 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect (ab) rather than on model-fit indices. Table 4 summarizes the mediator and outcome equations. Overall, egalitarianism showed a strong positive association with dating violence rejection, whereas the indirect association via Proportionality was modest but statistically significant (Table 5). Specifically, the total effect of egalitarianism on dating violence rejection was substantial ($B = .470$, $\beta = .58$), and the direct association remained nearly unchanged when Proportionality was included (c' : $B = .458$, $\beta = .57$). The bootstrapped indirect effect was statistically significant (ab: $B = .012$, 95% bootstrap CI [.001, .028]).

Path a: Gender role egalitarianism $\rightarrow$ Proportionality (H2)

As hypothesized, gender role egalitarianism was positively associated with Proportionality ($B = .036$, $SE = .015$, $\beta = .13$, $p = .017$; 95% CI [.007, .065]; Table 4). The zero-order correlation was positive as well ($r = .13$, $p < .05$; Table 2).

Path b: Proportionality $\rightarrow$ dating violence rejection (controlling for egalitarianism) (H3)

In line with H3, Proportionality was positively associated with dating violence rejection when controlling for gender role egalitarianism ($B = .321$, $SE = .127$, $\beta = .11$, $p = .012$; 95% CI [.072, .570]; Table 4). The magnitude of this association was small, suggesting a complementary rather than primary role.

Table 4. Indirect Effect Model Summary (M- and Y-Equations; N = 356)

Model	Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>
Mediator model (M)							
	Gender role egalitarianism (X)	.036	.015	.13	2.40	.017	[.007, .065]
Outcome model (Y)							
	Gender role egalitarianism (X)	.458	.035	.57	13.09	< .001	[.389, .527]
	Proportionality (M)	.321	.127	.11	2.53	.012	[.072, .570]
Total effect model							
	Gender role egalitarianism (X)	.470	.035	.58	13.43	< .001	[.401, .539]

Note. X = gender role egalitarianism; M = equity-based fairness (Proportionality); Y = dating violence rejection. *B* = unstandardized coefficient; β = standardized coefficient. Indirect effect (ab) is reported in Table 5 (bootstrap 5,000 resamples).

Direct and indirect effects (H4)

When Proportionality was included in the model, the direct association between gender role egalitarianism and dating violence rejection remained strong (*c'*: *B* = .458, *SE* = .035, β = .57, *p* < .001; 95% CI [.389, .527]; Table 5). The indirect effect was modest but statistically significant (ab: *B* = .012; 95% bootstrap CI [.001, .028]; Table 5). Given the cross-sectional design, these findings are interpreted as indirect associations and do not establish temporal ordering or causal mechanisms.

Table 5. Indirect Effect Analysis: Indirect Association via Equity-Based Fairness (Proportionality)

Effect	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	95% CI for <i>B</i>
Path a (X → M): Gender role egalitarianism → Proportionality	.036	.015	.13	[.007, .065]
Path b (M → Y): Proportionality → Dating violence rejection (controlling X)	.321	.127	.11	[.072, .570]
Direct effect <i>c'</i> (X → Y): Gender role egalitarianism → Dating violence rejection (controlling M)	.458	.035	.57	[.389, .527]
Total effect <i>c</i> (X → Y): Gender role egalitarianism → Dating violence rejection	.470	.035	.58	[.401, .539]
Indirect effect ab (X → M → Y)	.012	.007	.01	[.001, .028]

Note. X = gender role egalitarianism; M = equity-based fairness (Proportionality); Y = dating violence rejection. *B* = unstandardized coefficient; β = standardized coefficient. Confidence intervals for Paths a, b, *c'*, and *c* are based on OLS (parametric) estimates. The indirect effect (ab) uses 5,000 bootstrap resamples (percentile CI); the *SE* reported for ab is the bootstrap standard deviation. Model *R*²: Proportionality model = .017; outcome model (with X and M) = .349.

Table 6. Joint Outcome Model and Parallel Indirect-Effect Models Including Proportionality and Equality

Effect	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	95% CI for <i>B</i>
Joint outcome model (Y = dating violence rejection)	—	—	—	—
Gender role egalitarianism (X)	.471	.035	.58	[.402, .540]
Proportionality (M1)	.423	.129	.14	[.168, .677]
Equality (M2)	-.308	.100	-.14	[-.504, -.112]
Parallel mediation (bootstrapping 5,000)	—	—	—	—
Path a1 (X → M1): Gender role egalitarianism → Proportionality	.036	.015	.13	[.007, .065]

Effect	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>
Path a2 ($X \rightarrow M2$): Gender role egalitarianism $\rightarrow$ Equality	.053	.019	.15	[.016, .090]
Path b1 ($M1 \rightarrow Y$): Proportionality $\rightarrow$ dating violence rejection (controlling <i>X</i> and <i>M2</i>)	.423	.129	.14	[.168, .677]
Path b2 ($M2 \rightarrow Y$): Equality $\rightarrow$ dating violence rejection (controlling <i>X</i> and <i>M1</i>)	-.308	.100	-.14	[-.504, -.112]
Direct effect <i>c'</i> ($X \rightarrow Y$): controlling <i>M1</i> and <i>M2</i>	.471	.035	.58	[.402, .540]
Total effect <i>c</i> ($X \rightarrow Y$)	.470	.035	.58	[.401, .539]
Indirect effect a1b1 ($X \rightarrow M1 \rightarrow Y$): via Proportionality	.016	.008	.02	[.002, .034]
Indirect effect a2b2 ($X \rightarrow M2 \rightarrow Y$): via Equality	-.017	.009	-.02	[-.038, -.002]

Note. *X* = gender role egalitarianism; *M1* = Proportionality; *M2* = Equality; *Y* = dating violence rejection. *B* = unstandardized coefficient; β = standardized coefficient. Indirect effects are reported with nonparametric bootstrap standard errors and 95% bootstrap confidence intervals (5,000 resamples). Collinearity diagnostics for the joint outcome model indicated negligible multicollinearity (Proportionality: Tolerance = .919, VIF = 1.088; Equality: Tolerance = .915, VIF = 1.093; Egalitarianism: Tolerance = .969, VIF = 1.032; max condition index = 1.371).

Secondary analyses: Equality facet

As shown in Table 2, the Equality facet showed a near-zero association with dating violence rejection at the zero-order level ($r = -.01$). To evaluate whether the distinction between the two MFQ-2 fairness facets provides incremental information beyond bivariate correlations, we conducted secondary analyses in which Proportionality and Equality were considered concurrently. Specifically, we estimated a joint outcome model predicting dating violence rejection from gender role egalitarianism, Proportionality, and Equality entered simultaneously (Table 6).

In the joint outcome model, Proportionality remained a significant positive predictor of dating violence rejection ($B = .423$, $SE = .129$, $\beta = .14$; 95% CI [.168, .677]), whereas Equality showed a significant negative unique association ($B = -.308$, $SE = .100$, $\beta = -.14$; 95% CI [-.504, -.112]) when both facets were included alongside gender role egalitarianism (Table 6). Next, we estimated a parallel indirect-effect model including Proportionality and Equality as simultaneous indirect-effect components linking gender role egalitarianism to dating violence rejection. The bootstrapped indirect effect via Proportionality was modest but statistically significant (a1b1 = .016; 95% bootstrap CI [.002, .034]), whereas the indirect effect via Equality was also statistically significant but in the opposite direction (a2b2 = -.017; 95% bootstrap CI [-.038, -.002]) (Table 6).

Notably, this opposite-direction Equality coefficient is unlikely to be driven by multicollinearity: collinearity diagnostics indicated negligible overlap problems in the concurrent model (Proportionality: Tolerance = .919, VIF = 1.088; Equality: Tolerance = .915, VIF = 1.093; maximum condition index = 1.371). Given Equality's near-zero zero-order association with dating violence rejection, the negative unique coefficient is therefore best interpreted reflecting a suppression effect or an inconsistent indirect-effect pattern that can occur when correlated predictors partition shared variance differently with respect to the outcome. Taken together, these analyses suggest distinct patterns for the two fairness facets when modeled simultaneously: Proportionality showed a modest positive indirect association, whereas Equality showed an opposite-direction indirect association once shared variance was accounted for. Given the cross-sectional design, these findings are presented as associations rather than temporal or causal pathways.

Robustness checks

To evaluate the robustness of the pattern observed when the two fairness facets were modeled simultaneously, we re-estimated the joint outcome model controlling for age, gender, SES, and relationship status (listwise $N = 355$). As shown in Supplementary Table S2 (Panel A), the unique associations of the two fairness facets were preserved: Proportionality remained a positive predictor of dating violence rejection ($B = .378, \beta = .13, 95\% \text{ CI } [.127, .629]$), whereas Equality showed a negative unique association when modeled alongside Proportionality ($B = -.342, \beta = -.15, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.537, -.148]$). The association between gender role egalitarianism and dating violence rejection also remained strong under covariate adjustment (total association: $B = .399, \beta = .49, 95\% \text{ CI } [.311, .487]$).

In a further sensitivity model adding Authority and Sanctity as covariates (Supplementary Table S2, Panel B), the pattern remained largely unchanged (Proportionality: $B = .473, \beta = .16, 95\% \text{ CI } [.192, .753]$; Equality: $B = -.317, \beta = -.14, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.515, -.120]$), suggesting that the opposite-direction Equality association was unlikely to be attributable to demographic controls or to shared variance with these moral-traditionalism facets. Taken together, these robustness checks support the stability of the distinction between the two fairness facets at the level of unique concurrent associations. Full parallel indirect-effect estimates (including bootstrap intervals and contrasts) for the covariate-adjusted robustness models are provided in Supplementary Table S2.

Supplementary analyses using DVAS subscales

To examine outcome dimensionality, we re-estimated the joint outcome and parallel indirect-effect models using each DVAS subscale as the outcome (general, physical, emotional, economic, and sexual violence rejection). Across subscales, gender role egalitarianism remained a consistent positive predictor of dating violence rejection, indicating that the core association is not driven by a single facet of the DVAS.

Regarding the distinction between the two fairness facets, the concurrent pattern was broadly consistent in direction across subscales: Proportionality tended to show a positive unique association with rejection, whereas Equality tended to show an opposite-direction unique association when modeled alongside Proportionality. The strength of this divergence varied by DVAS facet. This pattern was most evident for general and sexual rejection and weaker or nonsignificant for the physical and economic subscales. Indirect effects remained small overall and were most evident for sexual violence rejection. Full coefficients and bootstrap intervals are provided in Supplementary Table S1.

Exploratory moderation by gender

Given the gender imbalance in the sample and prior evidence of gender differences in dating-violence attitudes, we conducted exploratory interaction tests. In a regression model including gender, centered gender-role egalitarianism, and their interaction, the Gender $\times$ Egalitarianism term was statistically significant ($B = -.370, SE = .088, t = -4.19, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.543, -.196]$), accounting for an additional 3.1% of the variance in dating violence rejection ($\Delta R^2 = .031$). Simple-slopes analyses indicated that the positive association between egalitarianism and dating violence rejection was stronger for men ($B = .580, SE = .062, t = 9.40, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.459, .701]$) than for women ($B = .210, SE = .063, t = 3.33, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.086, .335]$). In contrast, the Gender $\times$ Proportionality interaction was not statistically significant ($B = -.409, SE = .300, t = -1.37, p = .173, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.999, .180]; \Delta R^2 = .004$). Given the cross-sectional design and the gender-imbalanced sample, these

moderation findings should be interpreted cautiously and would benefit from replication in future studies. Interaction terms and conditional simple slopes are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Exploratory moderation models predicting dating violence rejection (DVAS total) by gender (N = 356)

Model / Term	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>	ΔR^2 (interaction block)
Model A: Gender $\times$ Egalitarianism						
Gender (0 = men, 1 = women)	2.082	1.628	1.28	.202	[-1.120, 5.284]	—
Egalitarianism (centered)	.580	.062	9.40	< .001	[.459, .701]	—
Gender $\times$ Egalitarianism	-.370	.088	-4.19	< .001	[-.543, -.196]	.031
Simple slopes (Egalitarianism $\rightarrow$ DVAS)						
Men (Gender = 0)	.580	.062	9.40	< .001	[.459, .701]	—
Women (Gender = 1)	.210	.063	3.33	< .001	[.086, .335]	—
Model B: Gender $\times$ Proportionality						
Gender (0 = men, 1 = women)	12.426	1.358	9.15	< .001	[9.756, 15.097]	—
Proportionality (centered)	.705	.251	2.81	.005	[.212, 1.198]	—
Gender $\times$ Proportionality	-.409	.300	-1.37	.173	[-.999, .180]	.004

Note. Outcome variable = dating violence rejection (DVAS total). Gender was coded 0 = men and 1 = women. Continuous predictors were mean-centered prior to computing interaction terms. ΔR^2 reflects the incremental variance explained by adding the interaction term in a second block. Simple slopes are reported for the significant Gender $\times$ Egalitarianism interaction.

Discussion

The present study examined the moral and ideological correlates of dating violence rejection among Turkish university students by integrating gender role egalitarianism with the refined fairness components of Moral Foundations Theory (MFT). Two findings stand out. First, gender role egalitarianism showed a strong positive association with rejecting dating violence (Tables 2–3). Second, this link displayed a modest but reliable indirect association through equity-based fairness (Proportionality) (Figure 1; Tables 2, 4–5). In planned secondary concurrent analyses that modeled Proportionality and Equality together, the two fairness facets diverged: Proportionality remained positively associated with dating violence rejection, whereas Equality showed an opposite-direction unique association (Table 6). Together, the results suggest that egalitarian gender perceptions are closely aligned with the rejection of dating violence, and that this alignment is accompanied—albeit modestly—by reciprocity- and proportionality-oriented fairness concerns (Graham et al., 2011, 2013; Atari et al., 2023).

Gender role egalitarianism and rejecting dating violence

Consistent with H1, students with more egalitarian gender perceptions reported markedly higher rejection of dating violence. This association was substantial at the bivariate level (Table 2) and remained strong in regression analyses (Table 3, Model 1), explaining a large share of variance in dating violence rejection (Table 3). A parsimonious interpretation is that egalitarian gender perceptions weaken beliefs that legitimize dominance, entitlement, or control in intimate relationships. Such legitimizing beliefs are consistent with moral disengagement mechanisms that allow harmful behavior to be reframed as acceptable, deserved, or protective (Bandura, 1999; Bandura et al., 1996). This aligns with Social Role



Theory, which emphasizes that gendered expectations and power arrangements shape what is perceived as legitimate behavior for women and men; as egalitarian norms are internalized, coercive control becomes less defensible (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Importantly, this pattern emerged in a young adult university sample, where norms emphasizing autonomy and mutual respect may be particularly salient.

Why proportionality mattered, and what the concurrent models suggest about equality

A key contribution of this study is clarifying the role of fairness-related moral intuitions using the MFQ-2 fairness split. In this framework, Equality captures concerns about equal treatment and impartiality, whereas Proportionality captures equity, reciprocity, and deservedness in social exchange (Atari et al., 2023). In our data, Equality was essentially unrelated to dating violence rejection at the zero-order level (Table 2), while Proportionality showed a small positive association (Table 2) and remained significant in regression-based models (Table 3, Model 2; Table 5). Importantly, planned secondary analyses that modeled Proportionality and Equality concurrently showed a clearer divergence between the two facets: Proportionality retained a positive unique association with dating violence rejection, whereas Equality showed a negative unique association when both facets were included in the same outcome equation (Table 6). Consistent with this divergence, the parallel mediation model yielded two small indirect effects in opposite directions—positive via Proportionality and negative via Equality (Table 6). Importantly, this divergence was robust in covariate-adjusted sensitivity analyses controlling for age, gender, socioeconomic status, and relationship status, and it persisted when Authority and Sanctity were additionally controlled (Supplementary Table S2).

Viewed through the lens of ambiguity and justificatory narratives, this divergence is consistent with the idea that proportional-response appraisals help differentiate firm rejection from conditional tolerance (Graham et al., 2011; Haidt, 2012). Substantively, these results suggest that rejecting dating violence may be more closely tied to relational norms of reciprocal fairness (i.e., “this is excessive/unwarranted in exchange”) than to abstract endorsement of equal treatment. Individuals may endorse “equality” as a broad social ideal, yet evaluations of coercion in intimate relationships often hinge on perceived violations of reciprocity, balance, and proportional response—moral appraisals that are closer to proportionality-based fairness. This interpretation is broadly compatible with accounts emphasizing intuitive moral appraisals in everyday judgment (Haidt, 2012) and with classic equity perspectives that highlight exchange imbalance as psychologically salient in close relationships (Walster et al., 1978). The concurrent pattern also highlights that “fairness” is not monolithic: equality-focused and equity-focused considerations can behave differently when people evaluate contested relational acts.

At the same time, the opposite-direction Equality effect in the concurrent models should be interpreted cautiously. When correlated facets are entered simultaneously, partial regression coefficients can change direction because each estimate reflects residual variance after accounting for shared content. This pattern may reflect a suppression effect or an inconsistent indirect-effect pattern. In other words, a near-zero bivariate association can coexist with a non-zero partial association once overlapping variance is removed. That said, the key concurrent pattern was not an artifact of demographic composition or of overlap with moral-traditionalism facets: in robustness checks controlling for age, gender, socioeconomic status, and relationship status (analytic $N = 355$ due to one missing SES value), Proportionality remained positively associated with dating violence rejection and Equality remained

negatively associated when modeled together; the same divergence persisted when Authority and Sanctity were additionally controlled (Supplementary Table S2). By contrast, the indirect effects were small and more sensitive to model specification: under demographic covariate adjustment, bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect effects overlapped zero, whereas in the stricter model additionally controlling Authority and Sanctity, the indirect effect via Proportionality became statistically reliable while the Equality indirect effect remained weak/borderline (Supplementary Table S2). These patterns reinforce that the distinction between the two fairness facets is robust at the level of unique concurrent associations, while indirect effects in cross-sectional data should be treated as suggestive rather than definitive. Importantly, supplementary analyses re-estimating the concurrent fairness models separately for each DVAS subscale indicated that the core pattern generalizes across the multidimensional outcome rather than being driven by a single facet (see Supplementary Table S1).

Finally, the size of these indirect associations should not be overstated. Both indirect effects in the parallel model were statistically reliable but small (Table 6), and the dominant association remained the strong direct link between egalitarian gender perceptions and dating violence rejection. The robustness checks further indicate that the concurrent facet divergence is stable, whereas the size and precision of indirect effects vary across reasonable covariate specifications (Supplementary Table S2). Dating violence rejection is likely shaped by multiple proximal influences not modeled here (e.g., prior exposure to coercion, peer norms, relationship experiences, situational appraisals), so any single moral-intuitive pathway would be expected to explain limited variance. Moreover, in cross-sectional data, indirect effects capture a pattern of associations consistent with mediation but cannot establish temporal ordering. Taken together, these considerations make the observed divergence theoretically suggestive but not definitive: proportionality-oriented fairness may modestly strengthen the association between egalitarian gender beliefs and stricter rejection of coercion, while equality-oriented fairness may operate differently when modeled concurrently and merits focused follow-up.

Binding foundations: modest links to lower rejection

Secondary findings indicated that two binding foundations—Authority and Sanctity—were modestly and negatively correlated with dating violence rejection (Table 2). Although these associations are small, their direction is consistent with MFT's distinction between individualizing and binding concerns: greater emphasis on authority, tradition, and purity can sometimes coexist with more permissive attitudes toward control or discipline within close relationships (Graham et al., 2011, 2013; Haidt & Graham, 2007). We interpret these findings cautiously given the correlational design and the many ways binding concerns can be expressed across contexts. Still, the pattern suggests that moral concerns about order and tradition may, for some individuals, be less compatible with unequivocal rejection of dating violence. In honor-oriented cultural contexts, authority and purity concerns can intersect with norms about reputation and relational control, potentially complicating unequivocal rejection of coercion (Uskul et al., 2019).

A culturally grounded interpretation: relational fairness (hakkaniyet)

The proportionality finding also invites a culturally grounded interpretation. In Turkish everyday moral language, hakkaniyet refers to a relational sense of equity—justice calibrated to reciprocity and proportionality—and often carries interpersonal weight. While the present data do not test cultural mechanisms directly, the results are consistent with the



possibility that non-violence messages framed around reciprocity, equitable treatment, and respect for the other's rightful boundaries may be particularly meaningful in this context. This interpretation is compatible with accounts of cultural change in which autonomy and relatedness are jointly valued rather than treated as opposites (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2017). Future research can test this more directly by comparing proportionality-focused versus equality-focused framings in experimental or vignette designs.

Implications for theory and practice

Theoretical implications

The findings contribute to moral psychology by illustrating that the refined fairness split in the MFQ-2—Equality versus Proportionality—may be relevant in judgments about romantic relationship aggression. While MFT work has often focused on political or societal attitudes, the present results are consistent with the broader claim that moral intuitions also matter when evaluating coercion in close relationships (Graham et al., 2011, 2013; Atari et al., 2023). The selective association involving Proportionality, together with the divergence observed when Proportionality and Equality were modeled concurrently (Table 6), further supports treating fairness as multidimensional rather than assuming a single fairness pathway.

If this suppression-like pattern replicates, one cautious interpretation is that Equality items may capture a general rights/equal-treatment orientation that does not necessarily translate into how people evaluate proportionality or “warranted response” claims in dyadic conflict scenarios. However, given the cross-sectional design and the near-zero zero-order association for Equality, this interpretation remains speculative; future work should test it using vignette manipulations that disentangle equality-based versus proportionality-based appraisals and through item-level analyses of the MFQ-2 fairness facets. Exploratory analyses further suggested that the egalitarianism–rejection association was moderated by gender (stronger among men), highlighting the value of testing gender-stratified mechanisms and replication in more gender-balanced samples.

Practical implications

From an applied perspective, the strong association between gender-role egalitarianism and rejecting dating violence (Tables 2–3) is consistent with prevention messaging that addresses gender norms and entitlement beliefs. The modest indirect association involving Proportionality (Table 5) should be interpreted cautiously in cross-sectional data and does not establish a causal mechanism. Rather, the results provide a testable framework for future studies evaluating whether prevention messages that foreground reciprocity and disproportionate-harm appraisals in dyadic exchange add value alongside egalitarian principles. This framing should be positioned as a complement—not a substitute—to gender equality work, given that the bulk of the association remained direct and large (Table 5). For stakeholders in higher education (e.g., instructors, student affairs units, and counseling services), these findings suggest a testable framing rather than evidence of program effectiveness: brief, scenario-based materials can foreground reciprocity and disproportionate-harm appraisals alongside equality-oriented content. Such materials can be evaluated in future campus-based studies to examine whether these appraisals relate not only to rejection attitudes but also to educationally relevant outcomes such as engagement and persistence (Wood et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2023).

In practical terms, the findings motivate hypotheses that can be examined in experimental or longitudinal designs. For example, future studies could pilot brief scenario-based (“reciprocity under conflict”) vignettes in which students judge whether a response is proportionate versus excessive and discuss how justificatory narratives may shift moral evaluation. The utility of such elements should be treated as an empirical question and evaluated before being considered evidence-based enhancements.

Limitations and future research

Several limitations should be noted. First, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference and temporal ordering; accordingly, the reported indirect effects should be interpreted as statistical indirect association patterns rather than evidence of causal mediation. Second, all measures were self-report, which may inflate associations due to shared method variance; common method checks can be informative but cannot eliminate method concerns (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In addition, we did not include a direct measure of social desirability or acquiescent responding. Given the high DVAS mean level and its near-ceiling tendency (Skew = -1.850 ; 19.38% scored ≥ 135), socially desirable responding or response styles may have contributed to elevated rejection scores and constrained variability. Third, the sample was drawn from a single university and was gender-imbalanced, limiting generalizability. Fourth, the planned concurrent analyses suggested that Equality may show a small opposite-direction unique association when modeled alongside Proportionality (Table 6), a pattern consistent with suppression or inconsistent indirect effects; this result should be interpreted cautiously and examined in replication studies, item-level measurement work, and alternative operationalizations of equality-based fairness. Fifth, although the indirect effects were statistically detectable, they were small; such small indirect associations in cross-sectional data may be sensitive to distributional constraints (including near-ceiling tendency) and model specification. Future research should test whether these patterns replicate across samples and examine whether they become more pronounced under experimentally induced conflict cues or emotional arousal.

Future studies can strengthen causal and design-relevant inference by (a) using longitudinal designs to test temporal precedence and directionality and (b) conducting experimental vignette or message-framing studies that manipulate proportionality-focused versus equality-focused appeals. They can also (c) incorporate behavioral or multi-informant data alongside additional constructs relevant to coercion and justification processes and (d) examine the distinction between Equality and Proportionality using designs capable of distinguishing substantive from statistical explanations (e.g., vignette manipulations of justificatory framing and item-level analyses of Equality–Proportionality content overlap).

Declarations

Acknowledgments: *We thank the participants.*

Funding: *None*

Ethics Statements: *Ethical approval was obtained from [blinded for review].*

Conflict of Interest: *The authors declare no conflicts of interest.*

Informed Consent: *Informed consent was obtained from all participants.*



Data availability: De-identified data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

References

- Altınova, H. H., & Duyan, V. (2013). Toplumsal cinsiyet algısı ölçeğinin geçerlilik güvenilirlik çalışması [The validity and reliability of Perception of Gender Scale]. *Toplum ve Sosyal Hizmet [Society and Social Work]*, 24(2), 9–22. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/tsh/issue/48480/614123>
- Atari, M., Haidt, J., Graham, J., Koleva, S., Stevens, S. T., & Dehghani, M. (2023). Morality beyond the WEIRD: How the nomological network of morality varies across cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 125(5), 1157–1188. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000470>
- Avşar Baldan, G., & Akış, N. (2017). Flört şiddeti [Dating violence]. *Uludağ Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Dergisi [Journal of Uludağ University Medical Faculty]*, 43(1), 41–44. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/uutfd/issue/35308/391935>
- Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., & Pastorelli, C. (1996). Mechanisms of moral disengagement in the exercise of moral agency. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(2), 364–374. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.71.2.364>
- Bandura, A. (1999). Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3(3), 193–209. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0303_3
- Doğruyol, B., Velioglu, İ., Bayrak, F., Acem, E., İşler, O., & Yılmaz, O. (2024). Validation of the Moral Foundations Questionnaire-2 in the Turkish context: Exploring its relationship with moral behavior. *Current Psychology*, 43, 24438–24452. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-06097-z>
- Eagly, A. H., & Wood, W. (2012). Social role theory. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 458–476). London, England: SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249222.n49>
- Graham, J., Haidt, J., & Nosek, B. A. (2009). Liberals and conservatives rely on different sets of moral foundations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96(5), 1029–1046. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015141>
- Graham, J., Haidt, J., Nosek, B. A., Iyer, R., Koleva, S., & Ditto, P. H. (2011). Mapping the moral domain. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101(2), 366–385. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021847>
- Graham, J., Haidt, J., Koleva, S., Motyl, M., Iyer, R., Wojcik, S. P., & Ditto, P. H. (2013). Moral foundations theory: The pragmatic validity of moral pluralism. In P. G. Devine & A. P. Plant (Eds.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 47, pp. 55–130). San Diego, CA: Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-407236-7.00002-4>
- Haidt, J., & Graham, J. (2007). When morality opposes justice: Conservatives have moral intuitions that liberals may not recognize. *Social Justice Research*, 20(1), 98–116. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-007-0034-z>
- Haidt, J. (2012). *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Hayes, A. F. (2018). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

- Hoxmeier, J. C., Connor, R. A., & McMahon, S. (2023). College students' engagement in violence prevention discussions with peers. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 38(5–6), 5329–5353. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605221120901>
- Kağıtçıbaşı, Ç. (2017). *Family, self, and human development across cultures: Theory and applications*. New York, NY: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315205281>
- López-Barranco, P. J., Jiménez-Ruiz, I., Pérez-Martínez, M. J., Ruiz-Penin, A., & Jiménez-Barbero, J. A. (2022). Systematic review and meta-analysis of the violence in dating relationships in adolescents and young adults. *Revista Iberoamericana de Psicología y Salud [IberoAmerican Journal of Psychology and Health]*, 13(2), 73–84. <https://doi.org/10.23923/j.rips.2022.02.055>
- Martín-Salvador, A., Saddiki-Mimoun, K., Pérez-Morente, M. Á., Álvarez-Serrano, M. A., Gázquez-López, M., Martínez-García, E., & Fernández-Gómez, E. (2021). Dating violence: Idealization of love and romantic myths in Spanish adolescents. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(10), 5296. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18105296>
- Matud, M. P., Hernández-Lorenzo, L., & Díaz, A. (2023). Dating violence and mental health in emerging adulthood. *Healthcare*, 11(24), 3172. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11243172>
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J.-Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879–903. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879>
- Reyes, H. L. M., Foshee, V. A., Bauer, D. J., & Ennett, S. T. (2015). Gender role attitudes and male adolescent dating violence perpetration: Normative beliefs as moderators. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 44(2), 350–369. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-015-0278-0>
- Ruiz-Palomino, E., Ballester-Arnal, R., Giménez-García, C., & Gil-Llario, M. D. (2021). Influence of beliefs about romantic love on the justification of abusive behaviors among early adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, 92, 126–136. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2021.09.001>
- Şahin, O., Yıldırım, S., Acar, E., & Sivuk, D. (2024). Students' attitudes towards dating violence. *Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University Journal of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, 26(3), 1095–1114. <https://doi.org/10.26745/ahbvuibfd.1493003>
- Terzioğlu, F., Göneneç, İ. M., Özdemir, F., Güvenç, G., Kök, G., Yılmaz Sezer, N., & Demirtaş Hiçyılmaz, B. (2016). Üniversite öğrencilerinin flört şiddetine yönelik tutumlarını belirlemeye yönelik ölçek geliştirme çalışması [The validity and reliability of the Dating Violence Scale]. *Journal of Anatolia Nursing and Health Sciences*, 19(4), 225–232. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ataunihem/issue/27668/291657>
- Uskul, A. K., Cross, S. E., Günsoy, C., & Gül, P. (2019). Cultures of honor. In S. Kitayama & D. Cohen (Eds.), *Handbook of cultural psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 793–821). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Walster, E., Walster, G. W., & Berscheid, E. (1978). *Equity: Theory and research*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- West, S. G., Finch, J. F., & Curran, P. J. (1995). Structural equation models with nonnormal variables: Problems and remedies. In R. H. Hoyle (Ed.), *Structural equation modeling: Concepts, issues, and applications* (pp. 56–75). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Wood, L., Voth Schrag, R., & Busch-Armendariz, N. (2020). Mental health and academic impacts of intimate partner violence among IHE-attending women. *Journal of*

- American College Health*, 68(3), 286–293.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2018.1546710>
- Wong, J. S., Bouchard, J., & Lee, C. (2023). The effectiveness of college dating violence prevention programs: A meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 24(2), 684–701.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380211036058>
- Yildirim-Hamurcu, S., & Terzioglu, F. (2023). Attitudes toward dating violence among Turkish university students: The relationships with self-esteem level and gender roles. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 45, 131–136.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnu.2023.06.010>
- Zakharin, M., & Bates, T. C. (2023). Moral foundations theory: Validation and replication of the MFQ-2. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 214, 112339.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2023.112339>