

The Investigation of the Mediator Effect of Sexism and Defense Style in the Relationship Between Homophobia and Aggression

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Homophobia is seen all over the world and it may lead to aggressive behavior towards individuals with different sexual orientations. In this study, it is aimed to examine the mediator effect of sexism and defense style in the relationship between homophobia and aggression.

Methods: 281 students from Tekirdağ Namik Kemal and İstanbul Aydın University are included in the study. The participants filled out the Demographic Information Form, Hudson-Ricketts Homophobia Scale, Defense Style Questionnaire, Ambivalent Sexism Inventory and Aggression Questionnaire.

Results: It was found that as homophobia level increased, sexism,

neurotic and immature defense style increased. In addition, the relationship between homophobia and aggression was mediated by neurotic defenses and hostile sexism. Moreover, it was found that immature defense styles have a significant positive relationship with aggression.

Discussion: The findings of the study suggest that homophobia is related to aggression and this relationship coincides with other findings in the literature. However, it is seen that there are findings that coincide with the literature on the mediator effect of sexism and defense styles in the relationship between homophobia and aggression.

Keywords: Homophobia, aggression, defense style, sexism

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INTRODUCTION

Prejudgments against people with different sexual orientation as homosexuality is seen in Turkey as seen in the world. Due to these prejudgments, individuals with different orientations except heterosexuality are discriminated against and may face aggressive attitudes. These negative behaviors and thoughts exhibited against different sexual orientation-gay and lesbian-people are expressed by the term homophobia.

While homophobia is defined as “negative emotions, attitudes and / or behaviors towards people with different sexual orientations such as homosexuality and bisexuality” (1), one of the definitions about homophobia is “fear or hatred towards homosexuality” (2). Emphasizing the necessity of narrowing the definition of homophobia, Başar suggested that homophobia be defined as “behaviors and attitudes brought about by unfair judgments in the form of irrational grudge, hatred and humiliation towards homosexuals and homosexuality. (3). Herek explained these negative attitudes towards homosexuals by using the term “sexual bias” instead of the term homophobia (4). Sexual bias is used to express the negative attitudes of heterosexual people towards those with a gay or bisexual orientation. On the other hand, the term homophobia does not imply an individual fear; It is stated that it points to an inter-group process that is related to the traditions, institutions and cultural structure of the society and should be evaluated by considering its ideological contexts. (5). Goregenli (2009) stated that homophobia

is formed as a result of defining homosexual individuals as an external group and can be considered as an ideology of inter-group relations that can take place within a certain socio-cultural context (5). The differences and similarities are very important in this inter-group relationship, which is discussed to explain the concept of homophobia; a process where the limits on differences are strengthened and the differences are stigmatized by the society (5). In our culture where dominant thought is heterosexism, the stigmatization of every non-heterosexual behavior, identity or relationship and the resulting violence as an individual fear does not reflect an inclusive approach. Therefore, while studying this study, which focuses on the individual processes that mostly make up homophobia, it should also consider the assessments of social factors.

Homophobia and Aggression

Aggression can generally be expressed as behaviors aimed at harming another person. Homophobia is among the important causes of aggression towards homosexuals (6). In analytical explanations, psychic bisexuality, that is, the capacity of having sex with people of both sexes, was seen as a rule (7). It is seen that when people find their own sex appealing with the process of personality development, they suppress their desires and exclude those who are considered socially normative. In this process, the individual cannot always call himself “gay” or “heterosexual” and may not be sure of sexual orientation; in this case, they may be concerned about being labeled as gay due to the cultural nature; therefore, it may

exhibit an aggressive attitude towards homosexual people (8). On the other hand, seeing that there is a different orientation in another may be a threat to the identity of the individual and individuals may develop avoidant or aggressive behavior towards those who define themselves as "homosexual" (7).

It is stated that more than one third of homosexual men and women are exposed to interpersonal violence and 94% experience victimization about their sexual orientation (9). Bernat et al. (2001) experimentally investigated the relationship between homophobia and physical aggression by another study conducted at the University of Georgia. In this study, the sample consisting of 52 heterosexual male university students was placed in "homophobic" and "non-homophobic" groups by applying the Homophobia Scale (HS; L. W. Wright, H. E. Adams and J. A. Bernat, 1999). It was told as a show story that the participants will watch a video with sexual content and then examine how the reaction times have changed in a competitive task. Before the mission, videos of the homosexual or heterosexual people who were said to be appointed as rivals to each of the participants were watched while answering some demographic questions. The severity of the electric shock applied by the participants to their competitors during the task was considered as a measure of physical aggression. As a result of the study, the homophobic group reported significantly more anxiety, anger and hostility after watching the erotic gay video tape than the non-homophobic group; It was observed that the homophobic group was more aggressive towards the gay opponent, but the groups were not different in terms of aggression towards the heterosexual opponent (10). In another experimental study by Prrott and Zeichner, 165 heterosexual men were randomly assigned to various groups. Within the scope of the study, 2 erotic video conditions (male-male; male-female) and 2 competing sexual orientation conditions (heterosexual male competitor; gay male competitor) were created. It was found that male participants who had a sexual bias from the participants whose anger levels were measured with the Anger-Hostility Scale and the Positive and Negative Emotions Scale before the task revealed more anger than the situation of seeing the erotic image of a woman and a man, in the condition of seeing the erotic image of two men. This difference in anger level could not be observed in male participants without sexual bias (11)

Agents: Sexism and Defense Forms

Sakallı-Uğurlu defines sexism as "revealing the biological and social role differences between male and female genders, exaggerating them and seeing masculinity in stronger and higher status, and pushing women to economic, social and political weakness and consequently discrimination" (12). In addition, it has been stated that sexism is used in the sense of "accepting gender roles and defining sexes within the framework of stereotypes" (12).

Sexism consists of protectionist sexism and hostile sexism (13). Hostile sexism involves negative attitudes about women being perceived as being weaker than men and thinking that they are in need of men. Protectionist sexism, on the other hand, accepts that women are at a lower level compared to men, although it includes positive attitudes about concepts such as protection, loving and glorification of women (13). It is thought that cultural pressures that comply with traditional gender roles cause higher levels of prejudice, anger and aggression towards sexual minorities (14). Individuals who adopt gender roles more strongly show a more negative attitude towards homosexuals (15, 16).

There are many studies showing that negative attitudes towards homosexuals are strongly associated with adherence to traditional gender roles. According to the meta-analysis by Whitley (2001), one of the strong predictors of aggressive behavior towards homosexual men was found to be dependent on the gender role of the participants. (17).

Another experimental study conducted by Parrott and Zeichner (2008) was assigned to erotic video watch groups about male-male or male-male relationship, randomly selected, after a laboratory task, the shock of the participants against their gay or heterosexual competitors was examined. Accordingly, it has been found that men who see male-male homosexual relationships as violations of male gender roles tend to show higher levels of physical aggression towards homosexuals (18). Finally, Parrott et al. (2008), based on a survey conducted with 135 heterosexual men, it was stated that compliance with traditional gender roles has a strong relationship with anger towards homosexuals (19).

Anna Freud has defined defense mechanisms as mental functions that aim to protect the individual by reducing anxiety caused by both stressful external events and destructive internal states (20). Another comprehensive definition of defense mechanisms is that "defense mechanisms are processes that operate unconsciously, protecting the individual from anxiety, internal conflicts that he / she is not aware of, impulses suppressed because he / she is unacceptable, feelings of guilt and other threats (1). Although there are various opinions about the classification of defense mechanisms, defense mechanisms can be classified as mature, neurotic and immature on the basis of the Defense Forms Scale used in this study (21). To mature defenses: glorification, humor, anticipation, oppression; neurotic defenses: making-breaking, pseudoaltruism, idealization, counter-reaction development; immature defenses include reflection, passive aggression, expression, isolation, devaluation, denial, displacement, division, rationalization, and bodilization.

Pour et al. Examining the relationship between forms of defense and aggression. (2008), as a result of their studies, adolescents had a negative relationship between mature defense and aggression; stated that aggressive behavior and depressive introversion predict immature defense mechanisms with 32% variance (22). However, when the literature is examined, a limited number of studies investigating the relationship between defense styles and homophobia are encountered. The most remarkable of these studies is Ciocca et al. (2015). Research results show that immature defense mechanisms predict homophobia and neurotic defenses are negatively related to homophobia (23). Considering that defense mechanisms make it more bearable by shaping negative emotions and experiences (24), it can be thought that homophobic attitudes such as aggression are defense attempts to manage internal concerns about sexuality and sexual orientation. It is therefore important to understand the role of defense mechanisms when investigating homophobia and related behavior.

The purpose of this study is to examine the mediating role of sexism and defense forms in the relationship between homophobia and aggression. Research hypotheses are given below:

- Defense styles have an intermediary effect on the relationship between homophobia and aggression.
- In the relationship between homophobia and aggression, contradictory sense sexism has a mediating effect.

METHOD

Model of the Research

This research was designed according to the relational screening model to reveal the relationships between homophobia, sexism, forms of defense and aggression (Figure 1).

Working group

The study group of the research consists of 281 university students studying at various faculties and departments in the 2018-2019

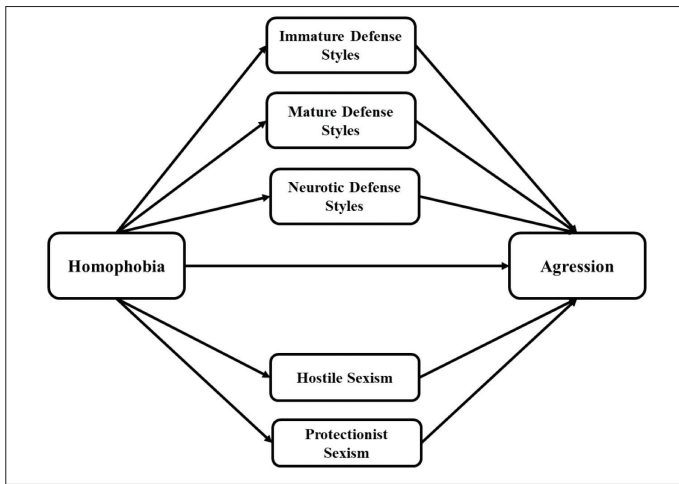


Figure 1. Hypothetic Model.

academic year fall semester at Namık Kemal University. 225 (80.1%) of the individuals in the study group are women, 56 (19.9%) are men and their ages vary between 18-36 ($x = 20.13$, $ss = 2.35$).

Data Collection Tools

Demographic Information Form

It is a form created by the researchers in which information such as age, gender, education level, faculty and department they attend, marital status, income level are questioned.

Hudson and Ricketts Homophobia Scale

The adaptation studies of the scale, which was developed by Hudson and Ricketts (1980) to measure attitudes towards homosexual individuals, were carried out by Sakallı and Uğurlu (2001). While the original form of the scale had 25 items, the Turkish form was prepared for use with 24 items (25, 26). Before applying the final version of the scale to the participants, Sakallı and Uğurlu excluded the scale item related to "being able to walk comfortably in the parts of the city where the homosexuals are located" because it is not a region as stated in the city where the adaptation study was conducted (Ankara) (26). Therefore, the Turkish form of the scale was determined as 24 items. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale (Cronbach Alpha) is for the original form. 90, while the internal consistency coefficient for the Turkish form. It was calculated as 94 (25, 26). Each item in the scale ranks as 6-point Likert between "I disagree (1)" and "I agree a lot (6)". The increase in the scores obtained from the scale shows the high level of homophobia (26). Internal consistency coefficient of the scale for this research. It was calculated as 95.

Contradictory Sexuality Scale

The adaptation studies of the scale, which was developed by Glick and Fiske (1996) to determine contradictory sense sexism levels, were conducted by Uğurlu (2002) (27, 28). The scale has 22 items and a 6-point Likert type (1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Disagree a little, 4: A little disagree, 5: Agree, 6: Disagree). While 11 items of the scale measure hostile sexism, the other 11 items measure protectionist sexism. High from the scale points indicate that the protectionist and hostile gender is high (28). Internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of CFCS. It has been determined as 85. The increase in the scores obtained from the scale means the increase in sexism levels (28). For this research, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale. It was calculated as 86.

Defense Forms Scale

The adaptation studies of the scale, which was developed by Andrews, Singh and Bond (1993) to evaluate the reflections of the

unconscious defense styles on the level of consciousness, were conducted by Yılmaz et al. (2007) (29, 21). The scale evaluates the reflections of defense mechanisms used unconsciously on the level of consciousness and includes 20 forms of defense. Under the scale immature defenses; counter-reaction development, reflection, passive aggression, externalization, isolation, devaluation, autistic fantasy, denial / denial, displacement, dissociation, division / division, logicization (rationalization), bodilyization; neurotic defenses; making-breaking, artificial altruism, idealization; mature defenses; suppression, sublimation, humor, expectation. In this scale, which has a 9-point likert scale, each item is evaluated between "Not suitable for me at all (1)" and "Very suitable for me (9)". Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficients of the Turkish form of the scale. 58-. It has been reported to vary between 80 (21). For this research, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale. It was calculated as 81.

Aggression Scale

Adaptation studies of the scale, developed by Buss and Peryy (1992) to measure aggression, were conducted by Can (2002) (30, 31). There are 34 items in the scale and five sub-dimensions, including physical aggression, verbal aggression, indirect aggression, hostility and anger. Each item in the scale is evaluated as 5-point Likert between 1 and 5 between "completely appropriate" and "not at all". While the highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 170; the lowest score is 34. The high score obtained from the dimensions of the scale indicates that the person has aggression behavior related to that dimension. The internal consistency Cronbach alpha coefficient of the Turkish form of the scale. It was stated as 91 (31). Internal consistency coefficient of the scale for this research. It was calculated as 89.

Operation

Ethical approval of the study was obtained from Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University Faculty of Medicine Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee with the approval number 2018/59/04/07 on 26.04.2018. Informed consent form was read and signed to all individuals participating in the research. The data were collected in groups from students studying in different departments at the undergraduate level in Tekirdağ Namık Kemal and İstanbul Aydın Universities in the 2018-2019 academic year. It has been observed that it takes between 10 and 15 minutes to respond to the data collection kit prepared by the researcher to collect the data of the research. The hypothetical model planned to be tested in the research was tested with IBM SPSS and Amos 21.0 programs. The compatibility of the model with the data was evaluated by looking at the significance of the t values of the path coefficients leading to the implicit variables. In the preliminary analysis, the kurtosis values of the variables-. With 01. It was determined that the skewness values were between 63 and acceptable limits between -0.11 and -1.03 (32).

Path Analysis

Path analysis, which is accepted as one of the Structural Equation Modeling techniques today, is a data analysis technique that has been used frequently in social sciences in recent years. The biggest and main difference of Structural Equation Modeling is the use of directly observed variables such as regression analysis, not latent variables as in structural equation models.

The variables directly measured or observed by the researcher are defined as observed variables. A limitation of the observed variable is that the observed variables include measurement errors. The observed variable may be the question or items in the measurement tool, as well as the total score of the scale or the total score of the subscales. In the classical approach, analyzes such as correlation or regression can be used to examine the relationships between dependent and independent

variables. Path analysis allows direct and indirect relationships between dependent and independent variables to be separated and the error variable under control. Another major advantage is that only one dependent variable can be taken for regression analysis, while more than one variable can be taken as dependent variable in path analysis. Also, in path analysis, a variable can be simultaneously defined as both a dependent and an independent variable.

In this study, the mediating effects of some potential intermediary variables in the relationship between the dependent and independent variables were tested. In the brokerage test, nested models (nested) strategy and Bootstrapping methods, which are recommended to be used in models with more than one broker variable, were used together. The nested models strategy has an important place in structural equality model studies. In this strategy, which of the models is more valid is obtained by evaluating whether the chi-square values difference of the models is statistically significant or not. Paths that do not cause any deterioration or improvement in the goodness of fit of the model are deleted from the model.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Average and standard deviation values and correlations between variables in the model determined in the study are presented in Table-1.

According to the results of the analysis given, aggression and hostile sexism ($r=0.43, p<0.05$), protectionist sexism ($r=0.18, p<0.05$), contradictory sensualism ($r=0.36, p<0.05$), neurotic forms of defense ($r=0.15, p<0.05$), immature forms of defense ($r=0.65, p<0.05$) and homophobia ($r=0.15, p<0.05$) positive positive relationships were determined. Homophobia, which is the external independent variable of the research, and hostile sexism ($r=0.38, p<0.05$), protectionist sexism ($r=0.57, p<0.05$), contradictory sensualism ($r=0.57, p<0.05$) and neurotic defense styles ($r=0.13, p<0.05$) were also positively significant.

Path Analysis

After testing the hypothetical model to be tested within the scope of the research, standardized path coefficients for the model are given in Figure 2.

When the standardized path coefficients in the model are examined, the neurotic defense forms of homophobia ($\beta=0.12, p<0.05$), hostile sexism ($\beta=0.37, p<0.05$) and protectionist sexism ($\beta=0.58, p<0.05$) statistically significant predicted; aggression of immature ($\beta=0.61, p<0.05$) and neurotic ($\beta=0.10, p<0.05$) defense forms, as well as hostile sexism ($\beta=0.25, p<0.05$) It is seen that it predicted significantly.

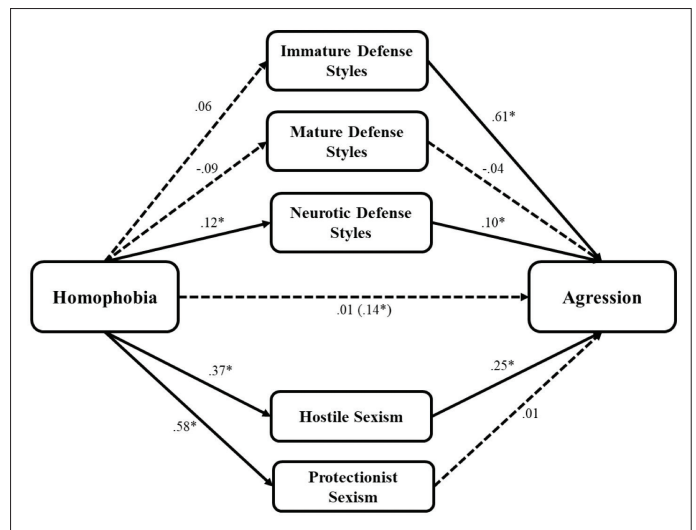


Figure 2. Standardized Path Coefficients for the Hypothetical Model, * $p < 0.05$. The value in parentheses reflects the predictive relationship between Homophobia and Aggression when other variables have no effect.

In addition, the coefficient of the path from homophobia to aggression was statistically significant when other variables had no effect ($\beta=0.14, p<0.05$), but not statistically significant when other variables entered the effect ($\beta=0.01, p>0.05$), it can be stated that neurotic defense mechanisms and hostile sexism have an intermediary effect in the relationship between homophobia and aggression. It was also determined that all internal and external independent variables explained 49% of aggression. It is seen that the explained variance is quite high.

Testing the Mediation Effect

For the mediation test in the model, the path from homophobia to aggression, as well as the paths determined to be statistically insignificant, were removed from the model and the model was re-tested and the deterioration in the model was evaluated with the chi-square difference test. When the path from homophobia to aggression is removed from the model and the full-mediated model is tested, the goodness of fit values obtained are $\chi^2 / sd (1.32 / 2) = 0.44, p = 0.73, GFI: 0.99, AGFI: 0.99, CFI = 1.00$; It was calculated as $RMSEA = 0.001$ (Confidence interval for $RMSEA = 0.0101-0.010$). The significance of the deterioration in the model was evaluated with the Chi-Square difference test and it was determined that there was no significant deterioration in the model (Chi-Square Difference Test: 0.19, 1: $p > 0.05$). According to the results of the analysis, it can be stated that neurotic defense forms and hostile sexism have a full mediating effect in the relationship between homophobia and aggression.

Table 1. Correlations between variables, mean and standard deviation values

Variables	\bar{x}	SS	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Aggression	85.28	20.80	0.43**	0.18**	0.36**	0.01	0.15**	0.65**	0.15*
2. Hostile sexism	34.45	10.62	-	0.40**	0.83**	-0.05	0.17**	0.29**	0.38**
3. Protectionist sexism	38.10	10.84		-	0.84**	-0.04	0.26**	0.14*	0.57**
4. Contradictory sexism	72.54	17.98			-	-0.06	0.26**	0.26**	0.57**
5. Mature forms of defense	45.81	9.83				-	0.35**	0.16**	-0.09
6. Neurotic forms of defense	42.31	10.14					-	0.34**	0.13*
7. Immature forms of defense	103.99	27.32						-	0.07
8. Homophobia	89.46	31.21							-

* $p < 0.05$
** $p < 0.01$

Table 2. Bootstrap test results

Path	Means	Path coefficient (β)	95% CI
Homophobia - Aggression	Neurotic Defense Forms and Hostile sexism	-0.01 (0.14*)	[0.044, 0.134]

Bootstrap was done over 1000 samples (Hayes, 2009).

β , standardized

* $p < 0.05$

The significance of neurotic defense forms and mediating effect of hostile sexism in the relationship between homophobia and aggression was also tested with the Bootstrapping method. The criterion for the significance of the indirect effect is that the intervals for estimating the indirect effect do not include 0. If the indirect effect range does not include 0, the indirect effects are statistically significant, if they are not statistically significant. For the significance of indirect effects in the structural model, the estimation interval was calculated as 0.044, 0.134 in the 95% confidence interval. Accordingly, indirect impact on the structural model has been demonstrated to be significant.

As a result of the analysis, it can be stated that homophobia increased neurotic defense mechanisms through hostile and protectionist sexism. Accordingly, homophobia increases neurotic defense mechanisms and protectionist sexism, possessing neurotic defense mechanisms and protection sexism also increases aggression. In addition, it was determined by the sample modeling (Bootstrapping) analysis that these indirect effects tested in the model did not depend on the sample.

DISCUSSION

In this study, it was aimed to investigate the relationship between homophobia, aggression, sexism and defense styles and to examine the role of sexism and defense forms as a mediator in the relationship between homophobia and aggression.

The model, which claims that homophobia makes the individual prone to aggression and is related to neurotic forms of defense and hostile sexism, is supported. The findings are in line with the studies conducted on this subject, which report the results that homophobia is associated with aggression, and show that homophobia may have an important place in the encounter of aggressive behavior among individuals with different sexual orientations. The findings that neurotic defense styles and hostile sexism have a full mediating effect in the relationship between homophobia and aggression are new and remarkable in the literature.

When the relationships between variables are analyzed, it is seen that the positive significant relationship between homophobia and aggression is consistent with the studies conducted in this literature (10, 11). The fact that aggression increases with increasing homophobia Bernart et al. It also supports the findings of the research conducted by (10). Most research examining masculine norms, aggression and homophobia has been done among adult men. It is generally shown that aggressive behaviors against homophobia are about taking advantage of their masculinity and heterosexuality among men, challenging other men's masculinity and isolating themselves from homophobic suspicions (33). Considering that 80% of the sample of this study is female, the results show that a similar relationship may exist for women. Similarly, the study of Poteat, Kimmel and Wilchins (2011) found that although girls found that their aggressive behavior was less than boys, they found a partnership between adolescent girls and boys in which homophobic behavior could be observed in connection with normative masculine activities (34).

On the other hand, in this study, where sexism was handled in three types as hostile sexism, protectionist sexism, and contradictory sense sexism, it was seen that homophobia was related to all three types of sexism. This relationship is compatible with other research results in the related field (17–19). This finding also supports the views in the literature that sexism increases negative attitudes towards gay individuals (14–16). That is, traditional gender role beliefs are linked to sexism and homophobia due to perceived violations of traditional gender role expectations. If a person approves such traditional gender beliefs, they are likely to express their hostility towards people who violate these norms, such as non-traditional women or gay men. Considering the traditional and patriarchal structure of the Turkish culture (35), norms related to gender roles are thought to determine behaviors towards individuals with different sexual orientation (36).

Another goal of the study is to test the role of defense forms in the relationship between homophobia and aggression. The relationship observed between hostile sexism and aggression in the research findings indicates that as hostile sexism increases, aggression tends to increase. Hostile sexism is mainly associated with the idea that male sex is superior to female sex, and the man's desire to control and dominate the woman. It is thought that having such hostile thoughts related to "being superior", "dominating", "controlling" and establishing authority can arouse anger in the person and increase the aggression. Although there are no similar studies to explain the relationship between hostile sexism and aggression over anger, there are studies conducted in different contexts addressing the relationship between hostile sexism and anger. For example, in a study, it was stated that hostile sexism was associated with driver anger in traffic (37). In addition, there were remarkable findings in the relationship between aggression and defense styles. First of all, it seems that aggression is not related to mature forms of defense. Considering that mature defenses have a healthy relationship with reality and strengthen relations with society, this finding is inevitable. Neurotic forms of defense show a low relationship with aggression; it has been found that immature defense forms show a strong positive relationship with aggression. Excessive use of immature defenses is socially undesirable and is thought to affect people's ability to handle reality and their capacity to cope with reality. The fact that individuals who could not cope with the positive coping strategies with reality show aggression as a result can be considered as a perspective that can be used to explain this finding. Consistent with this result, Pour et al. In a study conducted by immature defense mechanisms were found to be associated with aggression (22).

When the mediating effect was examined, it was observed that neurotic defense mechanisms had a mediating effect in the relationship between homophobia and aggression. It is seen that this finding shows contradiction with other findings in the literature. Ciocca et al (2015) state that neurotic defense mechanisms have negative correlations with homophobia (38). On the other hand, it was found that immature defense mechanisms predicted homophobia and it was argued that negative attitude towards homosexuals was affected by the dysfunctional aspects of personality (38). It is known that mature defenses generally protect self-esteem, and immature defenses work with hard and excessive distortions to

protect self-integrity, and cause personal and interpersonal relationships to deteriorate (39). The action of immature defense mechanisms as an incompatible coping mechanism between distress and anxiety situations (40) may explain that individuals using these defense mechanisms produce primitive responses against homophobia. Although it was thought that the difference observed between the two study findings might be due to the sampling and data collection tools, it was observed that similar scales were used in both studies and the gender distribution in the sample was similar. Accordingly, it was thought that other cultural and social differences of the samples might explain the inconsistency in the results. Ciocca et al. (2015), while the participants studying in Italy / Rome constituted the research sample, this study consisted of students studying at Tekirdağ Namık Kemal and Istanbul Aydın Universities. It was thought that the results obtained from the sample groups of two different cultures for a social phenomenon such as homophobia may have varied due to differences in culture, political structure, belief, tolerance to different orientations and the like.

This study has some limitations. It should be taken into consideration that the research sample cannot be generalized because the research sample consists only of students enrolled in Tekirdağ Namık Kemal and Istanbul Aydın Universities. In addition, the number of women in the research sample is higher than the number of men. It is seen that most researches about homophobia in the literature are carried out in the samples where the majority of men are. For this reason, it is considered that it will be appropriate to have more male participants in the sample in future studies. However, inability to make inferences about causality in the research and the necessity of evaluating the findings within the framework of relationality can be seen as another limitation.

Despite the limitations, this study is the only study conducted in our country that examines the role of intermediate variables in the relationship between homophobia and aggression. This study reveals that neurotic defense forms and the mediating role of sexism are important in the relationship between homophobia and aggression. Although individual factors related to homophobia are discussed in this study, the importance of social and cultural factors in the formation and maintenance of homophobia should not be forgotten, and all these factors should be considered together to evaluate homophobia as a whole.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethical approval of the study was obtained from Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University Faculty of Medicine Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee on 26.04.2018 with the approval number of 2018/59/04/07.

Informed Consent: Informed consent forms were read and signed by all participants.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Author Contributions: Concept - ZS; Design - ZS; Supervision - ZS; Resource - ZS; Materials - ZS; Data Collection and/or Processing - ZS; Analysis and/or Interpretation - ZS, ÖE; Literature Search - ÖE; Writing - ZS, ÖE; Critical Reviews - ZS.

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