

ELİF HAZAL TEKDEMİR TUNCER

Uskudar University, Türkiye

hazaltekdemir@gmail.com

orcid.org/0000-0002-8356-0753

ÜMİT ERTEM

Uskudar University, Türkiye

umit.ertem@uskudar.edu.tr

orcid.org/0000-0002-9052-2480

SEVİL ATASOY

Uskudar University, Türkiye

atasoy@uskudar.edu.tr

orcid.org/0000-0002-0236-0267

ZEKAI GENÇ

Uskudar University, Türkiye

zekai.genc@uskudar.edu.tr

orcid.org/0000-0002-4725-5356

ALİHAN KOCABAS

Uskudar University, Türkiye

alihan.kocabas@uskudar.edu.tr

orcid.org/0000-0002-7251-0726

The Effect of Rap Music on Youth Drug Use: The Case of Turkish Rap Songs

ABSTRACT

In recent decades, technological developments that have increased communication channels among cultures on a global scale have contributed to the emergence and spread of various music genres. One of these is rap music, along with the hip-hop culture that has developed with it. Rap music, which often expresses reactions to social conditions and to a quest for identity, holds a significant place in the formation of subcultures, particularly among youth. Due to its rebellious ethos, rap music can influence the attitudes of young people toward drug use, in both positive and negative ways. Drug users, who break away from the dominant cultural norms of society, form a distinct drug-based subculture characterized by its own language, clothing styles, lifestyles, and musical preferences. Rap music, which is the focus of this study, is considered a subcultural form of music making with a unique identity. This research analyzes rap songs that both encourage and criticize the drug subculture. A total of fourteen songs, seven promoting and seven opposing substance use, were selected and analyzed using the content analysis method, with reference to their availability on YouTube. In conclusion, the study compiled statements from both groups that either reflect or criticize drug use.

KEYWORDS

Forensic sciences
Drugs
Drug subculture
Rap music
Youth culture

Introduction

Music and drugs have existed since time immemorial. Throughout history, there have been moments when their paths have intersected, with the origins of this connection traceable to antiquity and to the shamanic rituals of various regions in the world (Jerotic et al., 2024). At times, this intersection became so significant that people regarded music and drugs as their 'travel companions', with each influencing the other profoundly. As a result of this reciprocal relationship, it is not uncommon for music, lyrics and musicians to be closely associated with drug use (Ögel and Tamar Gürol, 2010).

The transformation of the concept of entertainment from past to present has also naturally affected patterns of drug use. As people moved from concert halls to nightclubs, both drug consumption and the variety of substances used increased (Palamar et al., 2022). The lifestyles and lyrics of musicians who use drugs can also influence their audiences toward similar behavior. In fact, the desire of individuals to accept, adopt and imitate those that they admire, lays the groundwork for drug use. When young people idolize musicians and view them as role models, they may be more inclined to adopt drug use as a way to feel a sense of connection with them (Yörükoğlu, 1989; Özyıldız and Uçaner Çifdalöz, 2019).

In this regard, it is essential to understand the sociological aspect of youth culture, where youth is defined as “a socially constructed intermediary phase that stands between childhood and adulthood” (Furlong, 2013). Since this is a transitional period, it is also marked by psychosocial changes (Gezek, 2007). Adolescence, a stage often characterized by emotional fluctuations, is a time when young people may find life challenging and tend to overreact to events. The rapid physical and psychological changes experienced during this period make it difficult to predict the responses of individuals in this age group (Patton and Viner, 2007). The simultaneous strengthening of the desire for independence, coupled with a growing distance from family life, also intensifies the need to be understood. As a result, in their efforts to assert independence, gain acceptance and popularity among peers, and to search for self-identity, young individuals may be more inclined to engage in antisocial behavior and criminal activities, as well as turn to alcohol, cigarettes, stimulants, and drugs (İlhan, 2016; Sağır, 2020).

In this connection, the dissatisfaction experienced during adolescence, particularly in the

search for a peer group, is one of the fundamental elements underlying youth subcultures, which primarily respond to the diverse needs of younger generations. Feelings of powerlessness, insignificance, and aimlessness, often experienced during this stage, can lead young individuals to a sense of estrangement. Since moral values are still being shaped during this developmental period, young people in such a turbulent emotional state are more susceptible to external influences (Yaman, 2013; Bağış, 2019). Accordingly, the concept of a subculture is also used to describe individuals who are perceived to use drugs and who hold views that differ from the dominant norms of society. This includes young people whose form of speech or musical preferences differ from those of the broader community (Journet, 2009; Kurt, 2020).

The emergence of rap music and the hip-hop subculture constitutes a significant example that aligns with the theoretical background presented above. In the early 1970s, the Bronx, which experienced a drastic decline in nearly every respect, became New York City's poorest and most troubled district. This area was the birthplace of rap music, nourished by a social malaise caused by unemployment, exclusion, alienation, economic hardship, racism, and poverty, all faced by marginalized youth (McCoy, 2017). These challenges, combined with the social unrest of the local population, contributed to an increase in theft, drug trafficking, and other criminal activities. In response to these conditions, rap music and hip-hop culture emerged as forms of expression for the oppressed masses. Scholars have defined the resulting hip-hop culture as an underground movement shaped by the harsh realities of its environment (Watkins, 2005; Barnes, 2008).

In accordance with the definition proposed by Tylor in 1871, which is still considered valid, culture or civilization is described as “the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society” (Jenks, 2005). Within this framework, hip-hop culture comprises rap music, an associated clothing style, graffiti and breakdancing (McCoy, 2017), with rap music emerging as the voice of this culture (Blanchard, 1999). Rap songs are built around rhythm, which aligns closely with the accompanying sounds. As for the lyrics, rhyme is commonly used, and the content often addresses social and political issues, expressed through explicit and sometimes violent language (Hebdige, 2003; Rose, 1994).

Today, as in previous periods of radical change in history, social values in Turkey are changing rapidly, as exemplified by the emergence of rap music in the Bronx during the 1970s. This transformation has resulted in contradictions and conflicts between the generations, largely due to inherited value judgments. For reasons beyond the scope of this study, these generational tensions, which include both social and cultural aspects, have led many young people to seek new values and alternative cultural expressions (Yaman, 2013).

Several elements can be identified when defining the drug subculture with which some young people become involved. Coping strategies, musical preferences, language use, and belief systems are frequently cited when describing individuals who use drugs and are excluded from mainstream society. When young people engage with the drug subculture through one or more of these factors, they often begin by adopting patterns of substance acquisition and use, followed by the lifestyle associated with the group that uses these substances (Arslan and Kırlioğlu, 2019).

As explained above, it is common for drugs to be associated with songs, listeners, and performers. In the case of rap music, research conducted by Chen et al. revealed that listening to rap music is linked to alcohol and drug use, as well as to aggressive behavior (Chen et al., 2006). This finding was later confirmed by Stickle, who, in the context of rap music in the United States, highlighted the increasing popularity of drug-related rap songs after 2006 (Stickle, 2021). Regarding the situation in Turkey, the study by Arslan and Kırlioğlu offers a comprehensive overview of the relationship between rap music and the drug subculture (Arslan and Kırlioğlu, 2019). However, considering the developments that have occurred since the publication of that study in 2019, it has become necessary to re-examine the current relationship between Turkish rap songs and the drug subculture, and to assess whether these songs influence drug use among young people.

In the early 1990s, Turkish rap emerged in Germany as a distinct genre through the work of Turkish migrant rap artists. The release of the album *Cartel* in 1995 marked a milestone, leading to the spread of Turkish rap from Germany to Turkey (Elflein, 1998). In the late 1990s, artists such as *Ceza*, *Sagopa Kajmer*, *Dr. Fuchs*, *Yener*, and *Fuat Ergin*, who were among the first representatives of rap in Turkey, set an example for young people by popularizing amateur rap music. In the following years, particularly in the first

half of the 2000s, the widespread use of the internet enabled young artists to reach larger audiences (Elbir, 2021).

In rap songs produced in Turkey, the main aim of young people can be described as expressing their identities to society, resisting authority, forming emotional bonds with peers, and voicing problems they cannot share with their families. In summary, the primary motivation for Turkish youth to produce rap music is often rooted in personal and individual struggles (Budak and Ergun, 2022).

The fact that rap music is easily accessible for young people to produce has brought certain problems to light or made existing issues more visible to the public. From the perspective of young people, the spread of amateur rap music provided an accessible platform for self-expression. At the same time, this phenomenon has been thought to allow concepts, emotions, and ideas to be expressed without restrictions (Bayrak, 2011). As rap music is often performed without limitations, the issues affecting youth have become more visible, including but not limited to the drug subculture and drug use.

Rap songs that openly mention specific drugs, describe patterns of use, and employ drug-related terminology may influence young listeners' attitudes and behavior. The blending of a drug-related subculture with a hip-hop culture through rap music can lead to a misinterpretation and distorted perception of hip-hop culture among young people (Yörükoğlu, 1989; Biçer and Ertan, 2017). With the widespread use of social media, rap music now reaches a broader audience, particularly among adolescents. As a result, the presence of lyrics that legitimize drug use and violence may contribute to the normalization of these behaviors among young people (Çetinöz, 2019).

Beyond the relationship between Turkish rap songs and the drug subculture discussed above, drug use and drug-related criminal offenses represent a significant issue on their own among the challenges that Turkey has faced in recent years. The sharp increase in the percentage of individuals who have used substances at least once in their lifetime has been further aggravated by a decreasing average age of first-time drug users. This phenomenon has been confirmed by scholars, journalists, and official institutions (Üsküdar University, 2025; Duvar English, 2024; Le Monde, 2024; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2003; EMCDDA, 2019; Turkish National Police, Counter Narcotics Department, 2024).

The actions of Turkish law enforcement agencies in addressing drug-related criminal offenses have not been limited to targeting users and dealers. In some instances, Turkish rappers have found themselves at the center of public controversy. Artists such as *Ezhel*, *Khontkar*, *Burrry Soprano*, and *Heijan* were detained on charges of "encouraging and facilitating drug use" under Article 190 of the Turkish Penal Code (TCK), due to the content of their song lyrics (Hürriyet, 2018; Diken, 2018; Bianet, 2021; CNN Türk, 2017).

Ezhel, who was arrested under Article 190/2 of the TCK, stated in his defense that the lyrics in question were chosen purely for their rhyme and rhythm, and that he did not intend to promote drug use (DHA, 2018). As a result of the trial, he was sentenced to one year and eight months in prison (Anadolu Ajansı, 2019; Yaşar et al., 2018; Yılmaz, 2018). During a search of a residence belonging to another rapper, *Khontkar*, police seized packaged marijuana prepared for use and sale, along with smoking devices and grinders (Diken, 2018). He was later sentenced to four years and two months in prison (Independent Türkçe, 2019).

An indictment was also filed against a rapper known by the pseudonym *Murda*, on the charge of "encouraging the use of drugs." The prosecutor requested a prison sentence of up to ten years, and at the conclusion of the trial, he was sentenced to four years and two months (Sağır, 2020; BirGün, 2022).

On the other hand, in Turkey rap songs have also been utilized as part of drug prevention efforts, which have become increasingly common in recent years. Several initiatives have been organized in the hope of reducing drug use among young people. For example, in 2021 the Turkish Ministry of the Interior launched a rap song competition titled *Rap Burada!* (Rap Is Here!) to raise awareness about the harms of drug use among youth (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Interior, 2021). These efforts have not been limited to government initiatives. In some cases, individual rap artists or groups have released songs as part of their personal social responsibility projects aimed at combating drug use. Notable examples include the release of the album *UDDY Proje (Uyuşturucuya Dur Diyen Yok – There Is Nobody Saying No to Drugs)* in 2021, which features several anti-drug rap songs (Müzikonair, 2021), as well as *Düşme (Don't Fall)* by *Heijan* and *Muti* (Song Number 8 in this study) and *'Beyaz Ölüm' (White Death)* by *Zifir* (Song Number 10 in this study).

The aforementioned examples, along with others not included in this study, illustrate how

rap songs have become associated with the drug subculture in ways that have drawn significant public attention. As a result, the need for a contemporary study has become evident, particularly with regard to examining the potential effects of Turkish rap music on drug use among young people. In this context, rather than briefly listing and summarizing numerous songs, it is more effective to conduct an in-depth analysis of selected tracks in order to highlight the specific characteristics of Turkish rap songs related to the drug subculture.

To maintain a balance between offering a comprehensive overview and providing a detailed analysis of each song, the present study focuses on a total of fourteen songs. This includes seven songs that appear to encourage the drug subculture and seven songs that take a critical stance against it. Within the framework of the drug subculture, the lyrics will be examined based on criteria identified by researchers, including the promotion of drug use, the criticism of addiction as a socially and physically harmful form of behavior, the use of drug-related terminology, and the mention of specific substances.

Drawing on both the analysis of lyrics and publicly available data regarding the popularity of these songs, this study aims to investigate the possible influence of Turkish rap music on drug use among young people in Turkey.

Material and Method

Research Model

This research is a descriptive study based on the collection of data from rap songs using the content analysis method. According to the definition made by Berelson, content analysis is described as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of the communication” (Berelson, 1952). Content analysis involves the detailed consideration of the content of written or oral communication tools, while maintaining the principles of being systematic and impartial (Koçak and Arun, 2006).

Population and Sample

The research population in this study consists of Turkish rap songs, regardless of their stance on drug use. At the beginning of the study, all rap songs were accepted as potential candidates without any filtering. A systematic sampling method was applied to select the

final sample songs, resulting in a total of fourteen tracks: seven that promote drug use and seven that oppose it. The selected songs were evaluated to ensure that, from a critical perspective, they did not differ significantly from other songs with similar themes, nor did they omit relevant examples outside the sample group.

Inclusion Criteria and Data Collection

All the fourteen songs used in the study were evaluated and found to share a common ground, namely their connection to the drug subculture. In the first stage, the selected songs were divided into two categories: those that 'encourage drug use' and those that 'criticize drug use'. In the second stage, the songs in each category were analyzed based on subthemes related to the drug subculture.

The themes in songs that encourage drug use include an emphasis on substance use, specific drug names, methods of consumption, drug supply, criminal involvement, pessimism, poverty, death, subcultural jargon, and betrayal. In contrast, songs that criticize drug use focus on themes such as bodily harm, moral and financial losses, treatment, family relationships, pessimism, regret, despair, and the negative effects of drugs.

To provide a comprehensive overview of Turkish rap and its relationship with the drug subculture, the study prioritized a balanced representation of all potential subthemes rather than selecting songs solely on view counts. The analyzed lyrics were evaluated impartially and systematically, and a total of nineteen subthemes were identified as potentially impactful on listeners. The most frequent of these themes are shown in Figure 1.

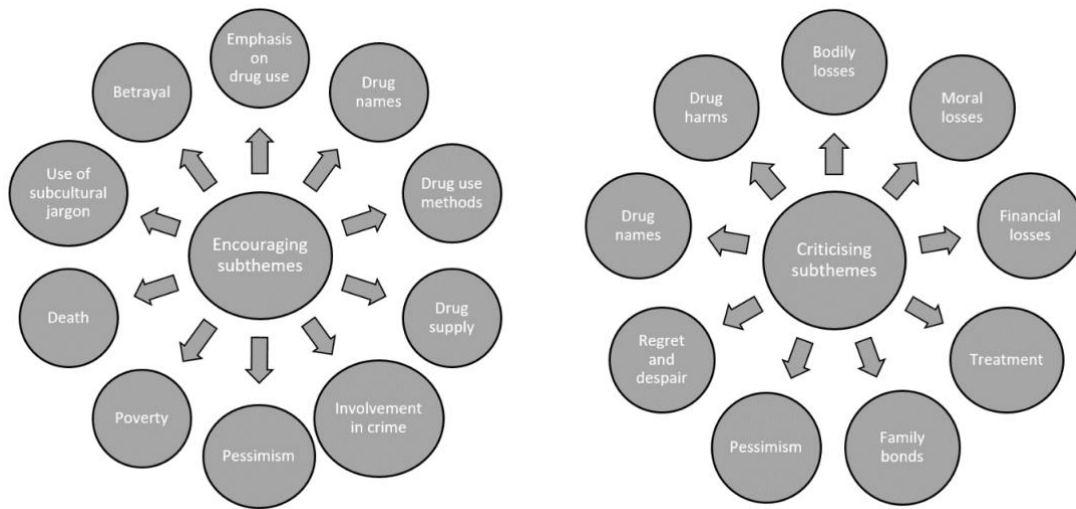


Figure 1. Subthemes of songs that encourage and criticize drug use

Among the songs that address drug-related themes, those with the highest number of views on YouTube as of March 2024 were evaluated, provided that they collectively met the criterion of comprehensiveness in terms of subthemes, as previously explained. Within the scope of this research, all Turkish rap songs were accessed via YouTube, the most widely used video-sharing platform globally, which was selected due to its status as the most preferred sharing network (Kemp, 2024). In addition to the seven rap songs identified as promoting the drug subculture and containing expressions related to drug use and addiction, seven songs that take a critical stance against the drug subculture, drug use, and addiction constitute the second pillar of our comparison.

Although all song lyrics were comprehensively analyzed during the preparatory phase of the study to avoid overlooking any direct or implicit references to the drug subculture, the results presented below will be limited to discussing only those parts of the songs directly relevant to our inquiry.

Results

Several Turkish rap songs identified as encouraging the drug subculture include references to drugs and addiction. In some of these songs, drug names are mentioned explicitly, while in others, such references are conveyed through informal slang developed by youth within the context of the drug subculture. In addition, these songs address themes such as death, alienation, pessimism, betrayal, hopelessness, and cultural differences, which are commonly expressed within the drug subculture (Arslan and

Kırlıoğlu, 2019).

Lyrics encouraging or criticizing substance use were selected from the songs and analyzed alongside other themes emphasized by the drug subculture. Table 1 presents the songs evaluated in the study, along with their YouTube view counts at the time of data collection. The songs in Table 1 are listed in descending order based on the number of views. The only exception here is *Heijan's 'Genemi Amcalar'* (Blue Suits Again), which was removed from YouTube due to its overtly drug-related lyrics. The song was no longer available on YouTube as of March 2024. Therefore, its view count was retrieved from a link archived in August 2017 (Çatı Müzik, 2016). Considering the fact that the archived video reached more than 12 million views in a year, the number of views of that music video would likely have been higher if the original link had still been active at the time of the research.

Table 1. The number of YouTube views for the songs examined in the study, as of March 2024

<i>Number of the Song</i>	<i>Pseudonym of the Rapper</i>	<i>Title of the Song</i>	<i>Number of the YouTube Views as of March 2024</i>
3	İsyan Tetick	<i>Adana Merkez</i> (Center of Adana)	78.808.642
4	İsyan Tetick	<i>Patlamaya Devam</i> (Keep on Blasting)	41.094.583
8	Heijan feat Muti	<i>Düşme</i> (Don't Fall)	31.983.026
1	Heijan	<i>Genemi Amcalar</i> (Blue Suits Again)	12,948,132
2	Ceyhan Prensi	<i>Sen Parfüm Ben Esrar Kokarım</i> (You Smell Perfume I Smell Marijuana)	7.384.180
7	Burri Soprano	<i>Mary Jane</i> (Mary Jane)	6.000.582
6	Tuhan	<i>Esenyurt Trap Pafküf</i> (Esenyurt Trap Smoke Up)	5.050.522
5	Asi Styla	<i>Ot Kubar Hergün Dönüyor Dünya</i> (Weed, Marijuana, The World turns everyday)	2.541.452
11	Ogeday	<i>Kaybettim Seni</i> (I Lost You)	1.148.374
9	Misal	<i>Tut Elimden</i> (Hold My Hand)	298.330
12	Sansür	<i>Uyuşturucuya Hayır</i> (No to Drugs)	183.748
10	Zifir	<i>Beyaz Ölüm</i> (White Death)	58.124
13	Okan İlhan	<i>Bir Kereden</i> (For Once)	9.149
14	Çelebi	<i>Pes Etme</i> (Don't Give Up)	7.009

The first seven rap songs were examined with respect to the following subthemes: emphasis on drug use, drug names, drug use methods, drug supply, involvement in crime, pessimism, poverty, death, use of subcultural jargon, and betrayal, as indicated in Table 2.

The most dominant themes in these seven, along with the song in which each theme occurs most frequently, are shown in the chart in Figure 2.

Table 2. Findings related to songs that emphasize drug use

Examined Subthemes	Number of Mentions in Songs						
	1 st Song	2 nd Song	3 rd Song	4 th Song	5 th Song	6 th Song	7 th Song
Emphasis on drug use	4	1	3	8	4	6	9
Drug names	8	4	6	1	4	3	1
Drug use methods	2	1	1	1	2	5	1
Drug supply	2	-	3	1	-	-	-
Involvement in crime (extortion, bodily harm, violence)	1	-	4	3	-	1	-
Pessimism	-	3	-	-	6	1	2
Poverty	2	3	-	-	-	1	-
Death	-	2	-	-	5	-	-
Use of subcultural jargon	7	1	11	7	1	4	2
Betrayal	-	4	-	-	-	-	1

While Table 2 shows how many times these sub-themes are highlighted in each particular song, Figure 1 displays a total of 10 sub-themes used in rap songs that encourage drug use.

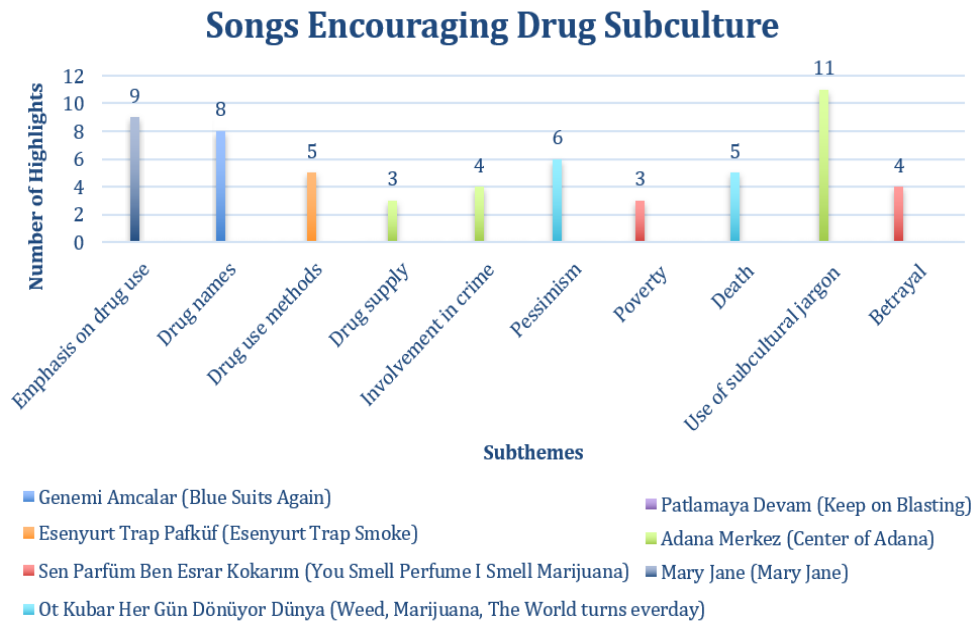


Figure 2. Display of dominant themes in songs encouraging the drug subculture

While Figure 1 shows a total of nine sub-themes used in the second group of seven songs, which criticize the drug subculture, Table 3 presents the frequency of these sub-themes in each song.

Table 3. Findings related to songs that criticize drug use

Examined Subthemes	Number of Mentions in Songs						
	8 th Song	9 th Song	10 th Song	11 th Song	12 th Song	13 th Song	14 th Song
Bodily losses (e.g., deprivation, physical weakening, death)	1	2	8	3	3	2	1
Moral losses (e.g., family, friends, spouse, loved ones)	2	2	2	1	4	2	-
Financial losses (e.g., job, money)	2	-	2	3	-	1	-
Treatment	1	-	-	1	1	2	2
Family bonds	3	2	1	1	-	-	-
Pessimism	-	-	8	1	-	-	3
Regret and despair	2	6	-	1	-	5	2
Drug names	-	-	3	3	-	-	-
Drug harms	3	2	2	3	4	1	4

The most dominant themes in the second set of seven songs were examined and the frequency with which these themes are encountered is shown in the Figure 3.

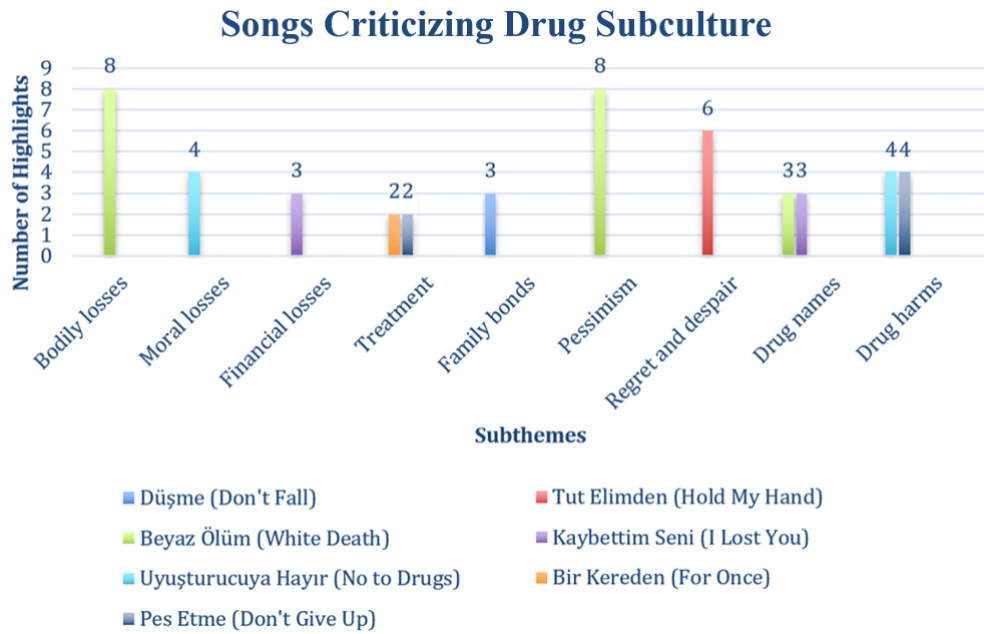


Figure 3. Display of dominant themes in songs criticizing drug subculture

While explaining the lyrics, the Turkish originals and English translations, prepared by the authors of this study, will be presented respectively. Following this, the words related to the drug subculture will be explained separately. The grammatical mistakes and nonstandard use of Turkish in the lyrics were preserved exactly as they appeared.

Songs Encouraging the Drug Subculture

Heijan / Genemi Amcalar (Blue Suits Again): This song was published on YouTube in 2014. *Heijan* was detained in 2017 for sharing content promoting drug use on the internet (CNN Türk, 2017). As of March 2024, when the data for this study was collected, all songs by *Heijan* deemed to promote drug use were no longer accessible on the rapper's YouTube channel. However, after his arrest, *Heijan* has been producing anti-drug rap songs for some time, such as '*Düşme*' (*Don't Fall*), which is also analyzed in this study (Song Number 8).

<i>Ver malı baba ben harmanım,</i>	Give me the stuff, man, I'm out of weed,
<i>Cep-te yok kene yok bir yolunu bulmalı,</i>	Got nothing in my pocket, not even a roach, I
<i>Torbacı veresiye tutmalı yapmalı,</i>	need to find a way
<i>Bu gece kafam bu zirveyi bulmalı.</i>	The dealer should give it on the credit,
	Tonight my head needs to reach that peak.

The first stanza selected from the song expresses both a desire to obtain drugs and a lack of money to purchase them. Financial hardship is a common theme in the rap songs analyzed and identified as encouraging the drug subculture. The slang term '*harman olmak*' (literally 'to get the wind', in the drug subculture 'to be out of weed') in this stanza refers to the desire to smoke marijuana. In addition, since there is no money to buy drugs, the lyrics suggest that the '*torbacı*' (dealer) should provide them on credit in order to achieve '*zirveyi bulmak*' (reaching the peak) through drug use.

<i>Hadi semte gidek baba piyasa yapak,</i>	Let's head to the neighborhood man, make an
<i>Bir iki duman alıp hapi patlatak.</i>	appearance
<i>Hap var rapimde hap var, içersen ot var,</i>	Take a few drags and pop a pill
<i>Bir dumanla patlar bonz var, ölüm var.</i>	There are pills in my rap, and if you want
<i>Burda hayat seni zorlar,</i>	there's weed too
<i>Yaramıyorsa koçum sana boş sigara var.</i>	One hit and you're gone, there's bonsai
	(synthetic weed), there's death

Life hits you hard around here

If you can't handle it bro, there's always an empty cigarette.

The slang term '*piyasa yapmak*' (to make an appearance) in this part of the song is a common expression in almost all youth subcultures and corresponds to the concept of socialization in its general and common meaning: for example, young people getting together with both the opposite sex and their own gender, meeting in different locations, including parties, cafés, streets, and derelict buildings. Within the language of the drug subculture, it also refers to doing business with a drug dealer. Again, according to the same subculture, this expression also encompasses drug use (Yaman, 2013).

In the line '*bir iki duman alıp hapi patlatacak*' (take a few drags and pop a pill), the concept of '*patlamak*' (pop) is noted as a means to prolong the effect and duration of the drug used. This is thought to refer to a drug such as ecstasy, dope, etc., as it is described as a pill that is believed to have been taken beforehand. Likewise, the expression '*duman almak*' (to smoke) in this sentence is also equivalent to smoking cannabis. In short, it is suggested that the effect of the pill, when combined with cannabis, will last longer in the body. The term '*boş sigara*' (empty cigarette) emphasizes that the cigarette does not contain any drugs.

Ceyhan Prensi / Sen Parfüm Ben Esrar Kokarım (You Smell Perfume I Smell Marijuana): The rapper, known by the pseudonym *Ceyhan Prensi* (Prince of Ceyhan), is popular despite the amateur production quality of his music video and voice-over. The song *You Smell Perfume I Smell Marijuana*, which was once widely known among young people, is still not available on the artist's personal YouTube channel in either video or audio format. Nevertheless, the original and popular version remains accessible on various other YouTube channels as of the time of writing.

Sevme kızım beni, ben bir serseriyim.

Don't fall in love with me, girl, I'm a drifter

Esrar ve duman kokarım,

I smell like weed and smoke

Ben şarkı türkü bilmem, esrar sararım, kova yaparım.

I don't know songs or ballads, I roll joints, I make bongs

Sen yatakta yatarken, ben sokakta kalırım.

While you're in bed, I'm out on the street
You wake up at 10, I'm up at dawn

<i>Sen saat 10'da, ben şafakta kalkarım.</i>	You smell perfume, I smell marijuana
<i>Sen parfüm, ben esrar kokarım,</i>	Don't make plans with me, babe, I'll be out of
<i>Randevu verme güzelim, ben o saatte</i>	weed then.
<i>harman olmuşum.</i>	

The theme of 'impossible love' is presented alongside references to '*esrar*' (marijuana), '*kova*' (bong), and '*harman olmak*' (to be out of weed), which are standard expressions from the Turkish drug subculture, is used to capture the listener's attention. The concept of 'being people from different worlds', which appears not only in music but also across various branches of art, has inspired and supported many musical compositions. In rap songs, there is often a focus on themes such as rebellion, romantic suffering, physical pain, injustice and separation. In addition to references to drug use, the themes of unfulfilled love, betrayal, and social difference are also prominently featured. It is possible to assert that the second song analyzed is a telling example of these elements.

İsyan Tetick / Adana Merkez (Center of Adana): The music video by the rapper known as *İsyan Tetick*, published on YouTube in 2015, was filmed on the streets of Adana and serves as a clear example of an amateur-produced rap song. The full title of the song uploaded to YouTube was recorded as '*Adana Merkez Patlıyor Herkes*' (Center of Adana, Everyone is Blasting). Quotes from the song, as well as the title itself, have become frequently repeated phrases within youth subculture, regardless of whether individuals are directly involved in rap music. The rapid spread and integration of such a phrase, originating from an amateur song, into the language of subculture and everyday speech highlights the challenge of regulating mass media platforms such as YouTube. Young people often turn to alternative channels like YouTube as a source of entertainment, which makes accessing this type of content particularly easy.

<i>Adana merkez, patlıyor herkes.</i>	Center of Adana, everyone is blasting.
<i>Şekeri atan kopmalık açıyor son ses.</i>	Drop a candy, crank the music to the max
<i>Hemen şimdi cigara mevzusuna dönelim,</i>	Now let's get back to the joint talk
<i>İçiyorsak susmayı tercih ederim,</i>	If we're smoking, I'd rather keep quiet
<i>Kafamız güzelken mahkemeye gidelim,</i>	Let's go the courthouse while we're high
<i>Şekerin üstüne ben cigarayı çok severim.</i>	I really love a joint on top of a candy.

The word '*şeker*' (candy) in this excerpt refers to the drug also known as '*hap*' (pill). In the language of the drug subculture, these terms are commonly used to describe substances such as ecstasy and crack. Furthermore, in this song, the words '*hap*' (pill) and '*şeker*' (candy) are used interchangeably. The line '*kafamız güzelken mahkemeye gidelim*' (*let's go to the courthouse while we're high*) suggests that the judicial system is not taken seriously by young individuals within the drug subculture. To them, actions that would constitute a crime under the law are not seen as problematic. In fact, going to prison, or getting into confrontations with law enforcement officers, are viewed as status symbols within this subculture.

İsyan Tetick / Patlamaya Devam (Keep on Blasting): Due to its lyrics, this song contains references to the rapper's previous song, '*Adana Merkez*', discussed above. Originally published on the rapper's YouTube channel in 2019, the song gained popularity through another video-sharing platform, TikTok, in early 2020. Through this platform, the song '*Adana Merkez*' reached a much wider audience.

<i>Ses ver Adana, zirveden selam.</i>	Make some noise, Adana, greetings from the peak
<i>Durmak yok "homie", patlamaya devam.</i>	Don't stop "homie", keep on blasting
<i>Yok bundan sonra size sigara filan,</i>	No more cigarettes for you from now on
<i>Uçuyor yıldızlara müptezel bayan.</i>	That junkie girl is flying up to the stars
<i>Harmanım, baba nerde çarşafım,</i>	I'm out of weed man, where's my rolling paper
<i>Gördüğün bu paketler benim dermanım.</i>	These packs you see are what keep me sane

In the parts of the song shared above and widely known by young people, words such as '*müptezel*' (junkie), '*harman olmak*' (be out of weed), and '*çarşaf*' (rolling paper) stand out. These are high-frequency terms commonly used within the drug subculture. When examined in terms of musical structure, '*Adana Merkez*' shares more characteristics with pop music than with other rap songs. Its upbeat and catchy melody serves as a gateway, encouraging young listeners to become familiar with the vocabulary of the drug subculture.

In addition, the word '*homie*', a common English greeting among youth, appears in the song without any change in meaning. This usage can be seen as evidence of young people's

interest in and openness to foreign cultural elements. Although the song is popular and appreciated by young people for its energetic musical background, it may also be considered problematic from a legal perspective because of its lyrics related to the drug subculture.

Asi Styla / Ot Kubar Hergün Dönüyor Dünya (Weed, Marijuana, The World turns everyday): The song written by the rapper using the pseudonym *Asi Stayla* can be classified as ‘*Arabesk rap*’, a genre that combines elements of *Arabesk* music and rap. In addition to being centered around the theme of death, the song contains numerous references to the drug subculture and substance addiction. The *Arabesk* rap style amplifies the emotional intensity of themes such as death, separation, and the inability to reunite, making them particularly dominant in this piece. (Sağır, 2020).

<i>Hep dert verdi yüce Rabbim,</i>	The Lord has only given me pain
<i>Ot kubar her gün beynime çekerim,</i>	I pull weed and hash into my head every day
<i>Çeker de kaderime feryadı ederim,</i>	I smoke and cry out to my fate
<i>Ağlama gardaş böyle de gülelim,</i>	Don't cry, brother, let's laugh even like this
<i>İki kapak ver de damardan alsam,</i>	Give me two pills so I can shoot it straight in
<i>İkiye bölündü tek kocaman dünyam.</i>	My one big world has split in two.

The selected part resembles the syntax of a classical *Arabesk* song, with a clear expression of rebellion against both God and life. The words ‘*ot*’ and ‘*kubar*’ (weed and hash, respectively) are slang terms referring to types of drugs. The expression ‘*damardan almak*’ (shoot straight in; literally, to take something intravenously) is used to describe the method of injecting drugs. The song and its music video, in which the theme of death is dominant, generally portray drug use as a response to emotional pain. The line ‘*Allah'ım beni tek koydun sen, maddeleri bana arkadaş ettin*’ (My God, you left me alone, and made the substances my friends) from a later part of the song supports this interpretation. When considered as a whole, the lyrics of this fifth song can be interpreted as a rebellion against life and social order.

Tuhan / Esenyurt Trap Pafküf (Esenyurt Trap Smoke Up): The rapper known by the pseudonym *Tuhan* produced this song, whose lyrics and music are directly connected to the drug subculture, particularly through its title. ‘*Pafküf*’, a slang term in the Turkish drug subculture meaning ‘using marijuana’ or ‘smoking up’, is repeated multiple times in the

chorus. In the same chorus, 'Sprite' and 'codeine' are mentioned together, referring to the combination of a soft drink and codeine or a codeine-based substance.

<i>Sprite, Kodein</i>	Sprite, codeine
<i>Saçlarım semt modeli.</i>	My hair's in the neighborhood style.
<i>Ya, ya, ya</i>	Yeah, yeah, yeah
<i>Sprite, Kodein</i>	Sprite, codeine
<i>Saçlarım semt modeli.</i>	My hair's in the neighborhood style.
<i>Altüst, altüst</i>	Upside down, upside down
<i>Altüst, hayatımız altüst.</i>	Our life is upside down.
<i>7/24 pafküf, pafküf</i>	24/7 we smoke up, smoke up
<i>7/24 pafküf, pafküf</i>	24/7 we smoke up, smoke up

The music video for the song contains numerous visuals related to drug use. Cocaine and cannabis consumption are explicitly shown to the audience through gestures. Additionally, the rapper's use of tobacco products, represented by a hookah, can be interpreted as a visual reference to the slang expression 'smoking up'.

<i>Düştü aklar saçlarıma, morlar da göz altlarıma.</i>	White hairs fell into my hair, and purples under my eyes.
<i>Esenyurt Trap,</i>	Esenyurt Trap,
<i>Trap, trap, trap,</i>	Trap, trap, trap,
<i>Uyamadım Allah'ım planlarına.</i>	My God, I couldn't follow your plans.
<i>Otomatik yanımda (rahat ol),</i>	The automatic gun's on me (stay cool),
<i>Adrenalin kanımda (hiçbi' şey),</i>	Adrenaline's in my blood (nothing),
<i>MDMA yanında (bunun),</i>	MDMA is with you (this),
<i>BMW'nin camından.</i>	From the window of a BMW.

References to drug use, which appear throughout the song, are reinforced by the frequent use of subcultural jargon in the lyrics. *MDMA* (methylenedioxymethamphetamine) is the chemical name for the drug commonly known as 'ecstasy', and in this song, the term *MDMA* is used explicitly to refer to the substance. Additionally, automatic weapons mentioned directly in the lyrics are rapid-firing firearms that are illegal for private ownership in most countries. These weapons are often associated with criminal gangs and drug-related activity.

Burrry Soprano / Mary Jane: The song ‘*Mary Jane*’ is performed by the rapper using the pseudonym *Burrry Soprano*. In 2021, the artist was sentenced to 4 years and 2 months in prison for ‘encouraging the use of drugs’, but was released shortly after his arrest (Susma24, 2021). The music video, available on YouTube, contains no visual imagery related to the drug subculture. It consists solely of the song’s lyrics and images of the rapper. However, when the lyrics are analyzed in terms of content, they include expressions from subculture drug jargon to a degree that reportedly justified the artist’s arrest. The song *Mary Jane* reached a broader audience following the release of its rearranged version, ‘*Mary Jane Remix*’.

<i>Çek bir duman bana dön bunu,</i>	Take a hit and pass it to me
<i>Her tadan aklını kaybedecek.</i>	Everyone who tastes it will lose their mind
<i>Harmanın içmedim on gündür,</i>	I am out of weed, I haven’t smoked in ten days
<i>Bu durum beni mahvedecek.</i>	This is gonna ruin me
<i>Senin her türün ayrı bir zevk,</i>	Every kind of you has its own pleasure
<i>Mary Jane, Mary Jane, Mary Jane.</i>	Mary Jane, Mary Jane, Mary Jane
<i>Seni istiyorum yanımda her gün,</i>	I want you with me every day
<i>Bu durum beni mahvedecek.</i>	This is gonna ruin me.

In the selection above, one can encounter specific examples of drug subculture jargon. Moreover, ‘*Mary Jane*’, which is frequently mentioned in the song, may appear to be a woman’s name; however, it is actually a slang term for cannabis (Işık, 2018). The act of smoking marijuana is hinted at by ‘*duman çekmek*’ (to take a hit) in the song, and ‘*dönmek*’ (to pass) refers to the sharing of the same cannabis cigarette, which is common in such environments. The phrase ‘*harman olmak*’ (be out of weed) in the song is also a form of expression used in the jargon of the drug subculture, frequently found in songs that praise drug use, and is used to describe the lack of cannabis.

It can be said that the seven songs examined share common themes: references that encourage the drug subculture, and frequent mentions of drug names appear in all of them. These representatives of the drug subculture, who all developed a unique language, often use terms such as ‘*esrar*’ (cannabis), ‘*kubar*’ (powdered marijuana), ‘*ex*’ (thizz), ‘*taş*’ (crack), ‘*harman olmak*’ (to be out of weed), ‘*kova*’ (bong), ‘*çarşaf*’ (rolling paper), ‘*torbacı*’ (dealer), ‘*amca*’ (blue suits) in their lyrics. In addition to drug-related references, themes

such as complaints about injustice, social exclusion, emotional pain and rebellion against life are also common, especially in *Arabesk* rap songs.

Young people often develop ways of speaking that only they can understand, which can evolve into specific subcultural jargon over time. Similarly, through the use of this jargon, they are able to communicate in a kind of private code to conceal situations that they do not want to be understood in environments where that particular subculture is not dominant. The development of subcultural language in this context occurred as expected, especially given the use and sale of drugs, which are strictly prohibited by law. For example, the word '*amca*' (uncle), which typically refers to a father's brother or an older male, is used in the drug subculture to refer to the police. Words such as '*çarşaf*' (rolling paper), '*kova*' (bong), '*kapak*' (cover), '*taş*' (crack) and '*şeker*' (candy), which are frequently used in the songs, further support this observation (Yaman, 2013).

Songs Criticizing the Drug Subculture

Heijan feat. Muti / Düşme (Don't Fall): The first of the seven songs that take a stand against the drug subculture and criticize drug use addiction is the song '*Don't Fall*' by rappers *Heijan* and *Muti*. An example of *Heijan*'s earlier work was examined in the first part of the study. The two rappers had previously been taken into custody due to their songs '*Genemi Amcalar*' (Blue Suits Again) and '*Bonzai Bom*' (Bonsai Boom), which were seen as promoting drug use. As part of a social responsibility project, they later collaborated on a rap that addresses the harms of drug abuse (Sağır, 2020).

The music video for the song begins with a teenager lying in a hospital room and continues by presenting scenes from the daily life of this young person, their surroundings, and their drug use. In this song, as in the previous ones, drug use is associated with themes of loneliness, desperation and rebellion. Although the lyrics do not contain any slang terms, images of drug use are shown in the music video. The harms of drug use are expressed in the following lines:

*Aklım oyunlar oynuyor,
Kalbim bayağıdır seninle değil.
Şeytan her zaman yanında,
Her dumanda gülümsüyor.*

My mind is playing games
My heart hasn't been with you for a long time
The devil is always by your side
He smiles with every hit
Wake up, kid, your mother is crying at your

<i>Uyan çocuk, annen başucunda ağlıyor.</i>	bedside
<i>Feleğin heybesinde tükenmiş huzuru maddelerde arama artık,</i>	Don't look for the peace that fate has taken from you in substances anymore
<i>Ölümden öteye başka bir köy yok.</i>	There's no village beyond death
<i>Senden aldıklarını geriye verecek hiçbir madde hiçbir alkol hiçbir zehir.</i>	No drug, no alcohol, no poison will give back what it took from you.

These song lyrics indicate that drugs consume the life of the person struggling with addiction. In this context, both the lyrics and the music video highlight the lives lost when individuals who want to escape from pain and hardship turn to drugs. The purpose of the song is to raise awareness by reaching out to young people who are addicted to drugs.

Misal / Tut Elimden (Hold My Hand): The music video for the song 'Tut Elimden' (Hold My Hand) by the singer using the pseudonym *Misal*, was filmed in and around an abandoned building, chosen to highlight the negative aspects of the subculture that promotes drug use. In the video, people addicted to drugs are depicted in this derelict setting. Although drug use is not shown directly, the tremors of individuals suffering from withdrawal symptoms, who are unable to obtain drugs, are clearly visible. The lyrics of the song, some of which are quoted below, illustrate how drug use negatively affects life and damages social relationships, particularly within families. The helplessness of addicted individuals and their desire to escape their situation are expressed through the sentence 'tut elimden' (hold my hand). In addition, drugs, whose harmful consequences are clearly emphasized, are described as being like an 'iblis' (demon).

<i>Yanlışlar arar, yılan gibi sarar,</i>	It looks for mistakes, wraps you like a snake,
<i>Sana verir zarar, adına alır karar.</i>	It hurts you, makes your choices for you.
<i>Gecelerdir mekânım, terk etmiş herkes,</i>	The night has been my only place,
<i>Sizi geç anladım ama bu illetmiş merkez.</i>	everyone's abandoned me
<i>Böyle değildim elbet, doğmadım serkeş,</i>	I realized too late, but this poison was the
<i>Gülümse, tut elimden kurtar beni kardeş.</i>	center of all
<i>İnan ki istemedim bunun böyle olmasını,</i>	I wasn't always like this, I wasn't born a
<i>Gözlerimin kararıp gönlümün solmasını,</i>	rebel,
<i>Her şeyimi gasp ettiler dünyam karardı.</i>	Smile, hold my hand, save me brother
	Believe me, I never wanted it to turn out this
	way
	For my eyes to go dark, for my heart to fade

They stole everything from me, my world
has gone dark.

Another point to be noted in the lyrics and the message they convey is that the harm experienced by addicts is not limited to themselves. The presence of a drug-addicted family member means that the entire family shares in the consequences of addiction. While friends can more easily end their relationship with the person struggling with addiction, family members often do not have that option. For this reason, it is more accurate to consider addiction as a ‘family disease’ that affects the entire family rather than just a personal issue. As explained in this song, the appropriate approach by the family toward the addicted individual, and the willingness to support that person in all circumstances, can only be achieved with professional help (Ögel and Tamar Gürol, 2010).

Zifir / Beyaz Ölüm (White Death): The third song critical of the drug subculture differs from the others in that it is a rap song with Islamic elements. Released by the group named *Mavera* on their own YouTube channel, the song is described by the group as a social responsibility project. It is performed by the rapper who goes by the nickname *Zifir*. The video, similar to those of other songs in this category, depicts the daily life of a teenager addicted to drugs. In addition, the psychological and physiological harms of drug use are addressed, and it is stated that overcoming addiction is possible by turning to spirituality as a solution. These lines clearly reflect the stance of the song and the group toward the drug subculture.

The following portion of the song depicts the drug as ‘*zehir*’ (poison), presenting the narcotic substance as toxic and harmful. While this section portrays drug use by addicts as a means of escaping daily problems, it emphasizes that the personal, material and moral values lost through drug use cannot be regained in any way.

*Al seccadeni yönel Rabbine, yen bu tuzağı,
Yıkma annenin sırtını yasladığı şu dağı.
Yaktığın ahiretin dostum, bu bir çıra değil,
Bırak şu zehirleri de git secdede eğil.
Derdine çare bedeni uyuşturmak değil,
Huzur için Rabbine bak, etmelisin meyl.*

Take your prayer rug and turn to your
Lord, break this trap,
Don’t destroy the mountain your mother
leans her back on.
The afterlife you’re burning, my friend,
this isn’t just a spark
Leave these poisons behind and bow down
in prostration

Numbing your body won't cure your pain
If you're seeking peace, turn to your Lord,
you should open your heart.

As mentioned above and discussed elsewhere in the song, freedom from drugs is presented as something that can be achieved by the addicted person through turning to spirituality. When parts of this song are examined, it becomes clear through the use of religious motifs that the singer recommends spirituality as a method of treatment for addiction.

Ogeday / Kaybettim Seni (I Lost You): Although it is the fourth song critical of the drug subculture in the context of this study, it is actually the first song to take a critical stance chronologically. '*Kaybettim Seni*' (I Lost You), was performed by the rapper *Ogeday* in 2003. The song tells the story of a teenage girl who uses drugs and a friend of hers who does not. This particular song does not contain any overt symbols, expressions or slang terms associated with the drug subculture. Only the setting shown in the video, which resembles a nightclub and its surrounding environment, suggests a connection to parties often associated with drug use.

<i>Bir bela bu kaçınmak zor,</i>	This is a curse, hard to avoid
<i>Bir fena bu, onu öldürüyor.</i>	It's something awful, it's killing him
<i>Genç beyinlere saldırıyor,</i>	It attacks young minds
<i>Kandırıp onları harcıyor.</i>	Tricks them and wastes them
<i>Kapılıp düşenler, gidenler çok,</i>	Many get caught up and fall, many are gone
<i>Gidip de geri gelenler hiç yok.</i>	No one returns once they're gone
<i>Bir nevi katil bunu bil,</i>	Know this, it's a kind of killer
<i>Uyanık ol işte benden sana yol.</i>	Stay sharp, that's the road I'm giving you
<i>Arkadaşını seç çocuk bak çocuk,</i>	Choose your friends wisely, kid, look, kid
<i>Zaman kötü gel çocuk ölüm soğuk.</i>	Times are bad, kid, death is cold
<i>Gülen yüzler sana hep dost değil,</i>	Not every smiling face is your friend
<i>Sıcak sözler sana tek söz değil.</i>	Not every sweet word means something real
<i>Sürekli uçuyor sanırlar onlar,</i>	They always think they're flying high
<i>Süratli düşerler fark etmezler.</i>	But they fall fast and don't even notice
<i>Bilmezler hayat bu kadar basit mi,</i>	They don't realize life isn't that simple
<i>Değer mi paraya fani dünya?</i>	Is it really worth chasing money in the mortal world?

The words chosen from the song and shown above strongly reflect the themes of hopelessness, desperation and pessimism. At the same time, the song reveals the lives consumed by the drug subculture. Even the title of the song refers to lives lost as a result of drug use. When evaluated chronologically, this song by *Ogeday* is one of the first to take a negative stance toward the drug subculture. In the early 2000s, drawing attention to drug use, which was not as common as it is today, can be considered a very important message.

Sansür / Uyuşturucuya Hayır (No to Drugs): The fifth song, '*Uyuşturucuya Hayır*' (No to Drugs), is performed by a rap artist using the nickname Sansür. At the beginning of the song, the drug addiction stories of real addicts are heard in their own words. The music video features the rapper performing the song directly to a young drug addict sitting across from him. Selected parts of the song are as follows:

<i>Bak bir gününü verme ona yazık.</i>	Don't give even a day of your life to it, it's a shame
<i>Boş ver içme onu be mutluluk sanıp,</i>	
<i>Folyoya doldurup veyahut sarıp,</i>	Forget it, don't smoke it thinking it brings happiness
<i>Babanın parası o ter akıtıp alıp.</i>	Filling foil or rolling it up
<i>Bir kapak daha yapaydı dostum demekle.</i>	That's your dad's money, earned through sweat
<i>Onu içersen eğer ki o beden paslanır.</i>	
<i>Emin ol sen hiçbir şey kazanmıyorsun,</i>	Wishing for one more hit
<i>Kazanan tek kişi satıcısıdır.</i>	If you use it, your body starts to rust
	Believe me, you're not gaining anything
	The only one winning is the dealer.

This part selected from the song reflects the negative effects of drugs and their use on both the addicted person and their family, as in other songs that take a critical approach. The physical harm caused by drug use is also described in this section. The line '*Uyuşturucu yaşatmaz, öldürür!*' (Drugs don't keep you alive death, they kill!) aligns with the title of the song and clearly expresses the singer's anti-drug stance.

Okan İlhan / Bir Kereden (For Once): The thirteenth song that we examined was created for a rap music competition held to support the prevention of drug use. The competition, organized by the Republic of Turkey, is titled '*Rap Burada*' (Rap is Here) and is an award-winning event coordinated by the Department of Combating Narcotic Crimes under the

authority of the General Directorate of Security. It is part of the '*Narko Yarışma Projesi*' (Narcotic Competition Project) conducted by the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Turkey (CNN Türk, 2021).

The rap song '*Bir Kereden*' (For Once) is performed by the rapper known as *Nasihat* and was written by a police officer Okan İlhan, who serves in the Anti-Narcotic Crimes Branch of the Istanbul Police Department. Therefore, as he criticizes drug use and the drug subculture in his role as a member of the law enforcement agencies fighting against drug-related crimes, the song holds a particular place among those critical to the drug subculture, which led to its inclusion in the scope of this study.

<i>Neden dedim düştün bu illete?</i>	Why did you fall into this mess, I asked
<i>Dedi abi eğitimsiziz,</i>	He said, "Bro, we're uneducated"
<i>İnsanız tabii hataya meyilliyiz.</i>	We're human, of course we're prone to mistakes
<i>İtmeye dursun biri düşeriz.</i>	If someone just gives a push, we fall"
<i>En yakınım dedi en yakınım,</i>	My closest, he said, my closest
<i>En yakınımdaki bildiklerim,</i>	The people I thought were closest
<i>Teslim olmayıp cenk etseydim,</i>	If only I had fought instead of giving in
<i>İçime de sevgiyi zerk etseydim."</i>	If only I had injected love into myself instead
<i>"Bir bende var sanırdım dert keder,</i>	"I used to think pain and sorrow were mine alone
<i>Bu illetmiş asıl dert keder.</i>	But this poison is the real pain and sorrow
<i>Tedavi ol dedim kardeşim geçer,</i>	I told, brother, go get treatment, it'll pass
<i>Ağlamanın gözü yaşlı anneler.</i>	So mothers with tearful eyes won't have to cry
<i>Türk gençleri bak bu işi halleder,</i>	Look, Turkish youth can handle this
<i>Sönüp gitmesin ülkemde gençler.</i>	Let our young people not fade away in this
<i>Bir kereden bir şey olmaz derler.</i>	country
<i>Hiç başlama diyenleriniz haklı.</i>	They say "one time won't hurt"
<i>Boşaltır tabii ki de önce cüzdanı,</i>	But the ones who say "never start", they're right
<i>Yeminler ederler, azdır tutanı.</i>	Of course it empties your wallet first
	They swear they'll quit, but few can keep their promises.

The song titled '*Bir Kereden*' (For Once) holds a distinctive position compared to other songs, as it was created by the General Directorate of Security itself. Throughout the song, as reflected in the lyrics above, a strong belief in the potential of youth is frequently

expressed. The lyrics consistently highlight the harms caused by drug use, aiming to deter young people from drugs by drawing attention to these negative aspects.

Çelebi / Pes Etme (Don't Give Up): The last song that we examined is 'Pes Etme' (Don't Give Up), which was published on the YouTube channel of the group *Nefer*, on 26 June 2021, coinciding with the 'International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking'. It was released following the rap music competition organized by the Department for Combating Narcotic Crimes. While the rapper using the pseudonym *Çelebi* performed the song, one of the nine different musical backtracks prepared for the 'Rap Burada' (Rap is Here) competition was used as its instrumental background.

<i>Yıkılma asla, duvarlar üstüne gelebilir inatla.</i>	Never collapse, the walls may come down on you with stubborn force
<i>Her gecenin bir sabahı vardır,</i>	But every night has its morning
<i>Gel, umuda gözlerini kapatma.</i>	Come on, don't close your eyes to hope
<i>Söyle, deniz aranır mı çölde,</i>	Tell me, would you search for the sea in a desert
<i>Suda yol alınır mı yürümeyle?</i>	Can you move through water just by walking
<i>Dertlerini kucakla, burası dünya,</i>	Embrace your troubles, this is the world
<i>Sonsuz huzur cennette.</i>	True and endless peace is in paradise
<i>Pes etme, dik dur eğilme,</i>	Don't give up, stand tall, don't bow your head
<i>Hadi dur de gidişata o koca yüreğinle.</i>	Tell things to stop with your big heart
<i>Sabah geceyi ışıklarında boğacaktır,</i>	Morning will drown the night in its light
<i>Sabır güneşin kapılarını açacaktır.</i>	Patience will open the doors to the sun.

This final song reviewed, 'Pes Etme' (Don't Give Up), can be considered an official initiative, as it was produced as part of the 'Rap Burada' (Rap is Here) competition. As in the previous song, the detrimental effects of drug use are emphasized, with strong language and paired with the theme of regret. Additionally, individuals who supply drugs are sharply criticized in the lyrics.

The second group of seven songs examined also share a common denominator: all of these songs emphasize that people who use drugs not only harm themselves but also those around them, that a strong belief system can help individuals recover from this self-

destructive path, and that the only ones who benefit are the drug dealers who profit financially. In these songs, which take a critical stance toward the drug subculture, the names of drugs or depictions of their use are not directly mentioned. Although there is no explicit evidence that the rappers adopted this approach intentionally, it allowed them to focus on various themes related to the drug subculture, such as the harms resulting from drug use, and ways to prevent or overcome addiction.

Discussion

Within the scope of this research, rap songs were examined through content analysis in relation to the drug subculture. The study claims that a significant portion of rap music reflects and reinforces elements of the drug subculture, and the selected songs were evaluated with this objective in mind. In the first part of the study, numerous references to the drug subculture were identified. Based on the presence of specific sub-themes, it was concluded that a significant portion of rap music reflects and reinforces elements of the drug subculture.

In the second phase of the study, songs that criticize the drug subculture were analyzed. These rap songs were evaluated in terms of themes such as bodily harm, moral and material losses, referral for treatment, orientation toward spirituality, expressions of regret, references to substance names, and the harm inflicted on users and their families. In this group of songs, slang terms were rarely encountered. Instead, the emphasis was placed on the losses experienced or likely to be experienced by addicts, as a means of highlighting the negative consequences of drug use.

Prior to the analysis of the selected fourteen songs, it was stated that the primary criterion for their selection was not the viewing figures, but the presence of subthemes related to the drug subculture. The viewing figures were considered as a secondary criterion. Nonetheless, when the figures for all fourteen selected songs are examined, it becomes evident that the group of seven songs considered as encouraging drug use reached a much wider audience. Six of the songs in the group that criticize drug use ranked at the bottom of the list in terms of views. The only exception was '*Düşme*' by *Heijan* and *Muti* (Song Number 8), which ranked third among all fourteen songs.

The findings related to the viewing figures of the fourteen songs analyzed in this study do

not represent a coincidence unique to this sample. According to recent statistics on Turkish rap music, songs that encourage drug use have consistently been more popular than those that take a critical stance toward the drug subculture (Çakmak, 2024; Rapertuar, 2024). It would be an oversimplification to attribute the popularity of such songs solely to the overall increase in drug use in recent decades. Songs that adopt a positive stance toward the drug subculture may also contribute to shaping attitudes and behavior regarding drug use among young people. In this regard, as Miller et al. noted, “the direction of the relationship is not specified” (Miller et al., 2016).

Although rap songs that contain lyrics praising drug use may not lead young people to use drugs in the short term (Harakeh and Ter Bogt, 2018), their long-term influence has been widely acknowledged (Chen et al., 2006). Ultimately, this influence may contribute to a snowball effect in Turkey, potentially exacerbating drug use among the youth population.

In pro-drug subculture songs, specific drug-related terms, violent content, and slang expressions are more commonly used. On the other hand, themes such as hopelessness, pessimism, and helplessness appear in the lyrics of both pro-drug and anti-drug songs. In rap songs that are critical of the drug subculture, the negative effects of drug use on individuals are emphasized, and suggestions for overcoming addiction are often included. The detention of rappers who produced songs encouraging drug use drew public attention beyond their typical audiences. This, in turn, sparked greater curiosity about the content of the songs that led to criminal prosecution, as well as the specific substances referenced in their lyrics.

It is widely accepted that lyrics from songs by artists admired and taken as role models by adolescents and young adults can have a significant impact. This age group, in which the search for identity is most intense, is particularly susceptible to external influences. In this context, it can be reasonably argued that songs aimed at preventing drug use may have a strong deterrent effect on young people. However, these songs often occupy a weaker and less influential position.

The songs critical of the drug subculture, analyzed in the second category of this study, are largely in reactive mode to those that promote drug use. The latter tend to be more popular and appealing among youth familiar with or influenced by the drug subculture. Moreover, the fact that a considerable number of anti-drug songs are produced through

governmental initiatives or non-governmental social responsibility projects suggests that they may sometimes lack a genuine emotional or cultural connection with their target audience. As a result, they may be less effective in influencing behavioral change. This complex dynamic, as revealed through a comprehensive assessment of the selected songs, highlights a phenomenon that warrants further investigation in future research.

In conclusion, it can be stated that songs emphasizing drug-related themes are more prominent and widely listened to by young people in Turkey, which presents a concerning trend for those already familiar with or exposed to the drug subculture. Although a number of anti-drug songs aim to highlight the harms of substance use, they remain in the minority compared to songs that praise or encourage drug use. Beyond this quantitative imbalance, the relative disconnection between anti-drug songs and the youth subculture is another factor that limits their effectiveness in influencing young audiences.

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