

## Marital Timing of Emerging Adults: Familial Factors as Potent Predictors

*Beliren Yetişkinlerin Evlilik Zamanlaması: Güçlü Bir Yordayıcı Olarak Ailesel Faktörler*

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## Abstract

Understanding marital beliefs during emerging adulthood is notably important as it might help emerging adults create a path in this unique life period to form a marital union. However, the affective factors shaping emerging adults' marriage beliefs are multifarious and merit further attention. Therefore, the ultimate goal of this research was to elucidate whether the family of origin's quality and marriage age of parents were predictors of emerging adults' ideal marriage age and the ideal amount of time needed to get to know a partner before marriage. The study group consisted of 500 unmarried university students and graduates in Turkey. A multivariate regression analysis was performed to analyse the data. The findings revealed that the marital timing of emerging adults was linked to a variety of familial factors. The ideal marital age of emerging adults was significantly predicted by the mother's marital age, parents' marital happiness and age. Later mother marriage age was correlated with later ideal age of marriage. Higher levels of perceived happiness in parents' marriage were associated with earlier ideal age of marriage. Additionally, the mother's marriage age and emerging adults' relationship status and age were significant predictors of the ideal amount of time to get to know a partner before marriage. Later mother's marriage age and having a romantic relationship was linked to a longer time to get to know a partner before marriage. Being older was also related to a shorter time to get to know a partner before marriage and the later ideal age of marriage. The ideal marital age is around 26 years old. Only 5% of emerging adults feel ready to get married. More than two-thirds of emerging adults do not want their marriage to resemble their parents' marriage. Besides, most emerging adults give priority to a career in their life plans.

## Keywords

Marital beliefs, emerging adults, marriage, marital timing, premarital factors.

## Öz

Beliren yetişkinlik döneminde evliliğe yönelik inançları anlamak, beliren yetişkinlerin bu benzersiz yaşam döneminde evlilik birliği oluşturmak için bir yol oluşturmalarına yardımcı olabileceğinden önemlidir. Bununla birlikte, beliren yetişkinlerin evlilik inançlarını şekillendiren faktörler çok çeşitlidir ve daha fazla araştırma yapılması gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu araştırmanın nihai amacı, kök aile kalitesinin ve ebeveynlerin evlilik yaşının, beliren yetişkinlerin ideal evlilik yaşının ve evlenmeden önce partneri tanımak için gereken ideal sürenin yordayıcıları olup olmadığını belirlemektir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Türkiye'deki evli olmayan 500 üniversite öğrencisi ve mezunu oluşturmuştur. Verilerin analizinde çok değişkenli regresyon analizi tekniği kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, beliren yetişkinlerin evlilik zamanlamasının çeşitli ailesel faktörlerle bağlantılı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Beliren yetişkinlerin ideal evlilik yaşı, annenin evlilik yaşı, ebeveynlerin evlilik mutluluğu ve yaşı tarafından önemli düzeyde yordanmıştır. Annenin daha geç yaşta evlenmesi ile beliren yetişkinlerin ideal evlilik yaşının daha geç olması arasında ilişki bulunmuştur. Ebeveynlerin evliliğinde daha yüksek algılanan mutluluk seviyeleri ile daha erken ideal evlilik yaşı ilişkili bulunmuştur. Ek olarak, annenin evlilik yaşı ve beliren yetişkinlerin ilişki durumu ve yaşı, evlenmeden önce bir partneri tanımak için gereken ideal sürenin önemli yordayıcılarıdır. Annenin daha geç evlenmesi ve romantik bir ilişkiye sahip olmak, evlenmeden önce bir partneri tanımının daha uzun sürmesi ile ilişkili bulunmuştur. Yaş arttıkça evlilik öncesi partneri tanımak için ideal sürenin kısaldığı ve ideal evlilik yaşının arttığı belirlenmiştir. İdeal evlilik yaşı 26 yaş civarındadır. Beliren yetişkinlerin sadece %5'i evlenmeye hazır hissetmektedir. Beliren yetişkinlerin üçte ikisinden fazlası, evliliklerinin ebeveynlerinin evliliğine benzemesini istememektedir. Ayrıca, beliren yetişkinlerin çoğu, yaşam planlarında kariyere öncelik vermektedir.

## Anahtar Kelimeler

Evlilik inançları, beliren yetişkinler, evlilik, evlilik zamanlaması, evlilik öncesi faktörler.

## Introduction

Many emerging adults attach importance to marriage (Carroll et al., 2007), a vast majority of emerging adults perceive marriage as a lifetime relationship (Willoughby & Carroll, 2010), they have an intention to get married at some point in their lives (Arocho, 2021; Cassinet & Jensen, 2020; Watkins & Beckmeyer, 2020) and few believe that being single has more advantages than being married (Willoughby & Carroll, 2010). Although emerging adults hold a positive attitude towards marriage, they may have hesitations while transforming their views into actions. Indeed, Carroll et al. (2009) reported that most emerging adults do not feel ready for marriage. Willoughby and Carroll (2010) reported that only a small percentage of the emerging adults would like to be married now, more than half believe that cohabitation is acceptable with or without a marriage plan, and more than half have an experience of sexual intercourse. Manning et al. (2019) pointed out that single young adults have strong expectations to marry, and two-thirds of these young people expect to cohabit with their future spouse. Considering all these findings, it can be stated that most emerging adults view marriage positively, but many factors can be influential in their marital timing. Among these factors, it is known that the family of origin plays a central role in shaping one's marital timing. Due to this, the goal of this study is to investigate the links between familial factors and marital timing beliefs during emerging adulthood.

### 1. Familial Factors and Marital Timing

Barr and Simons (2018) have suggested that among the contexts in which beliefs about marriage are shaped, the most prominent context is the family of origin. Findings from previous studies support this suggestion as it has been well-documented by researchers that family plays a significant role in the development of marital timing beliefs (Arocho & Kamp-Dush, 2020; Ellison et al., 2011; Willoughby, Carroll et al., 2012; Willoughby, Hersh et al., 2015; Willoughby et al., 2020). In more specific terms, Willoughby, Carroll et al. (2012) revealed a positive link between parents' ideal marital timing and their children's ideal marital timing. Ellison et al. (2011) reported that having a two-parent family increases the likelihood of women getting married compared to other family structures. Willoughby, Hersh et al. (2015) found a significant relationship between higher levels of perceived helicopter parenting and a later expected marital timing. Willoughby et al. (2020) divided the relationship status of the parents of emerging adults into three categories as married, divorced, and other, and compared the emerging adults' expected age of marriage regarding these categories. The results demonstrated that those whose parents' relationship status is 'other' have a later expected age of marriage than those whose parents are divorced or married.

Regarding the marital beliefs of emerging adults, Willoughby and Hall (2015) offered three paradigm classes, labelled enthusiasts, hesitant, and delayers and compared each of these groups' marital timing. As a result of this comparison, it was determined that the delayer group's expected age of marriage is almost a decade later than the other two groups. It was highlighted that the emerging adults in the delayer class are more likely to come from unmarried parents, and thus they avoid an institution they experienced within a negative context in their family of origin. Arocho and Kamp-Dush (2020) found that for males there is a negative correlation between the early age of marriage and growing up in an intact family, whereas there is no significant correlation for females. Similarly, Watkins and Beckmeyer (2020) attracted notice to the decrease in the likelihood of marriage intention of emerging adults whose parents are divorced or separated.

There is a consensus among scholars that familial factors are not only associated with marital beliefs but also with a range of premarital factors. Cunningham and Thornton (2006) argued that a child's report of parents' marital quality was negatively associated with attitudes toward divorce and premarital sex. Sassler et al. (2009) stated that parental divorce increases the likelihood of cohabitation compared to marriage. Amato and Kane (2011) concluded that parents' age at first marriage was negatively linked to daughters' nonmarital cohabitation, daughters' marriage and daughters' nonmarital births. Raab (2017) indicated that the mother's age at birth was negatively related to early cohabitation. Kapinus (2005) reported a positive relationship between parents' attitudes toward divorce and offspring's attitudes toward divorce. Likewise, Cui and Fincham (2010) found that higher levels of marital conflict of parents are associated with less quality in the relations of young people. Based on prior research demonstrating the importance of familial factors in the development of young people, it can be stated here that elucidating the associations between familial factors and marital timing beliefs of emerging adults is worthy of consideration.

### 2. Theoretical Framework

A frequently utilized conceptual framework to describe marital beliefs in emerging adulthood is the marital paradigm framework which encompasses both beliefs about getting married and beliefs about being married. The marital paradigm

concept addresses the collective beliefs of individuals about the marriage institution and their beliefs about a marital relationship in an abstract manner. To be more specific, this conceptual framework does not directly refer to one's specific attitudes about a current marital relationship or marital partner. Instead, it refers to one's overall marital beliefs that are used for specific situations and contexts as individuals get through in their life span. Hence, the paradigm may form or be influenced by one's beliefs and attitudes about one's own marriage or spouse (Willoughby et al., 2015).

Coming up with the proposal of marital paradigm theory, Willoughby et al. (2015) suggest that marital beliefs can be identified across six interrelated dimensions that encompass both beliefs about getting and being married. These dimensions are presented as follows: marital centrality, marital context, marital permanence, marital process, marital salience, and marital timing. Marital centrality is a term used to describe the attitudes around how central a role marriage and marital roles will take in a person's life. Marital context addresses beliefs about the context in which marriage occurs, covering beliefs about marriage readiness and preparation. Marital permanence refers to the beliefs based on the durability of marriage and the context in which the ending of a marriage is agreeable. Marital process includes beliefs about how married life should perform, encompassing beliefs about gender roles within marriage. Marital salience addresses the entire significance one places on marriage. Lastly, marital timing refers to beliefs about the ideal and expected timing of marriage and commitments of relationship. Regarding the content covered in these interrelated dimensions, we utilized the marital paradigm theory (Willoughby et al., 2015) by focusing on beliefs about marital timing which is used for beliefs about getting married.

### 3. Current Study

As previously mentioned, this study aims to clarify the links between familial factors and marital timing beliefs of emerging adults. Prior studies, which were mostly conducted in American culture, have focused on the associations between familial factors and marital timing beliefs (e.g., Willoughby, Carroll et al., 2012; Willoughby, Hersh et al., 2015; Willoughby et al., 2020). The current study aims at offering a more comprehensive understanding regarding the links between familial factors and marital timing beliefs of emerging adults and extending the related literature across different cultures. When considered from this point of view, it is a well-known fact that further studies are needed to clarify those links and expand the literature. To this end, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H1: A higher level of family quality and more perceived happiness of parents' marriage are associated with sooner ideal age of marriage and shorter time to get to know a partner before marriage.

To date, no studies have focused on the associations between parents' first marriage age and marital timing beliefs of emerging adults. However, Amato and Kane (2011) revealed that parents' marriage age is related to various premarital factors. Therefore, the lack of studies examining the relationship between the age of first marriage and marital timing has created an important gap in the literature. In addition, in the current study, it is important to reveal empirical findings regarding the contribution of parents' first marriage age in understanding the role of family in marital timing. With all these aspects, this study will both fill in an important gap in the literature and make an important contribution to the marital paradigm literature of emerging adults. In this respect, the second hypothesis we tested in this study is as follows:

H2: Late marriage age of parents is associated with delaying ideal age of marriage and allocating longer time to get to know a partner before marriage.

### 4. Method

#### 4.1. Participants and Procedure

In the current study, the convenience sampling method was implemented as one of the dedicated sampling methods. The sample used in the present study consisted of 500 graduate and university students studying in Turkey in the fall term of the 2020-2021 academic year. The participants were 116 (23%) male and 384 (77%) female aged 18 to 26 years old ( $M = 21.16$ ,  $SD = 1.92$ ). For the present study, we limit our sample to unmarried emerging adults between the ages of 18-26 as this age interval is regarded as the emerging adulthood. In our sample, 192 (38%) of the participants reported being in an ongoing relationship while the rest were not in a current relationship. Additionally, 92% of the participants reported their parents as being married. We excluded the data of the participants whose parents died or divorced before the age of 15. The race composition of the current sample was Turkish.

The present study was carried out as a correlational study in order to reveal the links between the marriage age of parents, emerging adults' ideal marriage age and the ideal time needed to get to know a partner before marriage. Data for the hypothetical tests were collected from the participants through an online survey including open-ended questions regarding

marital timing, the Family of Quality Scale and the Parents' Marriage Scale from the RELATE to get data about familial factors. Prior to the study, all of the ethical procedures of the study were completed, and the study was approved by the ethics committee of Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University (2020/08-04). At first, detailed information about the research was given to participants, and they were assured that their identity would be kept confidential. Afterwards, the participants contributed to the study with their informed consent, and they responded to 28 items on the survey form. Responding to all of the items took approximately 10 minutes.

## 4.2. Measures

### 4.2.1. Marital Timing

Marital timing, considered as a dependent variable of this study, was measured through a set of open-ended questions related to emerging adults' ideal marriage age and the ideal amount of time needed to get to know a partner prior to marriage decision. Respondents answered the questions as follows: In your opinion, what is the ideal marriage age? How long do you think couples need to get to know their partners prior to a marriage decision? The amount of time needed to get to know a partner before marriage was given in terms of months.

### 4.2.2. Familial Factors

The RELATE assessment battery was developed by Busby et al. (2001) as a Likert type scale that comprises 434 items. Data related to the family of origin was gathered using the Family Quality and the Parents' Marriage Subscales of RELATE assessment battery. The Turkish adaptation of the subscales was carried out within this study. We tested both of the scales' construct validity using confirmatory factor analysis. The model fit coefficients of the 4-item Family Quality Scale were found to be  $\chi^2/df=1.08$ , CFI=.99, TLI=.99, RMSEA=.01 (90% CI=.00-.12), and SRMR=.01. Based on our analyses regarding the 3-item Parents' Marriage Scale, we obtained a saturated model. The factor loadings were between .78 and .95 for the Parents' Marriage Scale. All these findings indicated that the scales are valid measurement tools to be used in Turkish culture.

For the reliability tests, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the scales were calculated. The internal consistency of the Family Quality Scale was .86 in the original form and .83 in the current study. Similarly, the internal consistency of the Parents' Marriage Scale was .91 in the original form and .89 in this study. The Family Quality Scale includes four items (sample item: We had a loving atmosphere in our family), and one of the items is reverse-coded. Higher scores represent greater family quality. Also, the Parents' Marriage Scale is a 3-item scale without any reverse coded item (sample item: I would like my marriage to be like my parents' marriage). Higher scores obtained from this scale indicate greater happiness in parents' marriage. For both of the scales, responses were based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

In addition to the subscales of RELATE assessment battery, participants reported their parents' marriage age through the following open-ended questions: What's your father's marriage age? What's your mother's marriage age? Moreover, we included gender, age and relationship status in our study as control variables. As one of the categorical variables, gender was coded as 0 = female, 1 = male and relationship status 0 = I do not have a romantic relationship, 1 = I have a romantic relationship. The participants also answered the following question: Which one do you give priority to in your life plans? (1) career, (2) marriage, and (3) other.

## 4.3. Data Analysis Strategy

In order to analyse the data to reveal links among variables, multivariate regression techniques were used. The outcome variables of this study are the ideal marital age and the ideal amount of time needed to get to know a partner before marriage. Independent variables are gender, relationship status, age, parents' marriage age, family quality, and happiness of parents in their married life. Analyses were performed through SAS 9.4. The level of significance in the present study was accepted as .05.

## 5. Results

Descriptive statistics related to the variables were given in Table 1. Correlation coefficients regarding variables were presented in Table 2. Subsequently, multivariate regression analysis findings of each dependent variable were reported in Table 3.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for Variables

Variables	M	SD	Proportion (%)	Range
Family quality	15.28	3.88		16.00
Parents' marriage happiness	10.00	3.75		12.00
Ideal marital age	26.29	2.54		34.00
Ideal time needed to get to know a partner before marriage (monthly)	21.41	12.62		71.00
Ideal engagement time (monthly)	7.83	5.24		36.00
Mother's marriage age	19.86	2.90		15.00
Father's marriage age	23.94	3.52		21.00
Marital readiness status				
- Yes			5	
- Yes, on some issues; No, on some issues			51	
- No			44	
Resemblance to parents' marriage				
- Yes			31	
- No			69	
Priority in life plan				
- Career			81	
- Marriage			5	
- Other			14	

As can be seen in Table 1 above, the ideal marital age is around 26 years old. Only 5% of emerging adults feel ready to get married. More than two-thirds of emerging adults do not want their marriage to resemble their parents' marriage. Besides, an overwhelming majority of emerging adults reported that they give priority to a career in their life plans.

**Table 2.** Bivariate Correlations for Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	-	.23*	-.03	-.04	-.20*	-.01	-.06
2. Ideal marital age	.10	-	.20*	.09	.06	-.04	-.24**
3. Ideal time to get to know a partner before marriage	-.08	.21**	-	.13	-.01	.08	-.06
4. Mother's marriage age	.05	.16**	.13**	-	.60**	.01	-.00
5. Father's marriage age	.02	.12*	.10	.48**	-	-.09	-.21*
6. Family quality	.07	-.04	.02	.09	.02	-	.64**
7. Perceived happiness in parents' marriage	-.12*	-.03	.01	.05	-.04	.68**	-

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$  coefficients above the diagonal belong to male

As demonstrated in Table 2, bivariate correlations between outcome variables and independent variables were low in general. Also, once correlations among predictor variables were tested, low and moderate correlations were obtained.

**Table 3.** Multivariate Regression Analysis Results

Predictor variables	Ideal marital age			Ideal time needed to get to know a partner		
	B	SE B	t	B	SE B	t
Gender (Male)	.32	.27	1.20	-1.06	1.29	-.82

Relationship status (In a relationship)	-.46	.24	-1.92	7.37	1.16	6.38*
Age	.19	.06	3.16*	-.85	.29	-2.95*
Family quality	.03	.04	.87	-.04	.19	-.23
Parents' marriage happiness	-.09	.04	-2.10*	.03	.20	.15
Mother's marriage age	.09	.05	2.00*	.73	.22	3.33*
Father's marriage age	.03	.04	.68	-.05	.18	-.28
R <sup>2</sup>	.05			.10		

According to the results of multivariate regression analysis, the model regarding the ideal marital age was found statistically significant ( $F(7, 492) = 4.06, p < .001$ ). The ideal marital age of emerging adults was significantly predicted by the mother's marital age, parents' marital happiness and age. According to these findings, later mother marriage age was correlated with later ideal age of marriage. Higher levels of perceived happiness in parents' marriage were associated with the earlier ideal age of marriage. Also, being older was correlated with the later ideal age of marriage.

The model regarding the ideal amount of time needed to get to know a partner before marriage was found significant ( $F(7, 492) = 8.05, p < .001$ ). Mother's marriage age, relationship status and age were significant predictors. Later mother's marriage age was linked to a longer time to get to know a partner before marriage. Similarly, having a romantic relationship was associated with a longer time to get to know a partner before marriage. Being older was also related to a shorter time to get to know a partner before marriage.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the links between emerging adults' family quality, parents' marital happiness, parents' marriage age and marital timing dimension of the marital paradigm. To this end, we formulated several hypotheses, and the first hypothesis of the study was slightly supported, whereas the second hypothesis was significantly supported. Consistent with our prediction, higher levels of perceived parents' marital happiness were related to earlier ideal marriage age among emerging adults. However, there was not a significant relationship between family quality and any outcome variables. Additionally, a significant relationship did not exist in the association between parents' marital happiness and the ideal time needed to get to know a partner before marriage.

In a study conducted with a sampling of emerging adults, Willoughby, Hersh et al. (2015) found a significant positive relationship between parental warmth and the importance of marriage among emerging adults. On the other hand, a negative correlation existed between parental warmth and preferring to be single to being married. In the same study, a significant positive relationship was reported between helicopter parenting and the expected age of marriage. Willoughby, Carroll et al. (2012) reported that higher levels of perceived mother marital quality is linked to giving more importance to marriage. Also, in a study carried out with Turkish emerging adults, Sağkal and Özdemir (2019) revealed a negative relationship between interparental conflict and marital attitudes of emerging adults. Willoughby and Hall (2015) also highlighted that most emerging adults hesitate to marry quickly.

Consistent with the previous research findings, we might state in the present study that familial factors demonstrate a significant correlation with marital beliefs of emerging adults. More specifically, positive experiences related to marriage in the family of origin climate may motivate emerging adults to establish a marital union at an earlier age. Perceived happiness in the family of origin climate can lead them to have positive beliefs that marriage provides individuals with great advantages. In this regard, emerging adults might hold a belief that the ideal marriage age should be at an earlier age.

As can be seen in previous research findings, there is a link between family structure and marital attitudes and beliefs (Sassler et al., 2009; Shimkowski et al., 2018; Willoughby et al., 2020). To be more specific, Sassler et al. (2009) reported that individuals whose parents cohabited after divorce demonstrated elevated odds of cohabiting themselves rather than marriage. In another study conducted by Shimkowski et al. (2018), it was found that individuals whose parents are married have more positive marital attitudes compared to ones with divorced parents. Willoughby et al. (2020) pointed out that having divorced parents are related to less marital salience, marital permanence, and marital centrality beliefs. The family has an essential role in an individual's development. For this reason, the happiness of parents in the family climate provides important gains for children. The importance given to family and marriage can be counted among these gains. In addition, it is

worthwhile to articulate that the family climate is a highly important factor to shape individuals' marital attitudes and beliefs and transform these beliefs into behaviour.

Another significant finding of the current study was that a significant relationship existed between parents' marriage age and marital timing of emerging adults. These findings are aligned with our second hypothesis. As anticipated, later mother marriage age is related to later ideal age of marriage and longer time to get to know a partner prior to marriage decision. Later father's marriage age is also linked to later ideal age of marriage among emerging adults. As Willoughby, Carroll et al. (2012) suggested, parents' marital attitudes towards marital timing were positively related to the marital timing of their children. These findings are congruent with the findings in our study. We can note here that the life experiences individuals gain from their family of origin can be effective in shaping their beliefs about marriage. When considered from this respect, parents who marry at a later age and continue the marriage in a well-functioning way can hold the belief that their children will be happier when they get married at a later age. Indeed, Arocho and Kamp-Dush (2020) reported that males who grown up in an intact family have negative attitudes towards marriage at earlier ages. Particularly, growing up in healthy families is important in terms of transforming the marital opinions of emerging adults into behaviour. Suggestions of parents who married at a later age to their children about the time of marriage also have a role in the formation of these behaviours.

According to Willoughby, Olson et al. (2012), when compared to their parents, emerging adults report earlier ideal marriage age, and they consider marriage as a more important purpose. Although emerging adults believe that the ideal age of marriage is earlier compared to their parents, economic conditions can be an important determinant in this regard. Muraco and Curran (2012) stated that economic concerns are a causal factor for emerging adults to postpone marriage. The economic opportunities of the families of emerging adults can play an important role in explaining these outcomes.

A further important finding of this study was that the average ideal marital age of Turkish emerging adults is around the age of 26. In previous studies conducted with an American sample (Hall & Willoughby, 2018; Willoughby, Olson et al., 2012), it was determined that the ideal age of marriage is around 25 years old. When Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) (2023) marriage and divorce statistics were examined, it was found that the average age at first marriage is 28.2 for men and 25.6 for women in Turkey. According to this finding, it can be stated that the ideal marital age of Turkish emerging adults turns into marital behaviours. In studies conducted in American culture, it is seen that the ideal marital age of emerging adults is one age lower than the ideal marital age of Turkish emerging adults. This result can be explained by the fact that Turkish emerging adults tend to form a marital union after completing university education and gaining certain economic gains as these factors can be the reasons for lacking personal readiness leading to draw emerging adults away from marriage. Moreover, in the current study, we revealed that the great majority of our sampling appears to prioritize career in their life plans. This finding is congruent with studies carried out in Turkish culture (Keldal, 2021a; Keldal & Kılıç, 2021; Keldal & Şeker, 2022). This finding is also aligned with prior research indicating that both genders attach similar importance to anticipated career (Kerpelman & Schvaneveldt, 1999), and there appears a shift to other priorities instead of getting married, such as career preparation (Hall & Willoughby, 2019).

Regarding the Turkish culture, specifically, we may report that along with the social, cultural and economic changes, the family institution in Turkey has also been subjected to changes (Çelik, 2018). Divorce rates have been on the rise in recent years, accompanied by a gradual increase in the average age at first marriage (TURKSTAT, 2023). Approximately one-third of emerging adults agree to cohabit without marrying a partner, while one-fourth believe that premarital sex is appropriate (Keldal, 2021b), and more than half of the emerging adults think that there is a deterioration in the institution of the family (Akbaş et al., 2019). Similarly, almost two-thirds of the emerging adults believe that the family is losing its importance (Teke, 2017). Although all these developments are perceived as indicators that marriage is subjected to lose its value, researchers (Bener & Günay, 2013; Keldal, 2021b) have determined that Turkish emerging adults attach importance to marriage.

Despite attaching importance to marriage, the ideal marital timing beliefs of Turkish emerging adults can be affected by economic factors. Erkol et al. (2021) revealed several factors affecting the ideal marital timing of Turkish emerging adults such as gaining economic freedom, completing education, not wanting to restrict freedom, holding a desire to pursue a career, waiting for maturity and becoming parents at a young age. Consistent with existing literature, the results of the current study indicate the significance of economic factors in determining the ideal age for marriage. Specifically, the attainment of education and employment status plays a crucial role in shaping the ideal marital timing beliefs of emerging adults.

While interpreting and generalizing the results of this research, several important limitations should be considered. Participants of this research are university students and graduates who were involved in the study through a convenient sampling method. Therefore, the results of this research may not be generalizable to non-university emerging adults. Further, this study is limited by the availability of an insufficient number of male participants as the participants are mainly women. In

future studies, it can be examined whether the findings of this study are replicated in samples with a higher number of male emerging adults and non-university emerging adults. What is more, our study is cross-sectional research, and this can be considered as another important limitation. This sort of data collection leads to not being able to determine directional causation for the variables of the study. Willoughby, Medaris et al. (2015) argue that marital beliefs are not static and can change over time. If future research is carried out longitudinally, changes in the marital timing beliefs of emerging adults over time can be examined. Finally, in this study, the economic conditions of the participants were not controlled although economic factors are considered to have an important role in forming beliefs about marriage. Hence, in future studies, the reproducibility of the research findings can be examined by classifying the participants according to the economic status of their families.

Although there are several limitations to this study, our study contributed to the relevant literature with substantial findings. To begin with, this study is noteworthy as it demonstrates the marital timings of Turkish emerging adults from the dimensions of marital paradigms. The current study provides findings indicating that familial factors have a significant role in the formation of the marital beliefs of emerging adults. Likewise, the findings of this study make important contributions to understanding the effects of the family on marital union formation behaviours of emerging adults. Scholars must continue their research to fully understand the role of the family of origin in the formation and shaping of marital beliefs. Carrying out further research on the effects of family of origin on forming and shaping marital beliefs of emerging adults may shed further light on the related literature.

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**Publication Ethics**

The authors declare that all ethical principles and rules were followed in the data collection, analysis, and reporting processes.

**Additional Statement/Contributing Authors**

This article was written by two authors.

**Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.