



## Attitudes of Social Work Undergraduate Students Towards Lgbti+ Individuals and Same-Sex Adoption in Turkey

*Türkiye’de Sosyal Hizmet Öğrencilerinin Lgbti+ Bireylere ve Eşcinsel Evlat Edinmeye Dair Tutumları*

### ABSTRACT

Social work ethical standards contain principles against suppression, discrimination and prejudice. Attitudes and perceptions of social work undergraduate students who will work with LGBTI+ individuals, one of the disadvantaged groups struggled against suppression, discrimination and prejudice is highly important. Considering the mostly negative attitudes against LGBTI+ individuals and lack of their human rights in Turkey; it’s thought that attitudes of social work undergraduates against LGBTI+ individuals and same-sex adoption can provide significant outputs for future change in LGBTI+ rights in Turkey since they will work with LGBTI+ individuals and will advocate to their rights. Therefore, this study aim to determine the attitudes of social work undergraduates towards LGBTI+ individuals and same-sex adoption and also to discover relevance between attitudes towards LGBTI+ individuals and same-sex adoption. In this study, the attitudes towards lesbians and gay men are fairly positive but the attitudes towards same-sex adoption are negative for 239 social work undergraduates. “Religious Concerns” and “LGBTI+ not seen Suitable for Family Structure of the Society” are determined as reasons for these negative attitudes towards same-sex adoption. Also, it’s found out that participants define homosexuality as deviance and illness have the most negative attitudes towards same-sex adoption. These findings implicate that more heteronormative social work education should be developed. Also in order to influence negative attitudes towards LGBTI+ individuals and same-sex adoption, awareness and social inclusion should be core to social work curriculum.

**Keywords:** Same-sex adoption, LGBTI+, Social work education, Gender, Discrimination

### ÖZET

Sosyal hizmet etik standartları baskı, ayrımcılık ve önyargıya karşı ilkeleri içerir. Baskı, ayrımcılık ve önyargıyla mücadele eden dezavantajlı gruplardan biri olan LGBTI+ bireylerle çalışacak sosyal hizmet lisans öğrencilerinin tutum ve algıları oldukça önemlidir. Türkiye’de LGBTI+ bireylere yönelik çoğunlukla olumsuz tutumlar ve insan hakları ihaleleri dikkate alındığında; gelecekte LGBTI+ bireylerle çalışacak ve onların haklarını savunacak olan sosyal hizmet lisans öğrencilerinin LGBTI+ bireylere ve eşcinsel evlat edinmeye yönelik tutumlarının Türkiye’de LGBTI+ haklarının gelecekteki değişimi için önemli çıktılar sağlayabileceği düşünülmektedir. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, sosyal hizmet lisans öğrencilerinin LGBTI+ bireylere ve eşcinsel evlat edinmeye yönelik tutumlarını belirlemeyi ve ayrıca LGBTI+ bireylere yönelik tutumlar ile eşcinsel evlat edinme arasındaki ilişkiyi keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmaya katılan 239 sosyal hizmet lisans öğrencisinin LGBTI+’lara yönelik tutumların oldukça olumlu olduğu ama aynı cinsiyetten evlat edinmeye yönelik tutumların olumsuz olduğu görülmüştür. Eşcinsel evlat edinmeye yönelik bu olumsuz tutumların nedeni olarak “Dini Kaygılar” ve “LGBTI+’nın Toplumun Aile Yapısına Uygun Görülmemesi” belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca katılımcılardan eşcinselliği sapkınlık ve hastalık olarak tanımlayanların eşcinsel evlat edinme konusunda en olumsuz tutumlara sahip oldukları saptanmıştır. Bu bulgular, daha heteronormatif bir sosyal hizmet eğitiminin geliştirilmesi gerektiğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca LGBTI+ bireylere ve eşcinsel evlat edinmeye yönelik olumsuz tutumları etkilemek için, farkındalık ve sosyal içerme sosyal hizmet müfredatının çekirdeği olmalıdır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Evlat edinme, LGBTI+, Sosyal hizmet eğitimi, Toplumsal cinsiyet, Ayrımcılık

### INTRODUCTION

LGBTI+ individuals face serious problems linked to societal stigma, discrimination, and denial of their civil and human rights. It is known that discrimination against LGBTI+ persons has been associated with high rates of psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, and suicide (ODPHP, 2016). It’s known that prejudice and discrimination can affect service quality and well-being of LGBTI+ individuals, evaluation of the attitudes and perception of

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professionals working with LGBTI+ individuals are significant for positive initiatives for change. Therefore, in this study it's been aimed to determine the attitudes of social work undergraduates toward LGBTI+ individuals and same-sex adoption in the context of human rights. It's highly important because social workers are among the professionals who work with or work for LGBTI+ individuals.

### **LGBTI+ Individuals and Same-sex Adoption**

In 2011 United Nations Human Rights Council recognized lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights for the first time and expressed that in order to protect LGBTI+ civil rights, all countries should legislate new laws. Upon that some countries legislated regulations on marriage, adoption, work life and civil rights but some countries legislated limited laws or regulations (Council for Global Equality, 2011; United Nations Human Rights, 2013). Before that the European Court of Human Rights had already been rendered a verdict that same-sex couples could adopt a child and the court expressed that to provide best interest of the child; need of care and love couldn't be prevented by prejudice of sexual orientation ("Europe," 2008).

The first country legislated same-sex adoption without any restrictions is Canada in 2000 (Ross et al., 2009). After that respectively Holland (2001), South Africa (2002) and Sweden (2002) legalized same-sex adoption. In 2013 fifteen countries legalized it without any restrictions. Notwithstanding LGBTI+ individuals wanting to adopt a child still face some institutional prejudices. Judges, law makers, case workers, professionals of adoption agencies may show prejudice and discriminative attitudes towards LGBTI+ individuals (Montero, 2014). In Turkey on the other hand there is no regulations on homosexuality or any other subjects relevant to LGBTI+ individuals in Turkish Republic Constitutional Law (Turkish Republic Constitutional Law, 1982). This legal ignorance or loop makes lives of LGBTI+ individuals more difficult since there is no mention on homosexuality in law, LGBTI+ individuals in Turkey cannot marry, form civil partnerships, and adopt a child. Ignorance of sexual orientation and sexual identities in Turkish Constitutional Law is considered as human rights violation and neglect because hate crimes and systematically discrimination against LGBTI+ individuals are very high in Turkey (KAOS GL et al., 2014).

According to research, most of the European countries have been showing more resistance to same-sex adoption than same-sex marriage or civil partnership. In this research more than 15.000 participants from 25 European countries supported same-sex marriages with rate of 53% while same-sex adoption supported with the rate of 38% (EOS Gallup, 2003). Similar results have been found in Eurobarometer research in 2006. Most of the participants from 27 European countries supported same-sex marriages or civil partnership but same-sex adoption support rates were lower than marriage support rates (European Commission, 2006). As for Turkey, it is important to indicate that Turkey is a country with high rates of Muslim population and according to Islam people cannot be homosexual by birth, but they turn into that with effects of external life factors and also homosexuality or same-sex relations are considered as sin and deviance (Kıraç, 2013). Moreover, negative attitudes towards LGBTI+ individuals are very common in Turkish society and homosexuality is considered as "abnormal" (Sakalli & Uğurlu, 2003; Şahin & Bilgiç, 2016; Gelbal & Duyan, 2006; Duyan & Duyan 2005). In Turkey there is still some physicians considered homosexuality as a treatable illness, also LGBTI+ individuals are being discriminated in work life; legal injustices are being experienced by LGBTI+ individuals; there is preclusions from establishing associations or syndication and there are violations of right to live (murders) of LGBTI+ individuals (KAOS GL et al, 2014; Öztürk & Kındap, 2011; Erol, 2008). All of these sum up LGBTI+ rights and conditions experienced by LGBTI+ individuals in Turkey. Therefore, in Turkey there is still no legal or social agenda on same-sex adoption.

### **Social Work and Working with LGBTI+ Individuals**

From the perspective of social work profession, it is known that any kind of discrimination cannot be tolerated. Social work ethical standards contain principles against suppression, discrimination and prejudice (IFSW, Ethics in Social Work Statement of Principles, 2002). Attitudes and perceptions of social work undergraduate students who will work with LGBTI+ individuals, one of the disadvantaged groups struggled against suppression, discrimination and prejudice is highly important. Also, social work undergraduate programs aim to teach students approach clients with respect without any discrimination (Council on Social Work Education, 2001).

Nevertheless, research conducted with social workers and social work students stated negative attitudes towards working with LGBTI+ individuals. For example, Morrow's (1996) research on social work text books, it was seen that contents of these books contained heterosexist prejudice and discrimination regarding the subjects of gay men and lesbians. Moreover, Snively and colleagues (2004) found that social work students participated had heterosexist and homophobic attitudes towards LGBTI+ individuals and it was stated that curriculum hardly concentrated on working with LGBTI+ individuals.

In another research 124 graduate and undergraduate students from two major universities of South Korea filled in Hudson and Ricketts' Homophobia Scale and it was found out that Korean students were more homophobic than American students (Lim & Johnson, 2001). In wider scale research in USA, 575 social work undergraduate students from 12 social work programs stated sexual orientation as a choice and it was also seen that students who were authoritarian, religious, and adopted traditional gender roles had more negative comments on LGBTI+ individuals (Swank & Raiz, 2010). In Europe as well it's seen that women and young participants had higher education, did not have strong religious believes and had leftist political point of views have been supported same-sex marriage more (Takacs & Bartus, 2016).

As we consider Turkish social work students Duyan and Duyan (2005) in their research with social work undergraduate students found out that students who adopted traditional gender roles had negative attitudes towards LGBTI+ individuals. Also, in another research it's found out that university students who did not have strong religious believes, who did not have active sexual life and had liberal attitudes towards premarital sex had positive attitudes towards gay man and lesbians (Gelbal & Duyan, 2006). Similar results have been showed in another research with nursing students. According to this research students who were raised up with conservative and religious teachings had negative attitudes towards LGBTI+ individuals; also, female students who had high income and highly educated parents had more positive attitudes (Ünlü, Bedük & Duyan, 2016).

In another study with Turkish social work undergraduate students firstly attitudes towards LGBTI+ individuals have been determined with The Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale – The Revised Short Version and after those students participated structured training program on LGBTI+ rights (Duyan et al., 2011). It's seen that students' negative attitudes has improved too positive. Similarly in another study students participated 10-week training and their attitudes has improved also (Serpen et al., 2016) In sum, it is seen that trainings on creating awareness and level of education have improve the negative attitudes towards LGBTI+ individuals in Turkey.

## METHOD

Since this study aims to determine the thoughts of social work students on same-sex adoption and attitudes toward gay men and lesbians, descriptive survey model from quantitative research models has been used. Sampling of this research consists of 239 social work undergraduate students from one of the public university located in Ankara, the capital city of Turkey during the academic year of 2018. Questionnaires and scale have been distributed to all students in the social work department and then students who wished to participate fill in them.

## Research Questions

There are in adequate research on same-sex adoption currently in the world (Montero, 2014). Therefore, this research can be significant for creating cross-cultural data on same-sex adoption. Considering all information given above research questions has been formulated.

- ✓ Are attitudes towards gay men and lesbians changing according to participants' socio-demographical characteristics and their own definitions of homosexuality?
- ✓ Are there any relations between participants' thoughts on same-sex adoption and attitudes towards gay men and lesbians?
- ✓ Are there any relations between reasons for not approving same-sex adoption and scores from The Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale – The Revised Short Version?

## Participants

Participants were 180 women (75,3 %) and 59 men (24,7 %) (total 239), aged between 18 and 30 years (M=20.35, SD=1,91). 26,3% of the students were from rural areas of Turkey while the majority (73,7%) was from urban areas. Regarding their religious beliefs, 6,3% of them reported that they had no religious beliefs, 6,7% of them had low, 46,9% of them had moderate, and 40,2% of them had strong religious beliefs (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Socio-demographical Information of the Students

Student Characteristics	N	%	Student Characteristics	N	%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Class</b>		
Women	180	75,3	Freshman	70	29,3
Men	59	24,7	Sophomore	54	22,6
Total	239	100,0	Junior	55	23,0
<b>Age*</b>			Senior	60	25,1
18	35	14,6	<b>Where lived most</b>		
19	50	20,9	Urban	176	73,7
20	56	23,4	Rural	63	26,3
21	56	23,4	<b>Religiosity</b>		

22	22	9,2	No religious belief	15	6,3
23+	20	8,3	Low	16	6,7
			Moderate	112	46,9
			High	96	40,2
*For Age: Mean: 20,35; Std. Deviation: 1,91; Minimum: 18; Maximum:30					

## Instruments

The Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale – The Revised Short Version developed by Herek (1988) and adopted Turkish by Duyan and Gelbal (2004) and questionnaire developed accordingly research conducted in Turkey (Duyan & Duyan, 2005; Gelbal & Duyan, 2006; Sakalli & Uğurlu, 2008; Duyan et al., 2011; Unlu, Beduk & Duyan, 2016) has been used to gather the research data.

The Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale – The Revised Short Version has been developed by Herek (1988) and adopted Turkish by Duyan and Gelbal (2004). Cronbach Alpha of the Turkish version is 0,91. Also the English version of the scale has been filled in 18 social work graduate students who know English and then Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient for scores of Turkish and English versions has been calculated as 0,997. The scale consists of 10 items with six negative and four positive ones on gay man and lesbians. Five-point Likert scale have been used for answers. The maximum score of the scale is 50 and minimum score is 10. Positively worded items are reverse coded, such that higher scale scores indicate more negative attitudes.

The questionnaire consists of nine questions in order to determine age, religious belief, sex, place lived most, class. Also questions below have been asked in questionnaire:

- ✓ What is the definition of homosexuality for you?
- ✓ Do you think it is appropriate for a child to share same environment with homosexual individuals?
- ✓ Do you find same sex adoption appropriate in terms of child's bio- psycho- social development?
- ✓ If your answer is no, can you choose reasons below which is best suits your opinion?
- ✓ (Reasons: Religious Concerns, Family Structure of the Society, Unhealthy Environment For Children, Homosexuality Considered Abnormal in the Society)

## Procedure

Before the data collections required permission from the Dean's Office has been granted. The data has been collected with the support of pollster students who do not participate this research. Questionnaires were administered in classroom setting. First the aim and scope of the research were explained and then questionnaires were administered students who wanted to participate. Participants were treated in accordance with Turkish Association of Social Workers' ethical guidelines for research with human participants. The purpose of the study was explained, and they were assured anonymity and confidentiality, and asked to answer the questionnaire honestly. Upon completion, which took approximately 15 minutes, participants were asked to fold and leave the questionnaire on the instructor's desk. Completed questionnaire forms were assigned different source codes. Accession of the handwritten questionnaires was limited to the researchers only.

## Data Analysis

The data were analysed with the SPSS statistical package, version 16.00. Attitudes toward lesbians and gay men were used as dependent variables. Descriptive statistics of the students on homosexuality and same-sex adoption were used as independent variables. ANOVA and the independent samples t-test procedure was employed to compare means. Minimum acceptable level of significance was set at 0.01 for ANOVA test and 0.05 for independent t-tests. This data file is available for further analysis if additional questions arise.

## RESULTS

According to descriptive information of the students on homosexuality and same-sex adoption; it has been seen that 48,4% of the students consider homosexuality as a sexual orientation but also, they find inappropriate for a child to share same environment with homosexual individuals (35,1%). Comparably most of the students again find bio-psycho-socially inappropriate for a child to be adopted by same-sex couples (56,5%). Within the students who find bio-psycho-socially inappropriate for a child to be adopted by same-sex couples, state the reason of this as it will be unhealthy environment for children to be grown up (39,7%). All descriptive information of the students on homosexuality and same-sex adoption can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Information of The Students on Homosexuality and Same-Sex Adoption

	N	%		N	%
<b>Definition of Homosexuality</b>			<b>Reasons not being bio-psycho-socially appropriate for children to be adopted by same-sex couples</b>		
Orientation	116	48,5	<b>Religious concerns</b>		
Preference	67	28,0	Yes	28	11,7
Illness	30	12,6	No	107	44,8
Deviance	26	10,9	<b>Family structure of the society</b>		
<b>Appropriateness for a child to share same environment with homosexual individual</b>			Yes	47	19,7
Yes	79	33,1	No	88	36,8
No	84	35,1	<b>Unhealthy environment for children</b>		
No opinion	76	31,8	Yes	95	39,7
<b>Bio-psycho-socially appropriateness for children to be adopted by same-sex couple</b>			No	40	16,7
Yes	45	18,8	<b>Homosexuality considered abnormal in the society</b>		
No	135	56,5	Yes	38	15,9
No opinion	59	24,7	No	97	40,6

Despite relatively negative results from descriptive information the students have low level scores from The Attitudes Lesbians and Gay Men Scale. Scores are 13, 69 for gay men and 13, 41 for lesbians. Since higher scores from this scale indicate more negative attitude and maximum score is 50 and minimum score is 10 for the scale, these scores show that students have positive attitudes (Table 3). But total scores for both lesbians and gay men are moderately negative with score of 27, 10.

**Table 3:** Total Scores from The Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale\*

	Gay	Lesbian	Total
Mean	13,69	13,41	27,10
Std. Deviation	5,28	5,10	1,02
Minimum	5,00	5,00	10,00
Maximum	25,00	25,00	50,00

\* Higher scores from this scale indicate more negative attitude towards lesbians and gay men.

When the results for the attitudes towards lesbians and gay men according to students' own definitions of homosexuality is analyzed, the ones define homosexuality as orientation have the most positive attitudes (11,43 score) while deviance have the most negative attitudes (21,88 score) towards both lesbians and gay men. According to homosexuality definitions, attitudes from the most positive to the most negative are respectively as follows orientation > preference > illness > deviance (Table 4).

**Table4:** The Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men According to Students' Own Homosexuality Definitions

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistics	p
<b>Gay</b>	Orientation (O)	116	11,43	3,91	F= 60,567 (O> P>I>D)*	,001
	Preference (P)	67	12,64	4,20		
	Illness (I)	30	17,70	4,24		
	Deviance (D)	26	21,88	3,44		
<b>Lesbians</b>	Orientation (O)	116	11,17	3,73	F= 53,627	,001
	Preference (P)	67	12,63	3,95		
	Illness (I)	30	17,50	4,35		
	Deviance (D)	26	20,73	4,48		
<b>Total</b>	Orientation (O)	116	22,60	7,53	F= 60,509	,001
	Preference (P)	67	25,27	8,00		
	Illness (I)	30	35,20	8,36		
	Deviance (D)	26	42,62	6,97		

Orientation > Preference > Illness > Deviance: from most positive attitudes to the most negative

The results for the attitudes towards lesbians and gay men according to finding appropriate for a child to share same environment with homosexual individual show that students think that it's inappropriate have the most negative attitude towards both lesbians and gay men. Also, total scores from the scale indicate that students find inappropriate for a child to share same environment with homosexual individual have 34,33 score which shows a great amount of negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men (Table 5).

**Table 5:** The Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men According to Finding Appropriate for A Child to Share Same Environment with Homosexual Individual

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistics	p
Gay	Yes	79	10,03	3,52	F= 57,383	,001
	No	84	17,32	4,95		
	No Opinion	76	13,50	4,42		
Lesbians	Yes	79	9,84	3,37	F= 60,704	,001
	No	84	17,01	4,84		
	No Opinion	76	13,16	4,10		
Total	Yes	79	19,86	6,77	F= 62,180	,001
	No	84	34,33	9,55		
	No Opinion	76	26,66	8,23		

The same results are seen for the attitudes towards lesbians and gay men according to finding bio- psycho-socially appropriate for children to be adopted by same-sex couples. The ones find bio- psycho-socially inappropriate for a child to be adopted by same-sex couple have the most negative attitudes with the total score of 31,04 (Table 6).

**Table 6:** The Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men According to Finding Bio-psycho-Socially Appropriate For Children to be Adopted by Same-sex Couples

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistics	p
Gay	Yes	45	9,91	3,35	F= 29,848	,001
	No	135	15,68	5,50		
	No Opinion	59	12,03	3,59		
Lesbians	Yes	45	9,44	2,96	F= 32,659	,001
	No	135	15,36	5,37		
	No Opinion	59	11,98	3,21		
Total	Yes	45	19,36	6,14	F= 32,578	,001
	No	135	31,04	10,67		
	No Opinion	59	24,02	6,59		

It's seen that most of the students have opinion of that it is bio- psycho-socially inappropriate for children to be adopted by same-sex couples and they have the most negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. Hence, it's important to determine the reasons for this opinion. The one of the most notable registered reasons is that same-sex adoption is "not suitable for family structure in the society". Not surprisingly the ones register this reason are among the group of the most negative attitudes (33,79 score from the scale). Another most registered reason is that same-sex adoption is not bio- psycho- socially appropriate for a child because of religious concerns; the ones give that answer have total 37,32 scale points and they have even more negative attitudes than the ones consider same-sex adoption is not suitable for family structure in the society.

Other reasons (Unhealthy Environment for Children and Homosexuality Considered Abnormal in the Society) are not significantly differentiated according to attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. All reasons and their statistical information can be seen in Table 7.

**Table 7:** The Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men According to Reasons of Not Finding Bio-psycho-socially Appropriate for Children to be Adopted by Same-sex Couple

	Religious Concerns	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistics	p
Gay	Yes	28	18,82	4,91	t= 3,534	,001
	No	107	14,86	5,37		
Lesbians	Yes	28	18,50	4,82	t= 3,624	,001
	No	107	14,54	5,23		
Total	Yes	28	37,32	9,67	t= 3,656	,001
	No	107	29,40	10,34		
	Family Structure Of The Society	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistics	p
Gay	Yes	47	17,13	5,99	t= 2,266	,025
	No	88	14,91	5,09		
Lesbians	Yes	47	16,66	5,90	t= 2,074	,040
	No	88	14,67	4,97		
Total	Yes	47	33,79	11,69	t= 2,215	,028

	No	88	29,58	9,83		
	<b>Unhealthy Environment For Children</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b>p</b>
Gay	Yes	95	15,97	5,03	t= 0,933	,352
	No	40	15,00	6,50		
Lesbians	Yes	95	15,73	4,91	t= 1,213	,227
	No	40	14,50	6,33		
Total	Yes	95	31,69	9,74	t= 1,093	,277
	No	40	29,50	12,60		
	<b>Homosexuality Considered Abnormal In The Society</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b>p</b>
Gay	Yes	38	15,42	6,07	t=-,343	,732
	No	97	15,78	5,29		
Lesbians	Yes	38	15,11	5,99	t=-,348	,729
	No	97	15,46	5,14		
Total	Yes	38	30,53	11,96	t=-,352	,725
	No	97	31,25	10,17		

## DISCUSSION

In this study with aim of determining thoughts of social work undergraduate students on same-sex adoption and effects of their attitudes towards gay men and lesbians, it's founded out that students have relatively positive towards gay man and lesbians. Also, most of the students defined homosexuality as orientation (48,5%) and preference (28,0%). It's notable that students who have moderate (46, 9%) and high levels of religious believes (40, 2%) defined homosexuality as orientation because studies in literature shows that participants with high levels of religious believes usually have negative attitudes towards homosexuality or same-sex adoption (Swank & Raiz, 2010; Takacs & Bartus, 2016; Gelbal & Duyan, 2006; Ünlü, Bedük & Duyan, 2016). Contrary to this, in this study students defined homosexuality as orientation have the most positive attitudes towards gay man and lesbians and also not surprisingly the student's defined homosexuality as deviance has the most negative attitudes.

Despite the results of researches in Turkish literature (Gelbal & Duyan, 2006; Duyan & Duyan, 2005; KAOS GL et al, 2014; Öztürk & Kındap, 2011; Erol, 2008) it can be taken as a positive development for students defining homosexuality as orientation but majority of the students find inappropriate for a child to share environment with homosexual individual (35, 1%) and they also find it inappropriate same-sex couples to adopt a child because it's not good for bio- psycho-social development of a child (44, 8%). Also, students who find inappropriate for a child to share same environment with a homosexual individual and who are against to same-sex adoption have the most negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians. Also, these results are parallel to results of other researches in the literature (EOS Gallup, 2003; European Commission, 2006) since it's known that in these researches while participants are positive towards same-sex marriage, they show negative attitudes towards same-sex adoption. Considering all of these, it can be said that there is considerable amount of bias and negative image on same-sex adoption among Turkish social work students. Also, it can be referred as students do not interiorize their thoughts on LGBTİ+ individuals and their human rights. They have not yet been developed human rights point of view. It can be deduced that social work undergraduate students have developed a little sense of understanding on LGBT rights during their courses (Equality and Diversity In Social Work, Social Work and Ethics, Social Work with Individuals, Mobbing, Human Behavior and Social Environment, Community Social Work, Solidarity Models etc.) and trainings but with the effect of stereotyped point of views constructed by socialization of them and general negative attitude of the Turkish society towards LGBTİ+ issues may hinder the positive attitude development for the students. Although it is still a need to be investigate deeply, at least social work curriculum can be expanded by contents on LGBT individual, human rights and ethics.

Apart from that the most stated reasons for negative support on same-sex adoption are because of religious concerns (44, 8%) and not being suitable for Turkish family structure (36, 8%). As stated above Turkish society has bias and negative attitude towards LGBTİ+ individuals and homosexuality and these individuals suffer from a lot of difficulties (Gelbal & Duyan 2006; Unlu, Bedük & Duyan, 2016; Özyurt & Duyan, 2016) and also sexual life and sex have still been taboo subjects because of that, attitudes towards LGBTİ+ individuals are becoming more and more negative. Also, another reason for that Turkey being more conservative through the past 10 years with the political dominance of the ruling government. (KAOS GL et al., 2014; OHCHR, 2012). Conservative tendencies affect the daily life, social dynamics of the society and family structure of Turkey. Therefore, it is not a striking

result that students stated religious concerns on same-sex adoption or put forward not being suitable for Turkish family structure since they have been living in these changing family structure.

To sum up it's founded out that in this research there are some positive developments regarding attitudes of Turkish social work undergraduate students on attitudes towards LGBTI+ individuals but there is also still very negative attitudes towards other issues like same-sex adoption. These results are parallel to other studies conducted before with social work students in Turkey and the world (Lim & Johnson, 2001; Swank & Raiz, 2010; Morrow, 1996; Snively et al, 2004; Duyan & Duyan, 2005; Gelbal & Duyan, 2006). It's undeniable that social work education should be more non- heteronormative in Turkey.

In order Countries like Turkey with narrow rights for LGBTI+ individuals to reach international human rights it is highly important professionals working with disadvantaged groups to develop adequate awareness and understanding since they are directly contact with people suffer from inequality and violation of rights. For Turkey there is still a long way to walk to actualize real equality for LGBTI+ individuals. Therefore, it's undeniable that education of aforementioned professionals critically significant.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, social work undergraduates are generally positive towards LGBTI+ individuals and this can show that social work education make some effect on prejudice and discrimination. But still there is prejudice against same-sex adoption. This shows that even if students are positive against LGBTI+ individuals they cannot fully understand all human rights that they should have since adopting a child can be considered as human and citizenship rights. Equality cannot be achieved conditionally. If the people are against some part of the rights and can accept the others there is no equality in that society. Therefor even if the students are positive towards LGBTI+ individuals, we cannot say they are all supportive and inclusive for this client group.

Most of the participants think that LGBTI+ individuals and a child should not share same environment since they think it's not appropriate bio-psycho-socially. It's a result worth discussing since it reflects tremendous prejudiced. Even sharing the same environment is considered as inappropriate. These results show that social work undergraduates have bias and negative attitudes towards LGBTI+ individuals even if their scale points indicate otherwise.

One of the main reasons for not supporting same-sex adoption and LGBTI+ individuals, religious concerns find a solid place itself. It can be said that social work students cannot separate professional social work from personal life and practices. It shows that the students' thoughts affecting by society's dominant and heteronormative point of view and religion, which should be personal and inner aspect of human life.

Social work profession should be unbiased, professional, ethic and anti-discriminative. The results of this study show that the social work undergraduates cannot internalize human rights and anti-discriminative professional acts. This conclusion means that social work education and broadly university education should be reconstructed by anti-discriminative point of view. Also, academicians should be critically questioning their own bias and anti-discriminative behaviours and attitudes since they have potential to affect their own students in positive and negative ways.

In order Countries like Turkey with narrow rights for LGBTI+ individuals to reach international human rights it is highly important professionals working with disadvantaged groups to develop adequate awareness and understanding since they are directly contact with people suffer from inequality and violation of rights. For Turkey there is still a long way to walk to actualize real equality for LGBTI+ individuals. Therefore, it's undeniable that education of aforementioned professionals critically significant.

There is a limitation for this study. The variable of "personally knowing a LGBTI+ individual" can affect the attitudes towards LGBTI+ individuals but since this study focus on same-sex adoption this variable left out form the questionnaire. Also results of this study are limited social work undergraduate students from Ankara, Turkey. It's important to conduct similar research in other social work departments of Turkey. In the future this study can be broaden by qualitative methods to understand the reasons for negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians and same-sex adoption.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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