

# Investigation of Students Assertiveness Level of Vocational School

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**Abstract**— In this study, it is aimed that the assertive level of students of Osmaniye Korkut Ata University - Vocational School of Osmaniye is investigated. Rathus Assertiveness Schedule/Inventory (RAS/RAI) is applied for determination of assertiveness condition to totally 400 students who are consist of 151 female and 249 male voluntary students. Related questions are added for determination of the socio-demographic properties of students. The schedule has totally 30 questions which are consist of 13 positive attitude questions and 17 negative attitude questions and participants can answer the questions with 6 different ways. Respondents' answers are scored with score system of RAS. The collected data are calculated with SPSS 20 statistical package software which is widely used in statistical studies in literature. According to the answers given by the students, the assertiveness status is determined with the converted scores. T test is applied for determining the difference on genders condition of participants with related to RAS results. Most of the participants' mothers and fathers' education level is determined as elementary school. The number of others who are graduated from high school or higher education is fewer than elementary school. The average of scored RAS results are determined as 110 points with respect to participants answers. It is determined in the score scale that assertiveness is more dominant than shyness. Also it is determined that the assertiveness increases with respect to increment of age. 3 of 13 positive attitude and 2 of 17 negative attitude questions results are meaningful in statistically. The collected results are discussed in detail.

**Index Terms**— Assertiveness level, t-test, RAS, vocational school.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Man is a social creature who needs to interact with other individuals in the social sphere. It is important to transfer what the thoughts of individuals to others. The thought of other individuals without prejudice is also important. Person's social interaction, which depends on their own characteristics, is a part of the development process of human.

The received extreme positive or negative warnings in the development stage of individual's personality can cause to display excessive shyness/assertiveness emotions and demonstrate attitudes beyond normal. Consequently, the consisting shyness or assertiveness affects the interaction of individual. Shyness prevents to tell the thoughts of individuals and assertiveness causes to behave the individual

to be dominant to other thoughts of individuals without any interaction. Individual is affected in their business and social life as a result of who cannot get what they want social interaction. Therefore, various researches are investigated about different branches of shyness and assertiveness. In addition to the observation studies, survey studies [2,8,24,27] are outstanding in literature about shyness and assertiveness.

In an investigation of measuring the assertiveness level of high school students [22] with application of Rathus Assertiveness Inventory (RAI), it is detected that parent education level has been found important on assertiveness and shyness and the brash and shy individuals are found to cope with stress in different ways. The investigation of assertiveness impact survey of parental attitudes on primary education [10] achieves statistically significant results.

RAI [17] is applied to measure the success level of a group of nursing students and it is detected that the applied training in that study responds more aggressive behaviors. In addition, in another study on assertiveness and self-made situation level of nurses [7], it is found that the place where they grow and mother's education level is found as effective on assertiveness. Similar results have been obtained inside of another level of self-esteem and assertiveness research in Karadeniz [15] Technical University in Trabzon School of Health, which also demonstrates that self-esteem increases as well as a rise in the level of assertiveness. The wrestlers [12] assertiveness situation is investigated in the fourth east and southeast summer wrestlers' games that illustrate statistically meaningful results on age, grade level, weight, height, family income and education level of the mother. Related [3] findings have been observed on assertiveness levels in adults championship wrestling between 2006 and 2007 in Turkey. The family [4] is important on assertiveness.

A similar study of increasing assertiveness skills has been applied to the guidance and counseling students by Gundogdu [13]. RAI used in the applied study and as a result of the research findings, it is determined that level of assertiveness significantly increases [13]. Assertiveness is [1,20] not inherit from congenital that can be learned and enhanced. Effect of assertiveness [14] and altruism concept is investigated on teaching and people with assertiveness are determined to be more altruistic.

It is [19] found with the application of specific training on a handball team during 9 months that creates a positive impact on the level of assertiveness players. Similar application is [9] applied on male volleyball players between ages of 14 and 16 and positive effects are observed on the

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participants' assertiveness level. When assertiveness level of university students is examined under their physical exercise in their free time, it is determined that the exercise makes a positive impact on the individual characteristics of assertiveness. The effect of social-economic status on assertiveness is [24] investigated on the application of assertiveness status research to 333 social science students. Research has determined that the socio-economic situation is affected as a result of assertiveness situation. Living areas of the students is [21] also known as effective on assertiveness.

The applied investigations point that even if similar branches are considered; state of assertiveness can be varied. In the results of RAI application on individual of kite [6] and windsurfing, differences in behavior between the two branches of assertiveness is observed. In another study, significant differences are [5] detected on in physical education and sport students in terms of grade level and doing sports years. Concept of shyness [25] is examined on a group of university students and it shows vary responses according to gender and is found greater in women than men. In a survey that is [11] applied on kids who works or not at the streets, assertiveness behavior has not changed meaningfully, which decreases with the increasing age.

Obtained several findings show that assertiveness can be controlled in various ways; it can be increased or reduced. Although lack of assertiveness or its excessive is an undesirable situation in the young people who came to the college age, the solution of problem is known. Measuring and evaluating the current assertiveness situation is aimed in Osmaniye Vocational School in this study. The gained information about the current situation in this study will be used for supporting knowledge to increase or decrease the assertiveness level in further studies.

II. METHOD

400 volunteers from Osmaniye Vocational School are attended into the research as participant set. Multiple-choice questionnaire is prepared in the research and it is aimed to measure the participants' level of assertiveness-shyness. The subjects have various ages, genders and social life conditions. Hence social-demographic characteristics are initially investigated. Gender, age, marital status, education level, monthly spending amount, number of siblings and mother and father's education level has been questioned. T test is applied for examining gender differences in applied inventory. p value is taken as 0.05 for degree of significance. SPSS 20 package software is used for application of investigation and evaluation of the data.

Rathus Assertiveness Inventory (RAI) is used, which is developed by Rathus in 1973 for determination of participants' assertiveness. Inventory is translated into Turkish in 1980 and the validity value of implementation is found as 0.92 by re-test method. Positive and negative

statements are included into inventory on various items. Substance with positive statements: the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> items in the inventory. The substance containing negative expressions: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> items in the inventory. The substance of positive statements is adapted from lowest score high points according to participants and negative expressions are scored from the low points to highest score. The total score ranges of results are obtained as; points between 30 and 80 represents shyness, between 80 and 130 represents mid-terms/default and between 130 and 180 represents assertiveness. The average score of the inventory assertiveness-shyness is 105 points.

III. RESULTS

The gained data are arranged as a result of research and they are prepared and evaluated according to age and gender of the participants. The number of participants is given by gender and percentiles in table 1. The applied research participating group consists of 400 people that include 151 female (37.8%) and 249 male (62.3%) students.

Table 1. Distribution of subjects by gender

Gender	frequency(#)	percent (%)
female	151	37.8
male	249	62.3
total	400	100.0

Fathers' education level of the participants is given in table 2. In the applied research, number of girls father's education level is found as 81 (53.64%) primary school, 39 (%25.82) high school, 16 (10.59%) undergraduate, 9 (5.96%) M.Sc and 6 (%3.97) Ph.D as degrees. There is also a similar percentage of cases is observed in the results of male students. Number of boys father's education level is found as 150 (60.24%) primary school, 61 (%24.49) high school, 20 (8.03%) undergraduate, 12 (4.81%) M.Sc and 6 (%2.40) Ph.D as graduates. When the parental education level in terms of higher education is observed, it is found that 36 graduate/undergraduate, 21 master and 12 doctoral graduates, which are 17.25% in total as a minority.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to parental education

		father's education level					# of participants
		primary education	high school	under graduate	graduate	Ph.D	
gender	female	81	39	16	9	6	151
	male	150	61	20	12	6	249
total (#)		231	100	36	21	12	400

The number of persons is given according to the participants' mother education levels in table 3. When the mother's education level of girls are investigated, it is gained in numbers that primary school as 106 (70.19%), high school as 29 (19.20%), 8 (5.29%) as undergraduate, 6 (3.97%) as M.Sc and 2 (1.32%) as Ph.D degree. When the male students the mother's level of education is investigated, it is detected that 169 (67.87%) of them are from primary school, 48 (19.27%) of them are from high school, 17 (6.82%) of them are from undergraduate, 11 (4.41%) of them are from M.Sc and 4 (1.60%) of them are from doctorate program. 25 undergraduate, 17 M.Sc and 6 Ph.D people are included. In terms of higher education level of the mother that is totally 48 (%12) people, who are in minority when obtained percentage is considered.

Table 3. Respondents' distribution according to maternal education

		mother's education level					# of participants
		primary education	high school	under graduate	graduate	Ph.D	
gender	female	106	29	8	6	2	151
	male	169	48	11	11	4	249
total (#)		275	77	17	17	6	400

Rathus Assertiveness Inventory (RAM) results are given in order to transform result according to positive and negative points in the scoring system in tables 4 and 5. Significant values (p) are found same between the answers given by the participants and converted score results. T test results of 13 positive items are given in table 4, which are used for comparison between male and female students. If the results are averaged and investigated, they seem to indicate in terms of aggressive behavior in a certain amount of points. The points which are statistically non-significant matter of female and male students are considered in table 4; show that male students take higher points in 1. (3.60±1.73 point), 3. (4.29±1.45 point), 10. (4.12±1.57 point), 11. (4.27±1.51 point) and 12. (4.39±1.48 point) items than female students. However, if the no statistical significance items are considered for female students in table 4, who display better assertiveness behavior than male students in 2. (4.73±1.35 points), 6. (4.21±1.52 points), 8. (4.66±1.49 points), 9. (4.46±1.55 points) and 13. (3.66±1.74 points) items.

If the significance value of the difference is considered between genders, it is detected that 4., 5. and 7. items in table 4 are found to be statistically significant results. When statistically significant item of 4. "like everyone else in your position, I tried to move up" in table 4 is considered, It is detected that average points are 4.84±1.32 for male and 4.55±1.48 for female students. Even if female students get higher score in 4. item, the score of "I talk comfortably with strangers or people that I just met" comment in 5. item is less than male students. The averaged score of "I do not mind to see others to learn the important and valuable work that i

accomplish" comment in 7.item is greater in female students.

Table 4. Positive t test results that is applied to the subjects

expressions	gender	# of participants	arithmetic mean	stand. deviation	t	p
1- I complain to waitress that a meal is not prepared with considering my request.	Female	151	3.43	1.76	-0.94	>0.05
	Male	249	3.60	1.73		
2- When something prompted to me, I always insist on know why.	Female	151	4.73	1.35	1.15	>0.05
	Male	249	4.57	1.41		
3- I sometimes want to join the human developer discussions.	Female	151	4.07	1.64	-1.41	>0.05
	Male	249	4.29	1.45		
4- Like everyone else in your position, I tried to move up	Female	151	4.84	1.32	1.95	<0.05
	Male	249	4.55	1.48		
5- I talk comfortably with strangers or people that I just met	Female	151	3.76	1.67	-2.46	<0.05
	Male	249	4.17	1.54		
6- The one, who has been respected and known, said anything wrong that I heard, I try to announce my own opinion	Female	151	4.21	1.52	0.99	>0.05
	Male	249	4.06	1.45		
7- I do not mind to see others to learn the important and valuable work that I accomplish	Female	151	4.76	1.39	2.25	<0.05
	Male	249	4.43	1.45		
8- While I express my feelings, I am obvious and friendly.	Female	151	4.66	1.49	1.24	>0.05
	Male	249	4.46	1.50		
9- If someone says wrong and bad things about me, I talk to that person immediately.	Female	151	4.46	1.55	0.41	>0.05
	Male	249	4.39	1.56		
10- I will complain about a bad service.	Female	151	4.10	1.64	-0.08	>0.05
	Male	249	4.12	1.57		
11- If two people talk loudly in the community, such as seminars or theatre, I tell them to keep silence or talk elsewhere.	Female	151	3.96	1.80	-1.85	>0.05
	Male	249	4.27	1.51		
12- That get ahead in the queue, I say that is wrong.	Female	151	4.24	1.66	-0.92	>0.05
	Male	249	4.39	1.48		
13- I have	Female	151	3.66	1.74	0.23	>0.05

## Investigation of Students Assertiveness Level of Vocational School

expressed my mind difficulty.	Male	249	3.62	1.74		
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According to the results in table 5, the negative containing material is observed to occur between the negative and mean value. If t test results are examined, statistically significant differences are observed in 1. and 3. items. It is determined that male students demonstrate more aggressive attitude than female students at "I think most people are more impulsive and aggressive than me." comment in 1.item and "I am caution to not hurt others who broke me." comment in 3. item. It is detected that male students exhibit more aggressive attitude than female students under adverse conditions in the social life that are observed in the items of 2. (3.36±1.73 point), 4. (3.22±1.76 point), 7. (3.62±1.77 point), 11. (3.69±1.72 point), 13. (2.56±1.44 point), 14. (2.95±1.68 point) and 16. (2.74±1.57 point) that do not contain statistically significant results. Female students get higher scores than male students about assertiveness in the items of 5. (3.94±1.68 point), 8. (3.07±1.92 point), 9. (4.10±1.72 point), 10. (3.16±1.78 point), 12. (3.71±1.87 point), 15. (3.23±1.77 point) and 17. (2.88±1.64 point). Female and male students exhibit the same attitude in the 6. (3.18 point) item.

Table 5. Negative t test results that is applied to the subjects

expressions	gender	# of participants	arithmetic mean	stand. deviation	t	P
1-I think most people are more impulsive and aggressive than me	Female	151	2.45	1.57	-2.54	<0.05
	Male	249	2.86	1.56		
2- because of my shyness, I do not accept any suggestions or their proposal opposite gender	Female	151	3.19	1.69	-0.94	>0.05
	Male	249	3.36	1.73		
3-I am caution to not hurt others who brake me	Female	151	2.21	1.52	-2.27	<0.05
	Male	249	2.58	1.61		
4- If I do not want to buy a product, I difficulty say "no" when it is insisted	Female	151	3.01	1.68	-1.16	>0.05
	Male	249	3.22	1.76		
5- People use me	Female	151	3.94	1.68	0.43	>0.05
	Male	249	3.86	1.76		
6-I do not know what to say to opposite sex in Many times	Female	151	3.18	1.69	-0.01	>0.05
	Male	249	3.18	1.68		
7- I fear to make formal phone calls	Female	151	3.31	1.73	-1.70	>0.05
	Male	249	3.62	1.77		
8-I apply a business with writing letter rather than meeting face to face	Female	151	3.07	1.92	0.18	>0.05
	Male	249	3.03	1.87		

9- I am bored when giving something, which I have purchased, back	Female	151	4.10	1.72	0.74	>0.05
	Male	249	3.97	1.67		
10- I prefer to hide my feelings rather than expressing, if a respectable relative bothers me	Female	151	3.16	1.78	0.23	>0.05
	Male	249	3.12	1.69		
11- I fear to appear as stupid that I do not ask any questions.	Female	151	3.43	1.79	-1.40	>0.05
	Male	249	3.69	1.72		
12- I'm afraid to be seen as angry when I am in a discussion	Female	151	3.71	1.87	0.95	>0.05
	Male	249	3.54	1.68		
13- I do not mind to see others to learn importance and valuable work that is accomplished by me	Female	151	2.43	1.55	-0.81	>0.05
	Male	249	2.56	1.44		
14- I often have difficulty saying no	Female	151	2.89	1.68	-0.37	>0.05
	Male	249	2.95	1.68		
15- I prefer to accumulate my feelings rather than reveal immediately	Female	151	3.23	1.77	0.35	>0.05
	Male	249	3.17	1.60		
16- Sometimes I did not know what to say when praised	Female	151	2.70	1.66	-0.20	>0.05
	Male	249	2.74	1.57		
17- Sometimes we cannot say anything	Female	151	2.88	1.64	0.28	>0.05
	Male	249	2.83	1.65		

The mean scores of students are given in table 6 according to age groups. When the number of participants' age range is considered, the most intense range is found between 16 and 20 and the least density is found as the age 30 and up. If the of the participants is considered according to receive assertiveness points; age range of 16-20 takes 109.87±12.67 point, age range of 21-24 takes 110.32±13.50 point, age range of 25-29 takes 111.89±9.60 point, age range 30 and takes 114.09±13.78. When the average score is observed, the assertiveness is greater a certain amount of total average point of 105 and it increases with increasing age. The mean total score of the participants is determined as 110.42 ± 12.87.

Table 6. The average points of assertiveness for age groups of participants.

age	# of participants	average	stand. deviation
16-20	191	109.87	12.67
21-24	159	110.32	13.50
25-29	29	111.89	9.60
30 and up	21	114.09	13.78
total (#)	400	110.42	12.87

Table 7. Average, standard deviation and t-test results of assertiveness for gender difference

gender	# of participants	average	stand. deviation	t value	degree of freedom	p
Female	151	108.92	13.01	-1.81	398	>0.05
Male	249	111.32	12.72			

The received Rathus Assertiveness Inventory (RAI) points between male and female students are analyzed with t-test in table 7. The mean scores of female students are  $108.92 \pm 13.01$  and the average score is obtained as  $111.32 \pm 12.72$  for male students. However, no statistically significant difference is observed between the results.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Living environment [7], mother [10] and father [22] education level is known to be effective in assertiveness as the carried out previous studies. In this case, assertiveness status of Osmaniye Vocational School students is examined on the effects of socio-demographic variables. A majority of participants' parents' education level is found as primary and high school. Fewer majorities of them are graduated from college and university. Percentage of participants' parental education level seems to be more than educational level of the mother according to higher education graduates. As a result of parental education level is greater than participants mother's level of education, it might cause to more number of high level of assertiveness students are in male rather than female students. It is also defined as the age of the participants is another factor that affecting the behavior of assertiveness. Assertiveness seems to be increased as a result of gained experience by increasing age.

When items of inventory are examined, male and female students make a complaint on prepared food that they do not want to be seen in such a way that not to be regarded and male students exhibit more aggressive attitude as a result of received higher scores in the positive content of answers. In questioning the reasons for the situation to be done, female students exhibit more aggressive behavior.

Male and female students, who want to be in human developer and discussion platforms, have more assertiveness behavior. Besides, it is determined that male students want to be much more in the debate. Female students nearly show the most assertiveness attitude in the situation of desire of self-improvement. However, male students are more aggressive than female students in the hard discussions conditions, but they have remained less aggressive in case of self-improvement. A statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) is observed in this observation. In human relations, the male students are seen more impulsive than female students on meet new individuals and be able to speak comfortably. Statistically significant differences is found in assertiveness attitude to speak with new people between male and female students ( $p < 0.05$ ). On the other hand, if female students detect errors in speech of acquaintances people, it is detected that female students are more aggressive and they say their own ideas with more comfortable. In the condition of learning of their work by others, male and female students exhibit aggressive attitude. However female students are

found to be more aggressive than male students in that condition. Learning of their work by others includes a statistically significant difference between male and female ( $p < 0.05$ ) in terms assertiveness attitude.

Female students are more assertiveness behavior to interfere on expressing their feelings and wrong speech about themselves. However, male students are determined as they are more aggressive than female students on warning people who exhibit bothersome behavior in the community and showing infringement behavior about tail like waiting. Both female and male students exhibit similar assertiveness attitude when they face with poor service.

If the results of measuring negativity in the items, it has been statistically significant differences are observed between male and female students under certain conditions. Female students tend to show shy behavior than male students which is as a result of more though on other people to female students to behave more aggressive attitude rather than male students. A statistically significant difference between male and female students is found for this condition ( $p < 0.05$ ). A similar situation occurs as a result of the negative attitude shown by others; female students take care not to hurt the others. In this case, female students present shy manner than male students. A statistically significant difference is found between male and female students for this idea ( $p < 0.05$ ). Male students exhibits more aggressive attitude than female students on talking to opposite gender and official phone calls, inability to reject products that do not want to take on and not being able to ask questions that a result of anxiety in various times and places. However, female students have more assertiveness attitude than male students on the items of people use them, return what they buy and suppress their angry feelings with fear. Male and female students exhibit similar assertiveness attitude on against a conversation with an attractive gender, face to face job interview, exhibits introverted attitude to the recognized persons who disturbs him and accumulation of feelings. In situations involving similar shyness attitude of male and female students, they do not behave assertiveness attitude on saying "no" and when they are praised, they do not talk. A result of the findings about assertiveness shows that different behaviors are observed to exhibit between genders. In summary, the revealed debate exhibits that the vocational school students are not overly dominant or shy characters.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Socio-demographic characteristics results of the applied assertiveness inventory have shown that a group of participants includes individuals, which have various and different properties from each other. Assertiveness status is examined with investigation of results of 400 participants and their socio-demographic characteristics results. When Rathus Assertiveness Inventory (RAI) results are

analyzed, different behavior attitude is observed in Osmaniye Vocational School students for genders under certain conditions. In certain conditions female or male students have more aggressive attitude than other gender students. It is determined from the findings that male students exhibit more aggressive behavior than female students in general. As a result of the increasing age of the participants, the level of assertiveness is found to increase. Statistically significant results are obtained between male and female students in behavior of various subjects findings.

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