

Masculinity and Seeking Psychological Help: A Review Based on Social Identity Theory

Erkeklik ve Psikolojik Yardım Arama: Sosyal Kimlik Kuramı Temelli Bir Derleme Çalışması

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ABSTRACT

To improve their quality of life and mental health, people need psychological help. Past research revealed that although participants reported low levels of life satisfaction, they were hesitant to seek psychological help. In the literature, this situation has been defined as mental health treatment gap. In this context, research focuses on reducing the treatment gap by identifying factors that facilitate and hinder seeking psychological help. Many studies consistently report that men are more reluctant to seek psychological help than women. Therefore, there is a need for a more detailed examination of the factors that affect men's reluctance to seek psychological help. Based on this fact, the study's primary purpose is to provide enlightening information about why men avoid seeking psychological help and the factors that encourage them to seek help. In this study, masculinity's role in seeking help is emphasized in the context of Social Identity Theory. However, past research findings on situations and contexts in which men are willing to seek psychological help are presented. Practitioners and researchers in the mental health field, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and psychological counselors, can learn a lot from the review's opinions on the role of traditional masculine norms in seeking psychological help.

Keywords: Masculinity, psychological help-seeking, social identity theory

ÖZ

Bireylerin ihtiyaç duyduklarında psikolojik yardım almaları hem akıl sağlıkları hem de yaşam kaliteleri açısından önem arz etmektedir. Psikolojik yardım alma davranışına ilişkin yapılan araştırmalarda katılımcıların yaşam memnuniyet düzeylerini düşük olarak belirtmelerine rağmen yardım arama konusunda çekimser tavırlar sergiledikleri ortaya konulmuştur. Alanyazında bu durum, ruh sağlığı tedavi boşluğu (mental health treatment gap) olarak tanımlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda araştırmalar, psikolojik yardım aramayı kolaylaştıran ve engelleyen faktörleri belirleyerek tedavi boşluğunu azaltmaya odaklanmıştır. Hem ulusal hem de yurt dışı alanyazında kadınlara kıyasla erkeklerin psikolojik yardım alma konusunda daha isteksiz davrandıklarını bildiren tutarlı araştırma bulguları bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle, erkeklerin psikolojik yardım arama konusundaki isteksizlikleri üzerinde etkili olan faktörlerin daha detaylı incelenmesine ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu çerçeveden hareketle çalışmanın temel amacı, erkeklerin psikolojik yardım almaktan kaçınmalarına neden olan faktörler ve yardım almalarını teşvik eden faktörler hakkında bilgiler sunmaktır. Bu ana amaçtan hareketle çalışmada, Sosyal Kimlik Kuramı bağlamında erkekliğin psikolojik yardım arama sürecindeki rolü üzerinde durulmuştur. Bununla birlikte, erkeklerin psikolojik yardım aramaya istekli oldukları durum ve bağlamlar hakkında geçmiş araştırma bulguları sunulmuştur. Derleme çalışmasının, ruh sağlığı alanında çalışan psikiyatrist, psikolog, sosyal hizmet uzmanı ve psikolojik danışman gibi uygulayıcılar ve araştırmacılar için geleneksel eril normların, psikolojik yardım alma sürecindeki rollerine ilişkin aydınlatıcı fikirler sunacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Erkeklik, psikolojik yardım arama, sosyal kimlik kuramı

Introduction

Psychological help-seeking is defined as getting in touch with other people for information, support, understanding or treatment based on the psychological difficulties or problems experienced by the individual (Hammer et al. 2018). Explaining help-seeking as the use of formal and informal social relationships, Rickwood et al. (2005) conceptualized the help-seeking process as a sequence extending from the individual's inner world to social relationships. In other words, the individual must be aware of the experienced problem, be able to express the need for support, access sources of help, and have the willingness to explain the problem so as to overcome the difficulty experienced. In this context, the prominence of the factors that have an impact on

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psychological help-seeking behavior in the process from the individual's recognition of the problem to the disclosure of the problem comes to the fore (Rickwood et al. 2005).

Receiving psychological help when individuals need to is vital for both their mental health and their quality of life. In studies on psychological help-seeking behavior, participants have been found to be hesitant to seek help despite their low life satisfaction levels (Kızıldağ et al. 2012, Goodwin et al. 2016). For example, Koydemir (2010) reported that young people do not consider seeking help from an expert unless they have significant psychological problems that cause challenges for them and that their primary source of support is their friends. Similarly, in a study conducted by Yalçın (2016) with university graduate adults, family and friends were the most important sources of social support when individuals experience psychological difficulties, and seeking help from a specialist was perceived as a "last resort".

The treatment gap for psychological difficulties represents the difference between the number of people in need of psychological support and seeking psychological help (Dschaak et al. 2021). An example, according to the results of the field study on the Well-being of Young People in Turkey, which was carried out through face-to-face interviews with the participation of 1209 young people in 16 provinces representing the urban youth population in Turkey, 14% of young people's self-assessment of health issues indicated a desire to receive psychological support (Erdoğan 2017). This situation is defined as the mental health treatment gap in the literature (Dschaak et al. 2021). To this end, research has focused on reducing the treatment gap by identifying factors that facilitate and hinder seeking psychological help. This review first presents the differences in the rates of seeking psychological help by gender. Then, in the scope of Social Identity Theory, the role of masculinity in the process of seeking psychological help is emphasized. Furthermore, past research findings are presented, which shed light on the conditions and settings in which men are eager to seek psychological help. The review study is anticipated to provide enlightening insights into the role of traditional masculine norms in the process of seeking psychological help for practitioners and researchers working in the field of mental health, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and psychological counselors.

Gender Ratios in Seeking Psychological Help

The literature on psychological help-seeking behavior includes gender (Koydemir Özden 2010, Güç 2014, Topkaya 2014b, Çamaş 2017), socioeconomic level (Erkan et al. 2012), gender roles (Türküm 2005, Terzi et al. 2011, Kalkan and Odacı 2016, Worthley et al. 2017, Gök 2019) past experience of receiving help, (Vogel and Wester 2003, Vogel et al. 2005, Atik and Yalçın 2011) expected benefit and risk from the service, (Vogel et al. 2008, Topkaya 2011) perceived social support, (Topkaya and Büyükgöze 2015, Yalçın 2016, Çebi and Demir 2020) volunteering to receive psychological help (Erkan et al. 2012) intention to receive psychological help, (Vogel et al. 2005, Vogel et al. 2007, Topkaya 2014a, Topkaya and Büyükgöze-Kavas 2015) self-disclosure (Komiya et al. 2000, Vogel and Wester 2003) self-esteem (Gürsoy and Gizir 2018), social stigmatization (Vogel et al. 2005, Topkaya, 2014b, Heath et al. 2018) self-stigmatization (Vogel 2006, Güç 2014) personality traits (Atik and Yalçın 2011) and self-compassion (Heath et al. 2018).

The common finding of most of the above-mentioned studies including the gender factor is that men have more negative attitudes towards seeking psychological help compared to women (Komiya et al. 2000, Kalkan and Odacı 2005, Türküm 2005, Vogel 2006, Atik and Yalçın 2011, Erkan et al. 2012, Topkaya 2014b, Çebi and Demir 2020). For instance, Atik and Yalçın (2011) reported a positive correlation between being male and negative attitudes towards seeking psychological help. As another example, Özbay et al. (2011) examined whether attitudes towards seeking psychological help differ according to gender and gender roles. They showed that males had more negative help-seeking attitudes than females. Besides, those with masculine gender roles had more negative help-seeking attitudes than those with feminine gender roles. Topkaya (2014a, 2014b, 2021) consistently revealed significant relationships between being male and more negative psychological help-seeking attitudes/intention in several studies of different years. In the same vein, Erkan et al. (2012) indicated that although young men have more psychological problems compared to young women, they have significantly lower help-seeking willingness. When the Turkish studies are analyzed together, it is consistently noted that men are less willing to seek psychological help compared to women.

In the international literature, some barrier factors that make it difficult to seek help or factors that facilitate help seeking have been identified in studies examining men's psychological help seeking behaviors (Addis and Mahalik 2003, Pederson and Vogel 2007, Vogel and Heath 2016). Barrier factors in seeking psychological help refer to variables that make it difficult for men to make the decision to seek help despite their need. To illustrate, when it comes to men's psychological help-seeking behavior, traditional masculinity norms are among the barrier factors that attract particular attention (Vogel and Heath 2016). More specifically, studies over the years

have consistently found that men who value masculine norms such as avoidance of emotional expression and work primacy avoid seeking psychological help (Smith et al. 2008, Levant et al. 2009, Vogel et al. 2011, Wong et al. 2017). Beyond barrier factors, variables that encourage men to seek psychological help in case of need and help reduce the pressure felt to conform to the expectations and demands of masculinity norms have been identified as facilitating factors (Pederson and Vogel 2007, Zhao et al. 2015, Lannin et al. 2016, Heath et al. 2017, Heath et al. 2018, Booth et al. 2019, Heath et al. 2019).

When the past research results presented above are considered as a whole, international studies specifically focused on male samples and addressed men's help-seeking behaviors together with gender roles (Vogel and Heath 2016). On the other hand, when Turkish literature on this subject is reviewed, studies examined gender as a categorical variable and explored mean differences or the relationship between gender and psychological help-seeking attitudes (Kalkan and Odacı 2005, Türküm 2005, Atik and Yalçın 2011, Özbay et al. 2011, Erkan et al. 2012, Topkaya and Meydan 2013, Güç 2014, Topkaya 2014a, 2014b, Gürsoy and Gizir 2018, Çebi and Demir 2020, Topkaya 2021).

The reasons why men avoid seeking psychological help or the variables that encourage them to seek psychological help have not been thoroughly studied in the Turkish studies. From this perspective, a more detailed examination of the factors affecting men's reluctance to seek psychological help is warranted. Several recent studies (Akçay 2018, Kantar 2021, Yapar 2021) have drawn attention to this research gap. Based on this framework, the aim of this study is to provide enlightening information about the reasons why men avoid seeking psychological help and the factors that encourage them to seek help.

Masculinity and Seeking Psychological Help in the Context of Social Identity Theory

Studies from the beginning of the history of psychology have been criticized for their gender bias. For example, many studies on human development, including Kohlberg's theory of Moral Development, have been criticized for their male biased samples (Gilligan 1979). In the early 1990s, a new subfield called the psychology of men or masculinity studies emerged, which, unlike previous research, addressed men together with their gender roles. Masculinity studies revealed that traditional gender roles have a restrictive role not only for women but also for men (Isacco et al. 2013). Courtenay (2000), in his seminal study suggesting that masculinity may have a "toxic" aspect, indicated that 30 behaviors, including risk behaviors, are more common in men who attach greater value to masculine norms. Factors such as lower life expectancy of men than women, substance abuse being more common in men, higher mortality rates due to suicide in men, and men avoiding getting help when they have a psychological problem have brought the need to understand men's mental health to the center stage (Akçay 2018).

Gender role socialization takes place within a multi-layered and longitudinal system (Addis et al. 2016). For example, a young man may be taught by his father that he should be tough, aggressive and free from feelings of weakness (family system). These expectations may be reinforced by his peers (social system). When the same child becomes an adult, he may have trouble explaining his feelings for the difficulties and problems he experiences in his romantic relationships as he believes that it would be a sign of weakness (relational system) (Good et al. 2005). Thus, demands and expectations that express what a man should or should not do according to the norms determined by the culture can be defined as masculinity (Sakallı et al. 2019).

Men are socialized with the expectation of conforming to masculine norms called traditional masculinity, which are tough, aggressive, competitive, dominant, independent, emotionally detached, self-confident, success and control-oriented (O'Neil et al. 1986, Feder et al. 2010). Men adopt gender roles learned through socialization at different levels. In other words, masculinity differs according to culture, socioeconomic level, education level, occupation and ethnicity (Hammond and Mattis 2005, Sobralske 2006, Ng et al. 2008, Connell 2019). To illustrate, the masculinity norms felt by a man working as a craftsman in industry differ from the masculinity felt by a doctor. Although masculinity varies from group to group and culture to culture, there are studies revealing that norms such as status, sense of responsibility, and having power are shared by men from all groups (Üstünel 2010, Türkoğlu 2013b, Sancar 2016, Bolak-Boratav et al. 2017, Connell 2019). More precisely, both a man who works as a craftsman in industry and a man who is a doctor feel the demands of masculinity norms like status, sense of responsibility and having power.

Traditional gender roles attributed to men and psychological help-seeking behavior are diametrically opposed to each other. This is because the psychological support process involves certain behaviors such as talking about the problem, expressing emotions and crying (Addis and Mahalik 2003). However, these behaviors are incompatible with traditional masculinity norms such as power, success and prestige, which convey

completeness and absoluteness (Komiya et al. 2000). To put it in other words, men are attributed the role of giving help rather than receiving help by the society (Eagle and Crowley 1986). Gender roles attributed to men by society can be explained by Social Identity Theory, which has a large body of research in the field of social psychology.

Social Identity Theory was originally formulated by Tajfel (1971). While the theory initially attempted to explain the formation of groups, over time it focused on group categorization, intergroup differences and intragroup similarities (Tajfel and Turner 1979, Tajfel and Turner 2004). According to the theory, individuals develop a sense of belonging to groups such as football team, professional association, country and gender to enhance their positive self-image (Tajfel and Turner 1979). The groups to which one becomes a member by building a sense of belonging are defined as in-groups, while the groups to which one does not become a member are defined as out-groups. The groups to which an individual belongs are a subdimension of social identity and social identity is a subdimension of the self. The individual can define themselves at different times and in different contexts with both the social identity gained from the groups they belong to and the personal identity that represents their unique and original aspect (Turner 1982, Turner 1985, Turner and Reynolds 2012).

For instance, when playing soccer, a young man may act in accordance with the image of a tough guy ascribed to men by society. However, he may share his feelings of weakness with his partner for the problems he is experiencing in his romantic relationship. In the first case, the individual behaved according to the group to which he belonged, whereas in the second case, he acted contrary to the norms of masculinity. From this point of view, while the expectations and rules of the group sometimes determine the perceptions and behaviors of individuals, sometimes the personal identity can shape them. The identity that an individual will act upon becomes evident depending on the importance they attach to their in-group status and social identity. Individuals who attach importance to group membership and maintaining their in-group status prefer their social identity over their personal identity and act according to the group [depersonalization] (Turner 1987, Abrams and Hogg 2010). Thus, while the individual strives to resemble the group they belong to, they also try to differentiate from others they are not a part of (Terry et al. 2000). In this regard, the individual tends to conform to the rules, norms, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of the social group of which they are a member, while they tend to exclude non-member groups. Consequently, members of a social group seek to maintain their in-group status through their behavior (Hogg 2016).

The Social Identity Theory posits that men who value masculinity norms may avoid seeking psychological help due to their desire to maintain their in-group social identity and status (Hogg, 2016). Accordingly, since men's in-group social identity status is based on displaying masculine behaviors, men are more likely to avoid seeking psychological help than women (Heath 2019). Indeed, over the years of research, consistent results have been obtained between masculinity norms and seeking psychological help (Addis and Mahalik 2003, Galdas et al. 2005, Pederson and Vogel 2007, Vogel and Heath 2016, Booth et al. 2019). That is to say, men who avoid seeking psychological help also attach high emphasis to masculine norms (Vogel and Heath 2016). Therefore, men who value masculine norms may perceive themselves as inadequate, incomplete, or unsuccessful when they seek psychological help. For men, receiving psychological help may be viewed by others as being less of a man. Because for men who value masculine norms, the norms and behaviors that the ingroup attributes importance determines their status. Behaviors that may be incompatible with traditional masculinity roles may be seen as a threat by men (Vandello et al. 2008, Bosson and Vandello 2013).

Akçay (2018), who likened the stance of men against masculinity norms to standing on a slippery slope, aimed to examine how men perceive mental illness in the context of hegemonic masculinity in a qualitative study conducted with 24 men between the ages of 25-65. In this study, the researcher concluded that although the participants felt the need to seek psychological help, they postponed seeking help. Akçay (2018) describes men's avoidance of seeking help as not wanting to put dust on their masculinity. Before applying to a psychiatric outpatient clinic, the adult men use traditional methods such as making the preacher pray, and manly coping methods such as I can solve the problem on my own (Akçay 2018). The first contact of diagnosed adult men with psychological help was mostly realized through referrals to psychiatry by doctors working in other specialties. Rather than labeling their problems as psychological difficulties, men preferred to perceive them as physical problems and consulted doctors in other fields. In conclusion, the gender norms imposed on men by traditional norms of masculinity, such as being strong, prioritizing work, being free from emotional weakness, and extreme competitiveness, which imply completeness and absoluteness, play a challenging role in seeking psychological help for men who value masculine norms.

Protective Factors Encouraging Men to Seek Psychological Help

Traditional masculinity includes gender norms such as solving problems on one's own, avoiding feelings of weakness and femininity. These gender norms may cause men to experience reluctance in seeking psychological help. In this context, there are studies reporting that men who attach importance to masculine norms avoid seeking help (Berger et al. 2005, Wimer and Levant 2011). However, considering that this situation may not be valid for all men, a number of contextual and situational factors play a role in men's help-seeking behavior (Pederson and Vogel 2007, Addis and Mahalik 2013, Heath et al. 2018). By identifying and understanding these factors, enlightening information about men's psychological help-seeking behaviors can be obtained. This section aims to present the conditions and settings in which men are willing to seek psychological help based on the research findings in the literature. Hence, it was intended to present new research ideas to researchers and practitioners for future studies in the Turkish literature.

First of all, there are studies reporting that men are more reluctant to seek psychological help than women when the level of psychological distress is low (Vogel and Heath 2016). In contrast, there are reports that the difference between genders decreases as the level of psychological distress increases. Demyan and Anderson (2012), for example, found that although women had a more positive attitude towards seeking help, men with high levels of distress and who had received help in the past were more likely to seek help than women.

Since help-seeking decision is permanent once made (Wenger 2011), the effect of gender on help-seeking behavior is evident in the process before the help-seeking decision is rendered. Once this decision takes place, the significant effect of gender tends to decrease (Vessey and Howard 1993). Moreover, the difference between genders becomes evident when the attitude towards help-seeking is negative (Vogel and Heath 2016). More specifically, although women make help-seeking decisions more easily than men, this difference fades after men make the decision to seek help (Demyan and Anderson 2012). Akçay (2018), who conducted qualitative interviews with men after having gotten psychological help, indicated that the perceptions of men towards requesting support changed after they received psychological help.

Gender differences in seeking psychological help tend to decrease with increasing age (Aruta et al. 2022). Although willingness of young men to seek help for personal and emotional difficulties is lower than that of young women (Eisenberg 2011), there is little difference in the rates at which older people seek professional psychological help (Husaini et al. 1994).

Rates of seeking psychological help between genders may vary according to the type of problem. There are studies indicating that there is no gender difference for individuals diagnosed with alcohol/substance addiction and schizophrenia (Hser et al. 1998, Koichi et al. 2009, Buscemi et al. 2010). In individuals diagnosed with mood disorders, men seek help at a higher rate than women during manic episodes, but seek help at a lower rate during depressive episodes (Kawa et al. 2005). Fonseca (2010) reported that the issues for which men seek help the most are related to characteristics that currently match the traditional image of masculinity in society, such as anger management, violence against romantic partners, excessive competitiveness and sexual harassment. Similarly, while Buscemi et al. (2010) observed no gender difference in seeking help for excessive alcohol consumption, Mansfield et al. (2005) noted that women were more willing to seek help for physical and psychiatric issues. Based on this framework, we can argue that men are more willing to seek psychological help for psychological problems where masculinity norms are not threatened.

There are a number of studies suggesting that the difference between genders varies according to the type of psychological help service. Men report a more negative attitude towards individual counseling than women (Rochlen et al. 1999, Gonzalez et al. 2005). However, when it comes to career counseling and group counseling processes, the difference according to gender is not as significant as the individual counseling process (Ludwikowski et al. 2009, Vogel et al. 2010). This difference between counseling domains may be attributable to a variety of factors, including men's perceptions of career and group counseling. For instance, individual counseling involves concepts that are incompatible with masculine norms, such as the expression of emotions, healing and self-disclosure. By contrast, career counseling may be more preferred by men as it represents a short-term, solution and action-oriented process with aspects related to masculine norms such as work priority and success (Rochlen et al. 1999).

Men who have difficulty in expressing their feelings and problems are more reluctant to seek psychological help (Vogel and Wester 2003). However, some studies have reported that men who have trouble disclosing themselves also attach importance to masculine norms (Pederson and Vogel 2007, Burns and Mahalik 2011, Heath et al. 2017). Men attaching importance to masculine norms may perceive themselves as incomplete, inadequate or unsuccessful when they think that behaviors such as expressing their problems, sharing their

feelings, and crying bring them closer to feminine gender roles (Fonseca 2019). Thus, men may avoid self-disclosure due to their gender roles (Heath 2019). As men's self-disclosure levels increase, they may become more willing to seek help (Komiya et al. 2000, Addis and Mahalik 2003).

Courtenay (2000), in his pioneering study revealing that masculinity may have a toxic aspect, stated that 30 behaviors including risk behaviors are more common in men who attach importance to masculine norms. Namely, engaging in risky behaviors, being tough or being emotionally detached are among the gender roles traditionally expected from men (Brannon and Juni 1984, Thompson and Pleck 1986, Mahalik et al. 2003). Thus, one of the reasons for men's difficult decision to seek psychological help may be their resistance to accept powerlessness and vulnerability. More specifically, there are studies reporting that gender differences in seeking help are reduced or eliminated when the symptoms of the problem are recognized and perceived (Corney 1990, Wyke et al. 1998). Hence, the fact that men ignore the symptoms of psychological problems they experience more or accept them later than women may be one of the factors that cause them to avoid seeking psychological help. In case men consider the symptoms they experience more severe, they may be as willing or more willing to seek help from a mental health professional as women (Vogel and Heath 2016).

In recent years, self-compassion has been identified as a protective factor for men who avoid seeking psychological help due to gender roles (Heath et al. 2017, Lannin et al. 2017, Wong 2017, Heath et al. 2018, Booth et al. 2019). Self-compassion refers to an individual's kind and non-judgmental attitude towards oneself in the face of personal pain, perceived failure or feelings of inadequacy (Neff 2003a, Neff 2003b). Instead of ignoring or overreacting to the pain they experience, self-compassionate individuals prefer to go on with the pain and accept it with a non-judgmental attitude (Neff and Tirsch 2013). Given that self-compassionate men think that psychological difficulties, pain and challenging emotions can be a common outcome of being human, they are likely to have a more positive attitude towards getting help (Heath et al. 2017, Heath et al. 2018). Since self-compassionate individuals have higher levels of self-regulation (Terry and Leary 2011), men may more easily decide to seek psychological help in case of need (Heath 2018).

Conclusion

Seeking psychological help for individuals when they need is crucial in terms of their quality of life. A review of the literature on seeking psychological help reveals that a number of facilitating or inhibiting factors have been identified in relation to the decision to seek help (Pederson and Vogel 2007). In many studies, traditional masculinity norms are consistently recognized as an obstacle to individuals' decision to seek psychological help (Magovcevic and Addis 2005). More specifically, the process of psychological support involves a number of concepts such as getting help, psychological distress and expressing challenging emotions. These concepts are incompatible with masculine norms of completeness and absoluteness such as success, power, status and toughness (Addis and Mahalik 2003). This incompatibility results in men who attach importance to masculine norms to refrain from seeking psychological help (Heath and Vogel 2016).

Although there is a large body of literature in the Turkish literature indicating that men are more reluctant to seek psychological help than women, findings from recent international studies suggest that this difference is due to situational and contextual factors. As presented above, men with high levels of psychological distress, who have received help in the past, who can perceive the symptoms of the problem, and who have high levels of self-disclosure and self-compassion have been reported to be more willing to seek help. In addition, men's help-seeking behaviors were also observed to vary depending on the type of problem they experienced, the type of psychological help provided, and increasing age. The findings in the cited studies show that there are many contexts and situations in which men seek help at equal rates, if not more than women. However, the fact that the difference between genders disappears in situations where masculinity roles are not threatened highlights the importance of addressing men together with their gender roles when it comes to help-seeking behavior.

The fact that there is no difference in the rates of seeking psychological help by gender when men have a high level of psychological distress or have past experiences of seeking help (Demyan and Anderson 2012) suggests that there is a need to develop activities to inform the public about mental health services. Such activities may include workshops and peer focus group discussions under the name of "critical masculinity" to raise awareness about the toxic aspects of masculinity norms attributed to men by society. In this way, individuals can be made aware of traditional norms of masculinity. There is a large literature reporting that the gender roles attributed to men by society and the dynamics of psychological help-seeking behavior are incompatible with each other (Pederson and Vogel 2007). Therefore, future studies may focus on the relationship between masculinity norms and protective factors such as self-compassion (Booth et al. 2019, Aruta et al. 2022), which may help reduce the pressure felt to conform to the expectations and demands of masculinity norms. In this way, men who need

psychological help and attach importance to masculine norms may have a more positive attitude towards getting help by thinking that psychological distress, pain, and challenging emotions can be a common outcome of being human (Heath et al. 2017, Heath et al. 2018). More detailed analysis of masculinity in the psychological support process can be carried out through qualitative research in upcoming studies. Thereby, it can be ensured that masculinity norms can be used in the psychological support process together with the qualities that will increase the psychological well-being of the individual (Kiselica and Englar-Carson 2010, Anthony et al. 2013, Englar-Carson and Kiselica 2013).

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