

A Quantitative Study on Aging and the Evaluation of Attitudes towards Aging: The Adiyaman University Example

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Abstract

Aging has become an essential social phenomenon in developing countries. The underlying reason is the demographic aging conceptualized as the increase in the number of the elders within the general population. The demographic structure which changes rapidly transforms attitudes towards aging and the significance of the relationship between cultural patterns into an important social phenomenon which needs to be examined in the sociological aspects. Attitudes developed by the society towards aging and elderliness which contain the cultural codes of the society and doesn't actualize independent from the social values vary according to time. Within this context, the study aims to examine at which level is the perception of two different generations (y and z) towards aging and elderliness in the demographically aging populations. In this study, Elderliness and Aging Attitudes Scale was implemented whose validity and reliability had been tested before. As a result of the data obtained, aging and negative attitudes towards old age are associated with the decline in the social status of the elderly. The developments that cause the elderly to be dependent on others have been evaluated as one of the important causes of aging and negative attitudes towards old age. It has been observed that the attitude towards aging and aging negatively affects active aging, and withdrawal from life, which is the opposite of active aging, increases addiction. In the research, the low social status of the elderly was associated with aging and attitudes towards aging.

Keywords: Aging, Elderliness, Demographic Aging, Active Aging

Yařlanmaya ve Yařlılıęa İliřkin Tutumların Deęerlendirilmesine Yönelik Nicel Bir Çalıřma: Adiyaman Üniversitesi Örneęi

Öz

Yařlanma geliřmekte olan ölkelerde önemli bir sosyal olgu haline dönüşmektedir. Bunun nedeni ise genel nüfus içerisindeki yařlı sayısının artması olarak kavramsallařtırılan demografik yařlanmadır. Hızla farklılařan demografik yapı, yařlılıkla ilgili tutumları ve kültürel örüntüler arasındaki iliřkinin anlamlılıęını, sosyolojik yönden arařtırılması gereken önemli bir olgu haline dönüřtürmektedir. Toplumun kültürel kodlarını barındıran, toplumun deęerlerinden bağımsız bir şekilde gerçekleşmeyen yařlanmaya ve yařlılıęa karşı toplumun geliřtirdięi tutumlar zaman göre farklılık göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda çalıřma, demografik olarak yařlanan toplumlarda iki farklı kuřaęın (y ve z) yařlanma ve yařlılık algısının hangi düzeyde olduęunu arařtırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Arařtırmada daha önce geçerlilięi ve güvenilirlięi test edilmiř Yařlılık ve Yařlanmaya İliřkin Tutumlar Ölçeęi kullanılmıřtır. Elde edilen veriler neticesinde yařlanma ve yařlılıęa karşı olumsuz tutum, yařlılığın sosyal statüsünde yařanan düşüřle iliřkilendirilmiřtir. Yařlı bağımlılıęına neden olan geliřmeler, yařlanmaya ve yařlılıęa karşı olumsuz tutumun önemli nedenlerinden biri olarak deęerlendirilmiřtir. Yařlanmaya ve yařlılıęa karşı tutumun aktif yařlanmayı olumsuz etkiledięi, aktif yařlanmanın tersi olan yařamdan geri çekilmenin de bağımlılıęı arttırdıęı görölmüřtür. Arařtırmada yařlılığın düşük sosyal statüsü, yařlanmaya ve yařlılıęa iliřkin tutumlarla iliřkilendirilmiřtir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yařlanma, Yařlılık, Demografik Yařlanma, Aktif Yařlanma


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Introduction

While aging had been an individualistic problem in the traditional societies, it has gained a social content nowadays. The reason is that the society ages rapidly. Decrease in fertility and adult mortality has resulted in the rapid increase in the number of elders within the general population while the increase in the number of elders resulted in population aging (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2022). This demographic transformation prevents the elder and the aging to be perceived as an economic, social, and cultural problem by ensuring the integration of the elderly into the active population through social policies such as social participation and active, successful, and healthy aging. Within this context, in this rapidly aging world, the perception of aging and elderliness is of great importance in terms of structuring the integration of elders into the active population. In this regard, the study evaluates the attitudes towards aging and elderliness in Turkey where the aging significantly increases among the total population and demographic aging becomes a reality consequently in accordance with various demographic characteristics. Accordingly, this study focuses on the attitude levels towards aging and elderliness which affects the elder's social participation and active aging. Findings obtained in the study are evaluated within the framework of modern and post-modern arguments according to gender, presence of an elder in need of care in a household as well as the attitudes of two different generations (y and z) towards aging and elderliness.

Biological aging (organ-specific aging) is essential for the individual's health. However, the individuals experience a social aging pursuant to the values of the social environment they live in. Social aging develops along with the aging of social structures, roles, social relations, and social bonds in parallel with chronological aging. In this respect, it's not expected that aging is disconnected from the social structure one lives in. This makes the perception of elderliness important in demographically aging populations. Aging is a period of change which affects quality of life (in the social, economic, and cultural sense) in a negative way. Nevertheless, society's perception of elderly person deepens the elderly problems. In a study conducted by Ulus (2020), it has been indicated that the prejudices developed against aging and elderliness and the negative attitudes have a negative influence upon active aging of the individuals within that society. In this regard, in developing countries who are rapidly aging, including Turkey, it of great importance that this issue is emphasized by handling the perception of aging and elderliness which can be an obstacle to active aging.

Changes delivered by industrialization and the new manufacturing type helped to transform today's demographic structure (Tufan, 2016, p. 67). Nevertheless, the main reason for the increase in the elderly population within the total population is the rapid decrease in death and birth rates. The decrease in death rates increase the number of populations who are likely to experience elderliness as well as their level of elderliness. The decrease in birth rates on the other hand, reduces the number of children and youngsters within the population and this situation increase the elderly rate within the general population (Tuna & Tenlik, 2017, p. 19). Since the beginning of 20th century, the changes in the cause of disease and death led to remarkable developments in life expectancy. At the beginning of 20th century, contagious and parasitic diseases were among the biggest health threats which will cost the lives of babies and children. Medical and technological developments had significantly decreased morbidity. This remarkable phenomenon led to the decreases in fertility and developments in longevity. Elders have constituted the increasing part of the total population along with the low number of children participating in the population and longevity. In more developed countries, fertility have decreased from approximately 3 births per woman in 1950's to 2 live birth per woman in 1970's. Fertility which is even more important for aging of the population decreases at a surprising rate in less developed countries. This rate has been reflected on the statistics as an average of 6 children in 1950 and 2 or 3 children in 2005. It has been observed that in 2006, in 44 less developed countries, fertility rates have dropped down to 2 children or lower (WHO, 2018, p. 4). Therefore, this emerging situation have led to the developments which enables questioning the social status of the elder once again. This change which actualized in the demographic structure during the transition period from the traditional society to modern society have significantly changed the perception of elder and elderliness. This perception which emerged during modern times is formed upon post-modern arguments, asserting that the patterns leading to the differences between generations today have become blurred. Determining the attitudes of young generations towards elders through analysis within the framework of these arguments reveals the main purpose of this study.

It has been observed that aging today has not received much philosophical attention in the past. Many philosophers were curious in their own era as to why elderliness did not arouse any interest in the field of religion, philosophy, and literature. Drawing attention more on death rather than aging have been interpreted as only several person reaching elderliness in a society while death being a threat of all ages. Back

in the days, in the studies of prominent philosophers, aging has been addressed only on the margins. In the Greek philosophy, elders are regarded as wise people. This is not because of their age, but because they have devoted their long life to working and thinking (Baars, 2010). Before modernity, in traditional societies, this situation has been different in terms of social systems where extended families are predominant due to the experiences of elderly and ownership. The source of energy was based on humans during the periods where economic sources were depended on agricultural economy. Therefore, extended family system was predominant in this economic conception projecting living together. The elders who were the oldest in the family has a reputable status in such societies (Canatan, 2008, p. 40). Lifestyle habits constituting the practices of the values holding the society together in daily life has been formed upon the information obtained from the elders who had experienced more experiential processes. Most important arguments forming these values had been originated from the narratives.

Narratives build and shape a person's life. They shape the process of continuation of life and constitute the identity (direction) of an individual or a population. Stories also establish the culture codes forming collective processes and their experiences. Therefore, stories told about aging in a certain period in a society constitute the cultural meaning of aging. These cultural meanings are also related with long-established narrative traditions. Narratives playing an important role in narrating cultural patterns of ideals such as the stories of Oedipus, Ulysses, Croesus, or Don Juan include some sort of practical intelligence or wisdom. These kinds of traditional stories found in each society's culture can widen the horizon of potential experiences of all the population in a society and offer the opportunity to re-interpret the meaning they can still bear for the societies. Elders were among the important narrators of this process which can be considered as social memory. In this sense, these configurations, culture formed as a result of people living together as a community in other words, has a functional role in the formation of life (Baars, 1997, p. 293-294). Therefore, during traditional periods where stories had such a big influence upon cultural life, elder's social value had indicated a much different status as compared to modern periods.

Modern life has matched the youth with the ideal and positioned it in the center of the ideal. This situation has caused elders to be disregarded and perceiving the aging process as an undesired situation in modern periods.

Ersözölü and Aydemir (2021, p. 20) emphasize that youthhood is portrayed as an appealing period to individuals due to certain dynamics built in the nature of modernity and it causes and increase in negative attitudes towards elderliness and elderliness to be regarded as a misfortune because of this created situation.

In short, before modern times, in societies where lifestyle habits are accommodated in accordance with traditional forms, the elder was embraced by the society. However, elderliness was regarded as a regular process in which the elder was cared by the relatives. Nevertheless, for the elders protected by the traditional world, modern world was far from being a safe harbor. In examination of the dynamics of this transformation created by the transition from traditional to modern for elders, it has been observed that one of the most remarkable factors is the differences in the manufacturing type. In the pre-modern societies, division of labor and specialization was more traditional in respect to economic livelihood. Intra-household division of labor and specialization were practiced rather in agricultural activities. While a demographic activity had not been observed in these types of relations of production, an economic conception focusing on production as needed were predominant. In the extended family type formed by this production type, while the elders are regarded as a wise person on account of their experiences, they also had an active role throughout the whole production. In this respect, the elders were regarded as reputable and valuable. The elders were wise in the eyes of the family in the micro sense and society in the macro sense as of the most effective instrument passing down their experiences to generations. In other words, the elder was the wise of the world where the narrative period was dominant (Bektaş, 2017, p. 13).

However, new lifestyle habits brought by modernity led to radical changes in these traditional values. Modern practices fulfilling the function of the elder who were regarded as the source of knowledge, had changed the social status of the elder. De Luce (1993) indicate that, apart from the opportunities provided by technological developments, modern Western tradition contains very few inspiring stories regarding elderliness and aging and that the practical wisdom styles regarding aging had almost faced extinction in modern period. This situation does not infer that there are no cultural narratives regarding aging any more today. Nowadays, cultural messages and dominant narratives are usually delivered via mainstream and social media. At this point, a cultural ambiguity has been observed on aging corresponding to two expanding markets. In modern period, the change caused by modern lifestyle habits in respect of attitudes towards the

elders and elderliness, have transformed into a more different tone today. There are two markets having an impact upon this. The first of these markets, commercially designed narratives. These narratives refer to the successful battle fought by the human nature against the wrinkles formed through the effect of chronological process, energy loss and dysmnesia. Ammunition for this battle consists of purchasable products in the form of expensive creams and pills. The other market focuses on providing care for the elders who have lost the battle of staying young forever. Political narratives turn into a pressure since these costs create certain pressure on collective financing. This impact encountered leads to the debates on care costs the aging society necessitates. These political narratives may lead to perceiving the image of trouble aging as a real burden for the society. Most gerontologic study exhibit that, when the financial source is provided by political organization, a one-sided approach is developed towards aging and that society can perceive this as a burden (Baars, 1997, p. 294). This approach demonstrates the most prominent attitude of modern period towards the elder. The number of elder increases in direct proportion to the rates of previous years. The passive status of this population and lessening its burden on the active population actualizes through elder's social, cultural, and economic participation. The success of the social policies pursued on actualizing active aging can be achieved by ensuring the positive change on the attitude towards aging and elderliness. Today, the resistance of elders has increased against social, cultural, and technological changes owing to the educatedness and digitalization in support of elderliness (Selçuk, 2022). Today, this force of harmony has led to elasticizing these strict boundaries between the generations. Examining this intergenerational harmony under the title of post-modern generation theory is essential in terms enlightening the intergenerational harmony today. Therefore, this study consists of an introduction part serving as the foreshadow of the post-modern generation theory.

Postmodern debates present the notion that concepts, theories and facts nest together. The design of the generations in respect of post-modern argument on the other hand, raises the statements asserting that the intergenerational boundaries have been exceeded, intergenerational differences have been blurred and that generations do not create a social and cultural tension unlike modern period. In this context, the study both evaluates whether the attitudes of generations y and z in respect of aging/elderliness pose an obstacle to the elder's integration to active population and analyses the opinions towards intergenerational cultural and social tension formed pursuant to post-modern debates.

Conceptual Framework

Aging and Elderliness

Aging represents the transformation a person experiences biologically and physically based on the chorological progression within the process from birth till death. It's a development process inclusive of not only a certain period, but the whole life cycle. In this context, aging contains physical and biological changes based on time. Elderliness on the hand, represents a certain period of a lifetime. According to many studies, this period, starts after 65 years of age to identify legal processes. However, it's not possible to determine a certain definition and age of onset for elderliness since its start time is reviewed in the social and cultural context. This is because elderliness does not only include physical, physiological, and chronological processes. It also includes the social relationships of the society in relation to aging and elderliness as well as the value attributed to the concept of elderliness. In this regard, the elder's social status differentiates the starting period and the process by affecting aging. According to Daniş and Efe (2016, p. 263), aging starts in mother's womb and represents the humanity's period of change within the stage until death. Elderliness on the other hand infancy, childhood, youth, and adulthood refers to a period containing people's similar development characteristics and differences in terms of a period as in youth and adulthood periods.

Although aging and elderliness are related to people's chronological and biological processes, describing this phenomenon by only sticking to these processes would not constitute a sufficient definition. Along with biological factors, physiological, psychological and sociological differences are essential factors in the development of elderliness. Therefore, while aging indicates the individual's own biological, psychological and physical condition, elderliness rather evaluates the social interaction results. Sociological aging aims to identify social condition created as a result of the increase of elderly population with a relatively newer perspective as compared to other aging types (Tuna & Tenlik, 2017, p. 5). Generally, when elderliness is mentioned, a silhouette of a person is visualized with such a style which cannot gain a place in society as of his or her dressing, walking and attitudes. There are many examples in Turkey that support this image and view and make people say, 'this is what is called old age'. However, elderliness should not only have

such an image. There are also elders who can run a marathon, study for doctorate in their 80's and go on a world tour who are over 100 years of age. The fact that most elders are perceived as in the first example in our country, and it is disregarded that the activities mentioned in the second example are deemed impossible is equivalent to ignoring the sun in cloudy days (Tufan, 2016, p. 2-3). In examination of this framework, it would not be wrong to state that elderliness fulfils a model bounded by the society.

Aging within The Historical Period

Attitude towards aging and elderliness had varied according to the differences in elder's status throughout history. In the traditional societies, while the possibility to have instruments of knowledge, skills and ownership as age increases, the elders had been in a better position in terms of realizing their selves as socially, culturally, and economically in comparison to the young individual. The means of status provided to the elders by these instruments inspired them to have an important place in society.

The first literary work mentioning the reputation and social value of elderliness is Iliad and Odyssey written by Homer in 8th century BC. In the saga, an elder hero is mentioned and there are opinions reflecting society's positive perspective on elderly in that period (Tufan, 2016, p. 97). The respect attributed to the elder in ancient times had been protected within the framework of religious approaches and had continued in the long-term. However, this value had started to disappear during 16-17th century and elderliness had become to be perceived as a period reminiscent of death. In this period where the elder had become to be disregarded, elders were considered as senile, unreasonable, physically weak and exploiter of the society in existence (Tufan, 2016, p. 99-100). Elderliness had become to be perceived as a population transforming into a problem due to the new lifestyle created by modernity. Dynamics of modernity featuring the individual have offered them an atomized or shattered Modernity draws young and old generations away from each other and keeps a serious distance among them socially. The dictation of modernity does not only actualize as elders not being welcomed by the youngsters. Nevertheless, elders also abstain from interacting with youngsters by staying within the social domain they have established. In this context, modernity preaches the necessity of the disintegration of generations, non-interaction between the generations and each generations' existence on their own dynamics (Aydın, 2015, p. 237). Therefore, modernity concretizes the distinction between the generations. When actualizing this distinction, it imposes the developments ensuring the alienation of each generation from one another. An elderly population who disapproves youngsters who are degenerated, detached from social values and who develop purposeless communication has emerged over against the population who live the youth glorified upon modernity by staying within the boundaries of their own social domain. Modernity increases intergenerational tension by providing both populations purposes that will satisfy them within their own dynamics and instruments to accomplish these purposes. In short, modernity offers lifestyle habits anticipating an atomized social life within the context of generations. Most concrete example for this is the individualized lives and extended family's transformation into nuclear family by dissolving.

As a result, industrial revolution and the new lifestyle brought along with it, introduced developments affecting elder's status. Along with industrialization, the labor force flooded into cities and the social value of elder had been decreased by women's rapid transformation to business life, transformation of traditional family type into nuclear family, increasing the importance attached to theoretical knowledge, occupations provided through school education gaining importance, division of labor and specialization becoming prevalent and life becoming more and more individualistic. Advanced industrialization led to perceiving elders as a burden on the shoulders of the active population, questioning elders' social status once again under the influence of modernity. Since advanced industrialization, urbanization and technological developments and medical breakthroughs introduced enhancements that will increase human lifespan, hence extended lifespan brought demographic aging. Along with demographic aging, scientific studies conducted for the purpose of unloading the burden aging creates for society which is perceived as a social problem have developed ways of seeking active aging by bringing elder's status into question. Elderliness becoming an essential social fact within the society have led to thought systems causing it to be analysed from a different perspective, multidisciplinary approach and through a rational sense. This perspective raises the topics of paving the way for making the activist role of the elder a social subject within the active population once again and questioning the status of the elder nowadays. This situation implies turning the dynamics of modernity upside-down. Successful aging which is one of the starting points in respect to the developments reducing the intergenerational tension, anticipates lifestyle habits that can be defined as postmodern generation tendency since it reactivates elder's life energy. Modernity would not have predicted that gradually aging society would lead to seeking elder's integration to the active population. Demographic

structure aging through opportunities provided by the modernity have caused the generations to get closer to each other and discovered this post-modern condition related to generations.

Active Aging and Structural Change within The Perspective of Gerontology Hypothesis

Demographic transformation causing aging to gain a social significance have made it available to achieve a scientific content through processing information regarding elderliness. Abstract links and criticism at the level of establishing a hypothetical order for these contents have made it available to be interpreted by broader social environment.

Disengagement theory

The disengagement theory is based on the notion that it's healthier for the individuals to maintain a passive life by aging both in their own eyes and in the eyes of the society. The theory argues that the satisfaction and the happiness gained in life will be achieved through the acceptance of this notion. The base of this theory is the notion that the elders will gain a higher life-satisfaction and make more realistic evaluations by isolating themselves from active life (Gitmez, 2000, p. 65). Therefore, the disengagement theory, states that the individuals who isolate themselves from active life will be able to achieve self-realization within their own social environment more effectively. The biggest criticism brought against this theory is the thought that elders are trapped into their own environment due to being perceived as incompetent, low skilled and lacking in potential in terms of social participation by the society physically, mentally, socially, and culturally. In this respect, the critics have turned towards the issue of increasing the elder's addiction potential by enabling the elder to be socially isolated.

The disengagement theory asserts that for the elders to maintain a better, relaxed and a peaceful life for the rest of their lives they should isolate themselves from active population. This theory could not anticipate that the elder withdrawing himself/herself along with retirement by isolating from active life will cause them to be perceived as a burden for the active population in time. Therefore, the opportunities provided for the elders who disengage themselves from active life along with retirement may increase the elderly issues such as elderly discrimination, becoming isolated and social isolation with the notion that they do not deserve these opportunities after a specific period (Selçuk,2022, p. 45-46).

Activity theory

Throughout their lives, while individuals are provided adequate protection, safety, and care on account of their physical, social and mental health potentials when they need help, their social participation is achieved according to the condition whether their needs are fulfilled (WHO, 2002, p. 12). In this respect, active aging focuses on the elderliness which can be achieved successfully by enabling the individual's physical, economic, cultural, and social participation. Active aging is inclusive of the behaviour which will increase the harmony in the social structure the individual lives within the compass of the social environment. In this sense, while an active life protects elder's mental and physical health, it also decreases the possibility of addiction.

According to the activity theory, the basis of the elder's active lifestyle habits depends on the lifestyle before elderliness. Socio-economic level and health status which has significant impact on the formation of lifestyle are important variables for active aging. The activity theory suggests that elders who accomplish active participation are more harmonized within the society and satisfied in life compared to the elders who disengage from life (Kalınkara, 2016, p. 27-28). Therefore, elders' social participation and interaction with active population facilitates their cohesion towards social change by providing an active lifestyle.

The word "Active" does not only indicate the ability to be active physically or participate in the labor force, but also consistent participation in social, economic, cultural, moral and citizenship affairs. Retired individuals can continue to actively contribute to their families, peers, communities, and nations. Active aging aims to extend healthy life expectancy and enhance quality of life for all individuals including the ones who are fragile, disabled and in need of care. The concept of health refers to the state of physical, mental, and social wellness. Therefore, policies and programs developing mental health and social network within the scope of active aging are as essential as the ones that improve physical health condition (WHO, 2002, p. 12).

Modernization theory

Changes presented by industrialization and new production types enabled the formation of the demographic structure of modern-day (Tufan, 2016, p. 67). Nevertheless, the main reason for the increase

of elderly population within the total population is the rapid decrease in the death and birth rates. The decrease in death rates increase the population who are likely to experience elderliness and the levels of advanced elderliness. On the other hand, the decrease in birth rates reduces the child and youngster rate within the population and this situation increases the elderly rate within the general population (Tuna & Tenlik, 2017, p. 19). Since beginning of 20th century, changes in the causes of disease and death have led to notable developments in life expectancy. At the dawn of 20th century, the biggest health threats consisted of contagious and parasitic disease which will cost the lives of babies and children. Medical and technological developments have significantly decreased morbidity. This notable phenomenon led to the decrease in fertility and greater longevity. Elders have constituted the increased part of the total population along with a smaller number of child population and longevity. In more developed countries, fertility have decreased from approximately 3 births per woman in 1950's to 2 live birth per woman in 1970's. Fertility which causes the population to age decreased at a surprising rate in less developed countries. This rate has been reflected on the statistics as an average of 6 children in 1950 and 2 or 3 children in 2005. It has been observed that in 2006, in 44 less developed countries, fertility rates have dropped down to 2 children or lower (WHO, 2018, p. 4). Considering all of these, the main perspective of modernization theory developed for elderliness is based on the fact that the positioning of elders in the society within historical process varies according to the characteristics of the specific period. This differentiation is described as of two important periods at traditional and modern level (Tufan, 2016, p. 152).

Along with modernization, theoretical knowledge has gained more importance compared to previous period. Therefore, the education provided under theoretical knowledge has become important. It has become easier for the individual who are able to obtain the physical, mental, economic, social, and cultural skills and abilities provided by the education and who have aged within this process to gain active participation roles which can achieve successful and active aging. When the issue is approached from this framework, is exhibited that modernization did not have a negative impact upon the elders' social status; in fact, it has channelized the channels of capitals (cultural capital) which will add value to them. Devices and services provided and developed by modernity have provided the elder with medical and technological support and have contributed to the individual's social existence. As a result, it can be indicated that modernity and all the opportunities provided by it have handed the value to be attributed to elder by the society to elder's individual effort (Selçuk, 2022, p. 44).

Social Aging

Social structure affects elders' social status, habit of mind, activity, and development potential. Therefore, the course of elder's efficiency and position in the society within historical process, elder's organizational structure and social relationships are directly associated with the current society (Backes & Clemens, 2017, p. 110). Examining aging via its social content appearance through a discipline have presented the elderliness type which had been evaluated lastly in the field of gerontology. Sociology has assessed elderliness as a social fact as of the mid-20th century. The reason behind sociology being late to focus on this social fact is related with the fact that elderliness is still not prevalent enough within the general population to create a social issue. Demographic aging which took place earlier in Europe have caused European sociology to become acquainted with elderliness earlier. Demographic aging has made it necessary to reinterpret the existence of elder within social life and reveal the manifestations of this reinterpretation. Hence, increase in the number of elders have exhibited that not all people age the same way, monotonously and on equal terms and that the value attributed to elder, and the social status determined by the current society is an essential factor in terms of aging. This also presents that social life is a factor which is as important as other types of social aging (chronological, biological, and physical).

Aging and elderliness have been mentioned in sociology as a fact in 1950's and 60's and two essential tendencies have contributed to the development of the issue. The first of these is the scientific examination of elderliness along with demographic aging through a discipline as required by being a social state and trying to discover all its aspects. The latter is the interpretation of functionalist perspective (Talcott Parsons) which was prevalent at that time in the field of sociology in respect of elder's functional characteristics within the society (Weymann, 1994, p. 349).

Until now, explanations at the conceptional level regarding aging and elderliness have revealed the reasons of the analysis which will be conducted in the study. Within this context, the evaluation of how the attitude towards aging and elderliness is perceived by generations y and z nowadays (in regard to university students selected as the study sample), is of great importance in terms of elderly employment, social

interaction, social and cultural participation. New lifestyle habits brought by modernity in contrast with traditional periods, have presented a perception suggesting that elderliness and elders must be avoided and emphasizing that elders must withdraw from society as being positioned as elderly. The following hypotheses were created for the purpose of determining which level this condition is being discussed within the framework post-modern arguments.

H_{1a} Students' attitudes towards elder's physical self-perception varies according to gender.

H_{1b} Students' attitudes towards elder's physical self-perception varies according to age.

H_{1c} Students' attitudes towards elder's physical self-perception varies according to the presence of an elder in need of care in a household.

H_{2a} Students' attitudes towards the difficulty in accepting elderliness varies according to gender.

H_{2b} Students' attitudes towards the difficulty in accepting elderliness varies according to age.

H_{2c} Students' attitudes towards the difficulty in accepting elderliness varies according to the presence of an elder in need of care in a household.

H_{3a} Students' attitudes towards the perception of social burden in respect of aging varies according to gender.

H_{3b} Students' attitudes towards the perception of social burden in respect of aging varies according to age.

H_{3c} Students' attitudes towards the perception of social burden in respect of aging varies according to the presence of an elder in need of care in a household.

H_{4a} Students' attitudes towards the positive image of elderliness varies according to gender.

H_{4b} Students' attitudes towards the positive image of elderliness varies according to age.

H_{4c} Students' attitudes towards the positive image of elderliness varies according to the presence of an elder in need of care in a household.

Method

The Population and Sample of The Study

It is known by the public that the attitude towards elders and aging in the Eastern regions of our country is more positive in comparison to that of Western regions. In this respect, this study is aimed to evaluate the attitude towards aging and elderliness in one of the Eastern cities which is considered to have more traditional background. In this context, as one of the cities preserving its traditional social fabric, the city of Adiyaman has been determined. University has been specified as the most effective domain that can assess the social, economic, and cultural interactions of the period we are living currently in the academic sense and approach generations y and z. The study population consists of the students in Adiyaman University located in the Turkish city of Adiyaman. The study sample consists of 633 people who are selected among the population, and which is higher than the minimum acceptable sample size of 384 people for other populations (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018).

The sample was specified according to convenience sampling method. This sample choice is actualized with the field application until reaching up to the required number of people (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018). The aim of the study was to evaluate the attitudes of two different generations towards aging and elderliness. In this regard, the scales were carried out both online and face-to-face to reach adult students who extend school and participate remotely.

The Purpose and Importance of The Study

Loneliness is one of the most important issue whose anxiety level increases along with aging. Nevertheless, apprehension cruising along with this is the anxiety in regard to feeling that an independent and autonomous life will be lost (Soulières & Charpentier, 2022). Global demographic context of modern society is characterized by the increasing percentage of elderly people. Today, 20% of the total population of the developed and developing countries are over 65 years old. As a result, while there is a serious aging rate occurring all over the world, naming this significant demographic population as vulnerable creates a demographic anxiety to a considerable extent (Yuhua, 2021). All kinds of activities designed for ensuring

the social participation of elders among the active population who had become an important population demographically along with society's rapid aging, is considered as a criterion for aging. Within this context, there is a relationship between active aging and social aging. Therefore, social aging can be considered as the most important change in today's societies.

One of the most important obstacles to active aging is the society's conception toward elders. Within this context, the attitude developed towards elders and elderliness affects level of active aging success within that society. This study aims to evaluate university students' perception of elderliness along with the increase of elderly population within the society nowadays.

Data Collection Tool

In the study, Elderliness and Aging Attitudes Scale whose reliability and validity has been assessed previously was used as the data collection method. Elderliness and Aging Attitudes Scale is scale consisting of 45 statements and 4 sub-dimensions (Otrar, 2016). Furthermore, in the study, questionnaire form created for the information regarding the participants' demographic information was completed.

Data Analysis

Certain pre-processes were applied and operationalized for analysis with the intention of examining the conformity of the data collected for analyzing the hypotheses specified in the study. Within this context, missing value and extreme value analysis was performed on the obtained data. No lost data was discovered in the data set as a result of the analysis conducted for the purpose of determining whether there are any missing data. Extreme values were determined via analyzing the Mahalanobis distance (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014). The findings obtained were excluded from the data set since 4 sets of data were extreme values according to Mahalanobis values. 633 people had participated in the study. The analyses were performed out of 629 data after excluding 4 of them from the data set as a result of extreme value analysis. Skewness and kurtosis values were examined for the purpose of testing the normality of the data. As a result of this examinations, it can be indicated that data has displayed normal distribution since the kurtosis (0,097) and skewness (0,195) values ranged between -1,5 and +1,5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013; Kline, 2016). Out of the discrimination tests, parametric tests were preferred since they have been detected that the data displayed normal distribution.

The scale used in the study is a scale whose reliability and validity has been tested previously (Otar, 2016). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) has been applied for the purpose of examining the relationship between the statements in the scale. Therefore, the validity of the scale on the determined sample was tested. Moreover, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was analysed within the framework of the scale's reliability analysis. Data on the findings mentioned above are provided on the table below.

Table 1. *Validity and reliability findings of elderliness and aging attitudes scale (EAAS)*

No.	Dimensions	Statements	Component Values				Covariance	Eigenvalues	Variance Extracted	Cronbach's Alpha
			1	2	3	4				
Y16	Low Physical Self-Perception of Aging	It gets harder for people to improve themselves as they get older.	,763				35,774	13,952	50,65	0,928
Y17		It gets harder to make friends as we get older.	,668							
Y15		Growing older makes people close-minded.	,646							
Y13		Elders find it difficult to manage social relationships	,627							
Y14		It gets harder for people to control their own behavior as they get older.	,580							
Y18		People get haunted by fear of loneliness as they get older.	,572							
Y19		People's self-confidence decreases as they get older.	,555							
Y26		An elder usually has a low work performance.	,544							

Table 1 continued. *Validity and reliability findings of elderliness and aging attitudes scale (EAAS)*

No.	Dimensions	Statements	Component Values				Covariance	Eigenvalues	Variance Extracted	Cronbach's Alpha
			1	2	3	4				
Y4	Difficulty of Accepting Aging	It gets harder to cope with life issues as we grow older.	,544							
Y31		Elderliness hinders a person's creativity.	,542							
Y23		People run out of steam as they get older.	,540							
Y10		I'm afraid of getting old.	,784							
Y1		The thought of "Growing old" is extremely disturbing.	,739							
Y5		Thinking of getting older makes me sad.	,728							
Y39		The effect of elderliness makes people feel vulnerable.	,716				6,305	2,459		
Y38		Never-ending health issues come to my mind when I think of elderliness.	,711							
Y42		Feeling of getting old makes me feel depressed.	,702							
Y34		Perception of Social Burden in Respect of Aging	Aging means gradually being degraded.		,775					
Y44	People get ridiculed by youngsters as they get older.			,698						
Y35	Elders cannot evaluate themselves objectively.			,641						
Y45	Elderliness means being a burden to relatives.			,638		4,536	1,769			
Y12	People become more talkative as they grow older.			,554						
Y40	Becoming unbearable for others is what you call aging.			,501						
Y32	Positive Image	Elder means a smart person.		,744						
Y43		You get respect as you get older.		,699		4,033	1,573			
Y30		People become more tolerant as they get older.		,687						
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy evaluation								0,939		
Bartlett's test of sphericity								Approximate Chi-square	13068,219	
								Degree of freedom	741	
								Significance	0,000	

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was applied with intent to test the construct validity of Elderliness and Aging Attitudes Scale (EAAS) and examine its relationship in terms of factor analysis. Two different methods were used for this analysis. The first one is the principal components and the other is the direct oblimin method.

When analysing the table above, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy is observed as .939. On the other hand, it can be argued that the preconditions required for factor analysis were met and the data are in conformity with factor analysis since the Bartlett's test of sphericity results were significant as well. When examining Table 1, it was observed that the factor loadings were also above .50. Therefore, it can be stated that the statements were adequate in representing the created dimension. Eigenvalue statistic being above 1 is among the obtained findings. In addition, the value of variance extracted being at 50,65 is an indication that the measurement tool has measured the desired result adequately. It has been observed that Cronbach' Alpha value obtained as a result of reliability analysis turned out to be .928 and this value shows that the scale is at a sufficient level in terms of the reliability of the scale (Hair et al., 2014). According to these findings obtained, it can be indicated that the construct validity of the scale is satisfied.

It has been discovered that, as a result of Exploratory Factor Analysis, Elderliness and Aging Attitudes Scale consisting of 45 statements constitute a structure with 4-factor sub-dimensions and that these 4 factors represent 50,65% of the total variance. According to these results, it has been concluded that Elderliness and Aging Attitudes Scale showed valid characteristic. In addition, while the scale was represented by the first sub-dimension at the rate of 35,77%, the second at 6,31%, third at 4,53% and forth at 4 % respectively.

6 questions were excluded from the scale since the Exploratory Factor Analysis results had not satisfied the construct validity. As a result of Exploratory Factor Analysis which was re-assessed, 13 statements under various dimensions which stayed below 0,50 were also excluded from the scale.

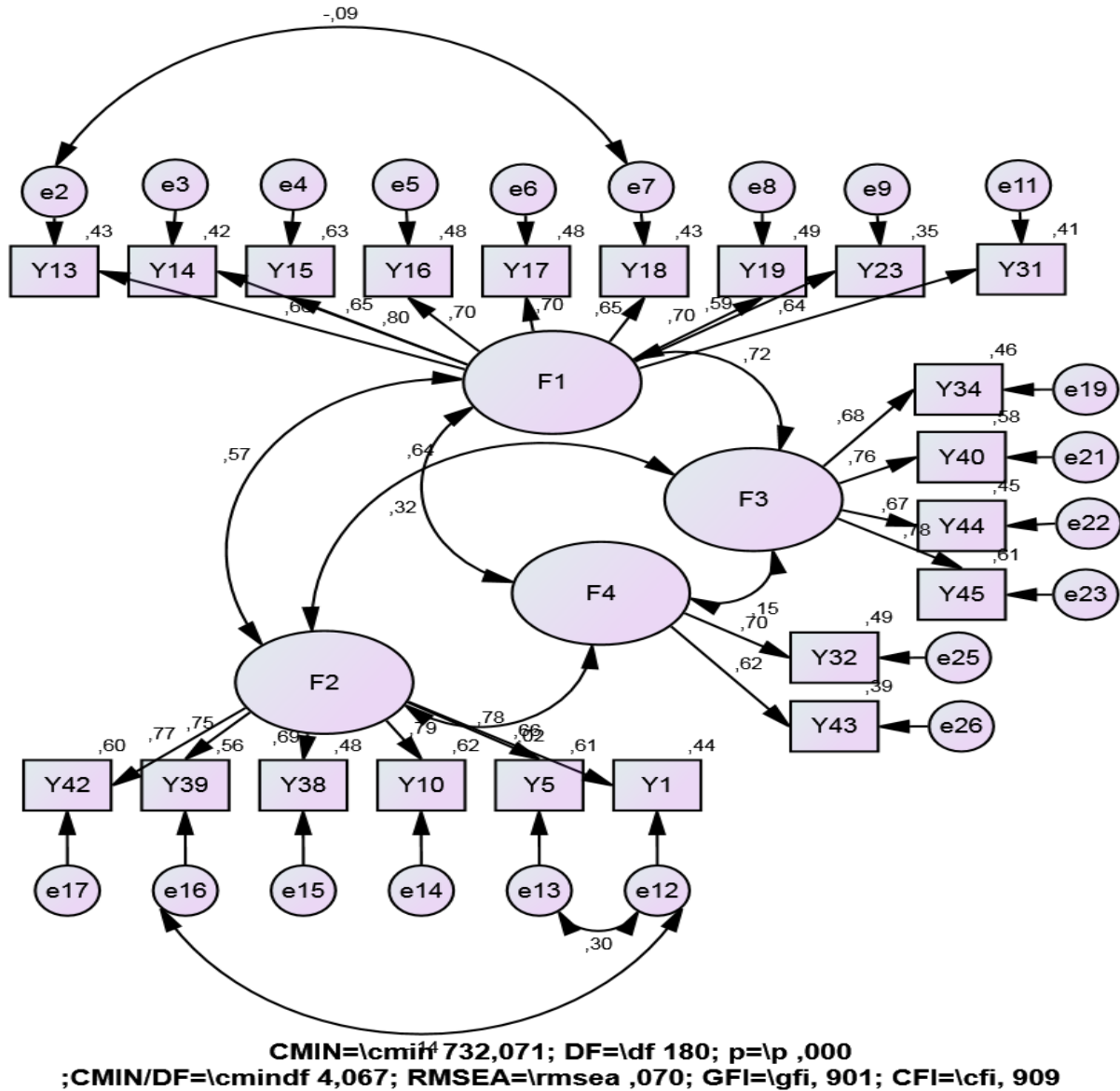


Figure 1. Path diagram and goodness-of-fit results of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of elderliness and aging attitudes scale

When examining Figure 1, paths are shown according to the relationships at the significance level of only 0,05 (95%). As a result of the conducted analysis, certain statements have been excluded from the scale to increase Goodness-of-Fit values and covariances were created between certain statements. Goodness-of-Fit values provided under Figure 1 show that the model is supported excellently (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018). Within this context, data are supported by the created model. Structural Equality Model (SEM) results on the structural model verified on Figure 1 is shown on Table 2.

Table 2: Structural equality model results of the study model

Items	Path	Factors	β_0	β_1	S.E.	C.R.	P
Y13	<---	F1	0,658	1,179	0,083	14,195	***
Y14	<---	F1	0,65	1,143	0,081	14,102	***
Y15	<---	F1	0,796	1,401	0,085	16,563	***
Y16	<---	F1	0,696	1,25	0,084	14,915	***
Y17	<---	F1	0,695	1,195	0,08	14,909	***
Y18	<---	F1	0,653	1,157	0,082	14,098	***
Y19	<---	F1	0,703	1,227	0,082	15,035	***
Y23	<---	F1	0,589	0,952	0,073	12,975	***
Y31	<---	F1	0,641	1			
Y1	<---	F2	0,663	1			
Y5	<---	F2	0,779	1,14	0,058	19,498	***
Y10	<---	F2	0,788	1,191	0,073	16,33	***
Y38	<---	F2	0,691	0,991	0,067	14,763	***
Y39	<---	F2	0,751	0,999	0,067	14,983	***
Y42	<---	F2	0,772	1,034	0,064	16,099	***
Y34	<---	F3	0,681	1			
Y40	<---	F3	0,763	1,146	0,071	16,207	***
Y44	<---	F3	0,674	1,024	0,07	14,639	***
Y45	<---	F3	0,779	1,144	0,069	16,462	***
Y32	<---	F4	0,702	1			
Y43	<---	F4	0,624	0,83	0,159	5,223	***

β_0 = Standardized values β_1 = Non-standardized values ***= $p < 0,005$

It has been discovered to what extent latent variables can be represented by observed variables by applying first level Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to the corrected measurement model. Variance of the factors calculated for the purpose of determining the validity and reliability of the measurement model and standardized and non-standardized values are given on Table 2. When examining Table 2, it has been observed that the parameters in the measurement model represent the standardized and non-standardized factor loadings, standard errors, and t values. Path coefficients of all the items included under the personal values on Confirmatory Factor Analysis were found statistically significant (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018).

Findings

Table 3. Unpaired t test results according to gender

Dimensions	Gender	N	X	Equality of Levene's Test		T	P	Accept /Reject																														
				F	P																																	
Low Physical Self-Perception of Aging	Female	396	2,9199	0,0030	0,985	-4,750	0,000*	Accept																														
	Male	220	3,2227						Difficulty of Accepting Aging	Female	396	2,9806	1,573	0,210	-0,602	0,547**	Reject	Male	220	3,0303	Perception of Social Burden in Respect of Aging	Female	396	2,3497	18,235	0,000	-3,187	0,002*	Accept	Male	220	2,5788	Positive Image	Female	396	2,9082	0,001	0,982
Difficulty of Accepting Aging	Female	396	2,9806	1,573	0,210	-0,602	0,547**	Reject																														
	Male	220	3,0303						Perception of Social Burden in Respect of Aging	Female	396	2,3497	18,235	0,000	-3,187	0,002*	Accept	Male	220	2,5788	Positive Image	Female	396	2,9082	0,001	0,982	-5,584	0,000*	Accept	Male	220	3,2742						
Perception of Social Burden in Respect of Aging	Female	396	2,3497	18,235	0,000	-3,187	0,002*	Accept																														
	Male	220	2,5788						Positive Image	Female	396	2,9082	0,001	0,982	-5,584	0,000*	Accept	Male	220	3,2742																		
Positive Image	Female	396	2,9082	0,001	0,982	-5,584	0,000*	Accept																														
	Male	220	3,2742																																			

* $p < 0,005$, ** $p > 0,05$

Unpaired t test has been conducted for the purpose of evaluating the difference between participants' attitude towards aging and elderliness and gender. As a result of the findings obtained, it has been observed that there is not any significant difference between difficulty of accepting aging which is the sub-dimension of the scale and gender ($p > 0,005$). It has been discovered that there is a significant difference between the gender variable and other variables which are low physical self-perception of the elder, perception of social burden in respect of aging and positive image dimensions ($p < 0,005$). Within this context, while the hypotheses of H1a, H3a and H4a were accepted, the hypothesis of H2a were rejected.

Table 4. Unpaired t test results according to age

Dimensions	Age	N	X	Equality of Levene's Test		T	P	Accept /Reject
				F	P			
Low Physical Self-Perception of Aging	18-22	183	3,2245	0,575	0,449	4,833	0,000*	Accept
	23-42	433	2,9450					
Difficulty of Accepting Aging	18-22	183	3,0692	3,585	0,059	1,171	0,227**	Reject
	23-42	433	2,9684					
Perception of Social Burden in Respect of Aging	18-22	183	2,6412	3,314	0,069	4,061	0,000*	Accept
	23-42	433	2,3430					
Positive Image	18-22	183	3,0401	1,500	0,221	0,419	0,983**	Reject
	23-42	433	3,0385					

*p<0,005, **p>0,05

According to the results of the unpaired t test conducted for the purpose of evaluating the difference between participants' attitude towards aging and elderliness and age, it has been discovered that there is a significant difference between low physical self-perception of the elder, perception of social burden in respect of aging and the variable of age (p< 0,005). The analysis exhibit that there is not any significant difference between the other sub-dimensions of difficulty of accepting elderliness and positive image and age (p> 0,005). Within this context, while the hypotheses of H1b, H2b and H3b were accepted, the hypothesis of H4b were rejected.

Table 5. Unpaired t test results according to the presence of an elder in need of care in a household

Dimensions	Are There Any Elders in Your Household Who Are in Need of Care?	N	X	Equality of Levene's Test		T	P	Accept /Reject
				F	P			
Low Physical Self-Perception of Aging	Yes	133	3,1381	0,290	0,590	2,208	,028*	Accept
	No	483	3,1617					
Difficulty of Accepting Aging	Yes	133	3,172	0,334	0,564	2,462	0,015*	Accept
	No	483	2,943					
Perception of Social Burden in Respect of Aging	Yes	133	2,603	4,534	0,034	2,851	0,005*	Accept
	No	483	2,3796					
Positive Image	Yes	133	3,2030	5,655	0,18	2,529	0,012*	Accept
	No	483	2,9938					

*p<0,05, **p>0,05

When examining the relationship of difference between the variable of participant's presence of an elder in need of care in their household and their attitude towards aging and elderliness, significant difference has been discovered between elder's low physical self-perception, difficulty of accepting aging, perception of social burden in respect of aging and positive image (p<0,005). Within this context, it has been observed that all hypotheses were accepted.

Conclusion and Discussion

Active aging is the elder's maintaining their lives within the society in the social, economic, and cultural sense and nesting with the active population. However, many developments emerged by modernity have given birth to the developments that cause the elders to be regarded as a population within the society henceforth and the notion and theoretic approach that it's a more accurate decision for the elder to withdraw from society for the sake of the advancement of social system has gained importance. This had a negative effect on the elders' social existence, namely economic employment, being present in the center of the social life and cultural participation. The elders who had been unable to make their presence felt socially had experienced a significant status loss within the society. In this respect, that social position of the elders is related with their social existence. There is a relationship between the social value attributed by the society and social position. However, although elders have a valuable and important position in the traditional societies, they do not have an active actuator identity. Even though the elders are considered valuable in the traditional structures, they have withdrawn from life socially, culturally, and economically. Elders who had lost their characteristics of respect along with modernity, they have been pushed into loneliness now with

their inactive status. In this respect, the negative attitude towards the elders whose numbers increase significantly within the total population along with social aging is turning into a significant social problem causing the elder to become both isolated psychologically and leading to the perception that their maintenance costs (pension rights) create a social burden. The status of the elders also affects their attitude towards aging. Acknowledging elderliness, fear in brough along with the idea of elderliness, depression and unhappiness is also essential in terms of the mental health of individuals who will age. All these outcomes show that elders becoming a part of the active life within the society shape upon the attitudes towards them.

When considering the study data, it has been observed that there had not been any significantly negative attitudes developed against the elders and aging; however, women had approached more empathetical towards elders when compared to men. While it has been observed that as a generation, generation y had developed more positive attitudes in comparison to generation x, individuals whose households include elders in need of care display more negative attitudes in comparison with the ones whose households do not include elders in need of care. In the study, in respect of elderliness turning into a social problem, it has been concluded that for the people who face problems connected with elders and elderliness develop more negative attitude against aging and elderliness. It has been observed that individuals who observe through experience the dependence of the elder economically, socially, and culturally, develop a higher level of negative attitudes against aging and elders. Active aging on the other hand, is an essential social policy leading to the elimination of many similar problems. These developments illustrate the importance of active aging.

- Active aging rescues the elders from dependence by enabling their economic, cultural, and social participation. The elder individual saved from dependence through active aging can have the opportunity to live a more quality life and achieve satisfaction with life through economically, socially, and culturally.
- Active aging causes the elderliness to have a social reflection as not being considered as a period to be avoided, but a period which the stocks obtained (socially, culturally, and economically) can be used efficiently. This situation can lead to the elimination of this negative attitude against aging which has become a vicious cycle and an obstacle to active aging.
- The notion that elders are regarded as a burden on the active population (aged between 14-65) is eliminated. While this situation enables the elders' social value to increase, it prevents the consideration of seeing elderliness as a social problem.

Ethical Declaration

In the writing process of the study titled “*A Quantitative Study on Aging and the Evaluation of Attitudes towards Aging: The Adiyaman University Example*”, there were followed the scientific, ethical and the citation rules; was not made any falsification on the collected data and this study was not sent to any other academic media for evaluation.

Declaration of Conflict

There is no potential conflict of interest in the study.

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TÜRKÇE GENİŐ ÖZET

Yaşlanma, özellikle Türkiye'nin de içerisinde bulunduđu gelişmekte olan ülkelerde önemli bir sosyal olgu haline dönüşmektedir. Genel nüfus içindeki yaşlı sayısındaki artış olarak kavramsallaştırılan demografik yaşlanmanın neden olduđu bu problem, gün geçtikçe daha çok derinleşmektedir. Yaşlılık ve yaşlanmaya karşı gerçekleştirilen tutumlar içinde bulunulan dönemin özelliklerine göre şekillenmektedir. Toplum içerisinde artan yaşlı sayısı ve bu nedenle hızla farklılaşan demografik yapı, yaşlılık ve yaşlanmaya yönelik tutumlar ile kültürel örüntüler arasındaki ilişkinin önemini bir kez daha ortaya çıkarmıştır. Demografik olarak yaşlanma gerçekleşirken, bu kitleyi oluşturan bireylerin nitelikleri de ortaya çıkacak sorunlar açısından önem taşımaktadır. İçinde bulunduğumuz dönemde yaşlıların niteliklerinin önemli ölçüde farklılaştığı görülmektedir. Daha bilinçli, kültürel ve sosyal sermaye düzeyi daha yüksek yaşlı bireylerin sayısı artmaktadır. "Y" kuşağı ve "Z" kuşağı olarak adlandırılan kitlenin yaşlanmasıyla beraber, bu nitelikteki yaşlı sayısı daha çok artacaktır. Nitelikli bir kitlenin artık nüfus olarak görülmesi, sosyal açıdan sorunların daha çok derinleşeceği anlamına gelmektedir. Ayrıca bu kitlenin geleneksel dönemlerde olduđu gibi yaşamdan geri çekilmesi, bu bağlamda bir takım sosyal, ekonomik ve kültürel problemleri beraberinde getirebilir. Bu sorunlardan biri de yaşlının topluma olan sosyoekonomik yükünün, aktif nüfusun (16-64) omuzlarında ciddi bir yük oluşturduđu algısıdır. Bu gelişme yaşlılığa ve yaşlanmaya ilişkin tutumları olumsuz etkilemektedir. Ayrıca yaşlanmaya ve yaşlılığa karşı tutumlar, yaşlının toplumdaki soyutlanabilmesine ve dolayısıyla yalnızlaşmasına neden olarak psikolojik, meslektan arınmasıyla ekonomik ve kaybettiği statülerle kültürel açıdan değersizleşmesiyle sosyolojik birçok problemin doğmasına neden olabilmektedir. Bu bakımdan yaşlının sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik olarak sosyal katılımının sağlandığı aktif yaşlanma stratejileri ve bu yönde geliştirilecek çalışmalar, sosyal politikalara yön verilmesi açısından büyük önem arz etmektedir. Yaşlının toplam nüfus içerisinde giderek artan ve demografik yapıda meydana getirdiği dönüşüm, yaşlılığı sosyolojik açıdan incelenmesi gereken önemli bir toplumsal olgu haline dönüştürmektedir. Dolayısıyla bu konuda ele alınacak önemli değişkenlerden biri, yaşlılığa ve yaşlanmaya karşı geliştirilen tutumlardır. Toplumun kültürel kodlarını içeren ve toplumsal değerlere göre şekillenen tutumlar, zamana göre farklılaşmaktadır. Yaşlılık ve yaşlanmaya ilişkin tutumlar, içinde bulunduğumuz dönemin özelliklerine göre

şekillenmektedir. Yaşlının sosyal statüsünü önemli ölçüde etkileyen yaşlılığa yönelik tutumlar, aktif yaşlanma eğilimini de önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir. Yaşlılığa ve yaşlanmaya karşı geliştirilen olumsuz tutum yaşlının sosyal varlığını tehdit eden birçok davranışın sergilenmesine neden olmaktadır. Tutumlarının yönünün belirlenmesi ve toplumun yaşlanmaya karşı olan tutumlarının değerlendirilmesi sosyal politikalar geliştirilmesi ve yaşlının faal nüfusa katılımını kolaylaştırmaktadır. Bu nedenle bu konudaki tutumların değerlendirilmesi, yaşlanan popülasyonun sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik katılımı açısından büyük önem taşımaktadır. Bu çerçevede genç ve yetişkin öğrencilerin yaşlanmayı nasıl algıladıkları ve yaşlıların toplum içindeki değer ve statüleriyle yaşlı algılarının tartışılması aktif yaşlanma için, yaşlının pozisyonunun belirlenmesi adına önemli bir adım olarak görülmektedir.

Bu bağlamda çalışma, iki farklı kuşağın (y ve z) yaşlanma ve yaşlılık algısının hangi düzeyde olduğunu incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada, yaşlılığa ve yaşlanmaya karşı geliştirilen tutumlar çerçevesinde yaşlının toplumdaki konumuna, yaşlının sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik hayata katılımı konusundaki yargıların belirlenmesine ve bu konudaki sosyal politikaların neler olabileceğine dikkat çekilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Araştırmada elde edilen bulguların cinsiyete göre ortaya çıkan sonuçları değerlendirildiğinde, yaşlılığa ve yaşlanmaya karşı kadınların erkeklere göre, “y” kuşağının “z” kuşağına göre, hanelerinde yaşlı bulunmayanların, bulunanlara göre daha olumlu tutum sergiledikleri sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu sonuçlar, yaşın ilerlemesine bağlı olarak yaşlanmaya olan tutumların daha olumlu yönde geliştiğini göstermektedir. Gençlerin yetişkinlere oranla yaşlılığa ve yaşlanmaya karşı olumsuz tutumları, yaşlılığın kendilerinden yıl olarak uzak olmasına ve modernitenin gençliğe atfetmiş olduğu değerin, gençler üzerinde yetişkinlere göre daha etkili olduğu şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Bununla beraber yaşlılığın neden olduğu fiziksel, psikolojik ve sosyal kayıplara şahit olan bireylerin yaşlılığa karşı olumsuz tutuma sahip oldukları gözlemlenmektedir. Önemli bir sosyal sorun olarak ortaya çıkan bu durum, bireylerin yaşlanmaktan korkmasına, dolayısıyla yaşlılığa ve yaşlanmaya karşı olumsuz tavır almalarına neden olabilmektedir. Yaşlının yalnızlaşması, ekonomik ve sağlık sorunları bu tip sonuçların oluşmasında etkilidir. Yaşlının birçok açıdan bağımlı olmasına neden olan modern hayatın sonuçları, yaşlının hayatını idame ettirebilmesi için diğerlerine bağımlı olacak bir hayata neden olmaktadır. Yaşamdan sosyal ve kültürel olarak geri çekilen ve meslekten arındırılarak ekonomik açıdan yetersiz kalan yaşlı için bağımlılık kaçınılmazdır. Yaşlının sosyal, ekonomik ve kültürel açıdan içine düştüğü bu aciz durum karşısında, yaşlı olmayan kitleler tarafından yaşlılığa ve yaşlanmaya karşı olumlu tutum geliştirilmesi beklenemez. Bu tutumların geliştirilmesi için yaşlının içinde bulunduğu bağımlılıktan kurtulması gerekmektedir. Bağımlılığın neden olduğu olumsuz hava, yaşlılığı ve yaşlıyı aciz, bakımsız, her açıdan yetersiz göstermekte, geliştirilen olumsuz tavır, yaşlının aktif yaşlanmasını engellemektedir. Çünkü olumsuz tavra sahip olan toplumsal algı, yaşlının yaşamdan geri çekilmesini, meslekten arındırılmasını savunurken, katılımına karşı gelir. Dolayısıyla yaşlanmaya ve yaşlılığa karşı geliştirilen olumsuz tutum, aktif yaşlanmanın önündeki engellerden birini oluşturmaktadır. Aktif yaşlanamayan kitle yalnızlaşmakta, yalnızlaşan, izole edilen ve dışlanan yaşlının, faal nüfusla gerilimi de artmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu kısır döngü, demografik yaşlanmanın ivme kazandığı toplumlarda önemli bir sosyal problem haline dönüşebilmektedir. Bu konu geliştirilecek önemli sosyal politikalardan biri, yaşlının aktif olarak faal nüfusun içinde bulunmasını sağlayacak çalışmalardır. Yaşlının faal nüfus içerisinde aktif katılımının sağlanması, yaşlının bağımsız şekilde yaşlanmasını sağlayacaktır. Bu durum yaşlılığa ve yaşlanmaya karşı olumsuz tutumları oluşumunu engellenmesi için önemli bir adımdır. Bu bakımdan çalışma, yaşlının toplumsal yapı içerisindeki değerini, yaşlılığa ve yaşlanmaya karşı tutumunu aktif yaşlanma çerçevesinde tartışmaktadır.