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# HİTİT İLÂHİYAT DERGİSİ

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Special Issue on Religion, Philosophy and Society  
Din, Felsefe ve Toplum Özel Sayısı



HİTİT  
ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
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## Microaggression and Japanese Muslim Women

Mikroagresyon ve Japon Müslüman Kadınlar

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## Microaggression and Japanese Muslim Women

### Abstract

Microaggressions are subtle, mostly unintentional and not ill-intended but discriminatory or biased behaviours, actions or conversations that have negative impacts towards minorities, disadvantaged or marginalised groups. Even though they are not intentional or not ill-intended, due to their cumulative nature, they still can have harmful effects on those who experience them. These effects include emotional ones such as anger, stress, frustration, anxiety, self-doubt and depression as well as stress-related physiological diseases: hypertension and heart diseases. Therefore, they significantly impact the life of those who are exposed to them. Microaggressions can take three forms: microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations. They are several types of microaggressions: racial, sexist, albeit or ageist, or religious.

Japan has approximately 150.000 Muslims. A majority of them are immigrant Muslims, and only %10 of them are estimated to be native Japanese Muslims. This makes Japanese Muslims a minority among a minority. Although both immigrant and Japanese Muslims are quite contented with their lives in Japanese society, Japanese Muslim women are easily identified as Muslims in the society due to their hijab, and come across microaggressions from time to time. This work is an ethnographic study focusing on religious microaggressions that Japanese Muslim women encounter during their daily lives in Japan. The data is obtained during the researcher's almost two and half years of studies in Japan, Tokyo. The participant observation, semi-structured interviews and field notes data are analysed thematically to discover the religious microaggression types of Japanese women experience and their responses towards them. It is also aimed to see to what extent religious microaggressions have an influence on their lives.

It is discovered that Japanese Muslim women encounter three types of microaggressions: being mistaken as a foreigner, underestimation of personal agency and offensive jokes. Due to a lack of familiarity with Japanese society about hijab-wearing Japanese Muslim women, they are frequently assumed to be foreigners and approached in English, and this is the first microaggression, being mistaken as a foreigner. The second one is when society assumes it is their Muslim husbands or boyfriends who convinced them for religious conversion and for hijab as well, thus, underestimating Japanese Muslim women's personal agency. The last one is offensive jokes: jokes on stereotypes such as terrorism and jokes on their mental health. These three microaggressions affect Japanese Muslim women's lives in four ways: frustration, efforts to prove themselves, leading double lives, and last but not least, detachment from the society. The first step is getting frustrated. Dealing with daily assumptions on them frustrates them. Next comes more serious steps. Some get into an effort of proving their decision to be correct: showing the society the rightness and/or the beauty of Islam. Some, rather than dealing with the society, prefer to hide their religious identity and continue their daily lives as secret Muslims. They do not wear hijab in front of their non-Muslim friends, family and acquaintances, but wear it while attending to Islamic events. They do not pray openly and they find excuses for not eating non-halal. They lead double lives. Lastly, some, perhaps the most serious impact of microaggressions, distance themselves from Japanese society. They leave their jobs. They do not socialise with non-Muslim friends. Due to microaggressions they experience, they detach themselves from the society.

Microaggression is still a new discussion topic among social scientists and the public. Due to the suspicions of its nature or harmful results, awareness-raising activities are not widespread enough. Therefore, in order to understand microaggression and its harmful results better, and to create more equal and inclusive societies, it is necessary to increase the microaggression studies.

**Key Words:** Sociology of Religion, Microaggression, Religious Microaggression, Discrimination, Japanese Muslim Women.

### Mikroagresyon ve Japon Müslüman Kadınlar

#### Öz

Mikroagresyon, azınlıklara, dezavantajlı veya marjinal gruplara yönelik olumsuz etkileri olan gizli, çoğunlukla kasıtlı ve kötü niyetli olmayan ancak ayrımcı veya önyargılı tarafları bulunan tavır, eylem veya konuşmalardır. Kasıtlı veya kötü niyetli olmasalar bile, kümülatif ve günlük doğaları nedeniyle, bunları yaşayanlar üzerinde yine de zararlı etkilere sahip olabilmektedirler. Bu etkiler; öfke, stress, hayal kırıklığı, kaygı, kendinden şüphe duyma ve depresyon gibi duygusal etkilerin yanı sıra hipertansiyon ve kalp hastalıkları gibi strese bağlı fizyolojik etkileri de içermektedir. Bu nedenle mikroagresyonlar maruz kalanların yaşamlarını ciddi bir biçimde etkileyebilmektedirler. Mikroagresyon üç şekilde gerçekleşebilmektedir: mikro-hakaretler, mikro-aşağılamalar ve mikro-değersizleştirmeler. Ayrıca ırka, cinsiyete, yaşa, engele veya dine yönelik olmak üzere pek çok türü bulunmaktadır.

Japonya'nın Müslüman nüfusu yaklaşık 150.000 civarındadır. Bunun büyük bir çoğunluğu göçmen Müslümanlardır. Yaklaşık %10'unun etnik Japon Müslüman olduğu tahmin edilmektedir. Bu nedenle Japon Müslümanlar azınlık içinde azınlık konumundadırlar. Hem göçmen hem de Japon Müslümanlar Japon

toplumdaki hayatlarından oldukça memnun olsalar da, Japon Müslüman kadınlar başörtüleri nedeniyle toplumda kolayca Müslüman olarak fark edilmekte ve zaman zaman mikroagresyonlara maruz kalabilmektedirler. Etnografik bir çalışma olan bu araştırma, Japon Müslüman kadınların Japonya'daki günlük yaşamları sırasında karşılaştıkları dini mikroagresyonlara odaklanmaktadır. Veriler araştırmacının Japonya, Tokyo'daki yaklaşık iki buçuk yıllık çalışmaları sırasında elde edilmiştir. Katılımcı gözlem, yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat ve saha notu verileri, Japon kadınların deneyimledikleri dini mikroagresyon türlerini ve bunlara yönelik tepkilerini keşfetmek için tematik olarak analiz edilmiştir. Ayrıca dini mikroagresyonların onların yaşamları üzerinde ne ölçüde etkili olduğunu görmek amaçlanmıştır.

Bu çalışmada Japon Müslüman kadınların üç tür mikroagresyon ile karşılaştıkları tespit edilmiştir: yabancı sanılma, kişisel irade güçlerinin küçümsenmesi ve saldırgan şakalar. Japon toplumu başörtü takan Japon Müslüman kadınlara aşina değildir, bu sebeple karşılaştıklarında yabancı olduklarını varsayıp İngilizce iletişim kurmaya çalışmaktadırlar. İlk mikroagresyon budur: yabancı sanılmak. İkincisi, toplumun Japon Müslüman kadınların din değiştirme ve başörtüsü kullanma sebeplerini eşlerinin ya da erkek arkadaşlarının karar ve ısrarları olduğunu varsaymasıdır. Bu Japon Müslüman kadınların kişisel irade güçlerini hafife almaktır. Sonuncusu ise terörizm ve akıl sağlığı gibi konular üzerine stereotipik ve saldırgan şakalardır. Bu üç tip mikrosaldırıcılığa karşı Japon Müslüman kadınların dört şekilde tepki gösterdikleri görülmüştür; bıkkınlık, kendilerini kanıtlama çabaları, ikili hayatlar sürme ve son olarak da toplumdaki kopma. İlk adım bıkkınlıktır. Günlük olarak uğraşmak durumunda kaldıkları varsayımlardan yorulmuşlardır. Ardından daha ciddi adımlar gelmektedir. Bazıları verdikleri kararların doğruluğunu ve İslam'ın doğruluğunu ve güzelliğini ispat etme çabasına girmektedir. Bazıları ise toplumla uğraşmaktansa dini kimliklerini gizlemeyi ve gizli birer Müslüman olarak gündelik yaşamlarına devam etmeyi tercih etmektedir. Müslüman olmayan Japon arkadaşlarının, ailelerinin ve tanıdıklarının önünde başörtüsü takmamaktadırlar. Açıkta namaz kılmamakta ve helal olmayanı tüketmemek için başka bahanelere başvurmaktadırlar. Son olarak, mikroagresyonların belki en ciddi etkisi, bazıları da kendilerini Japon toplumundan uzaklaştırmaktadır. İşlerini bırakmakta ve gayrimüslim arkadaşları ile görüşmemeye başlamaktadırlar. Yaşadıkları mikroagresyonlar onları Japon toplumundan uzaklaştırmaktadır.

Mikroagresyon sosyal bilimciler arasında bir hala yeni bir tartışma konusudur. Doğası ya da zararlı sonuçları konusundaki şüpheler nedeniyle farkındalık artırma faaliyetleri yeterince yaygın değildir. Bu nedenle, daha eşit ve kapsayıcı toplumlar yaratmak için mikroagresyonu ve sonuçlarını daha iyi anlamaya ve açıklamaya yönelik çalışmalarının artırılması gerekmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Din Sosyolojisi, Mikroagresyon, Dini Mikroagresyon, Ayrımcılık, Japon Müslüman Kadınlar.

## Introduction

We are having a cup of coffee with a young Japanese woman in her twenties, a participant of my doctoral research, and a friend. She has just converted to Islam a few months ago, and upon following her conversion started to wear hijab. Hijab in Japanese society is a rare sight, and then mostly observed among immigrant Muslims. Seeing a Japanese Muslim woman wearing hijab is not an everyday sight. The coffee shop clerk greets my friend in English, and she responds in a frustrated voice tone in Japanese. She does not complain to coffee shop clerk, but while walking away from the shop she turns to me and says "She hates being treated like a foreigner all the time."

This situation, experienced by Japanese Muslim women frequently in their daily lives, is called microaggression. First used by a Harvard university professor in 1970s<sup>1</sup>, microaggression initially was a term defining perhaps unintentional, seemingly innocent and harmless verbal or behavioural interactions that sends negative messages towards people of colour. Sue et al. define microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color."<sup>2</sup> Although the discussions on microaggression has started in the racial context, in time it is noticed that these type of negative

<sup>1</sup> Chester M. Pierce, "Psychiatric Problems of the Black Minority", *American Handbook of Psychiatry*, ed. S. Arieti (New York: NY Basic Books, 1974), 515.

<sup>2</sup> Derald W. Sue et. al. "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice", *American Psychologist* 62/4 (2007), 271.

interactions are not limited to race. Gender or sexuality based<sup>3</sup>, ableism, ageism and religious microaggressions are some of them. For example, assuming one gender is less competent than the other gender is a gender microaggression,<sup>4</sup> or assuming a disabled person is incompetent on performing certain task and commenting on it as ableism microaggression,<sup>5</sup> or making assumptious or derogatory comments on a particular religious group is a religious microaggression.<sup>6</sup>

Based on the type of interaction, microaggressions can have categories such as microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations.<sup>7</sup> Microassaults are prejudiced or discriminative actions or expressions towards a person or a group. Getting scanned by the airport security more frequently than the others<sup>8</sup> or when entering a store being followed by a security guard just in case<sup>9</sup> are some of the microassault types. They stem from a prejudiced perspective that some group of people are more prone to unlawful acts than the others, hence controlling them more. Microinsults are disrespectful or impolite interactions towards a group, such as assuming lesser intelligence or ability and making related remarks. Having low academic expectations of/from a group or not accepting their accomplishments<sup>10</sup> and assuming lesser social status for people of colour<sup>11</sup> are some examples for this situation. Microinvalidations are the denials or dismissals of discriminative experiences. It happens when a member of a marginalised group relies their negative experience to someone and receives underestimation or doubt. Being constantly ignored by the waitress at a restaurant and getting treated as a foreigner/non-native of the country they were born, and when telling these stories to a friend getting accused of being “‘oversensitive’ or ‘paranoid’”<sup>12</sup> is one example of this phenomenon.

As mentioned above, majority of the studies on the microaggression has been done in racial context. Sue and others identifies nine themes of racial microaggressions: “alien in one’s own land, ascription of intelligence, color blindness, criminality/assumption of criminal status, denial of individual racism, myth of meritocracy, pathologizing cultural values/communication styles, second-class status, and environmental invalidation.”<sup>13</sup> Yosso and others find three types of microaggressions that Latin American students encounter: interpersonal microaggressions, racial jokes and institutional microaggressions. They argue that these migroaggressions “cast doubt on students’ academic merits and capabilities, demean their ethnic identity, and dismiss

<sup>3</sup> Wouter J. Kiekens et. al. “Sexuality and Gender Identity-Based Microaggressions: Differences by Sexual and Gender Identity, and Sex Assignment at Birth Among Dutch Youth”, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 37 (2022), 21293-21319; Kevin L. Nadal et. al. “Sexual Orientation and Transgender Microaggressions: Implications for Mental Health and Counseling”, *Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestation, Dynamics and Impact*, ed. Derald W. Sue (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 217-240.

<sup>4</sup> Tessa E. Basford et. al. “Do You See What I See? Perceptions of Gender Microaggressions in the Workplace”, *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 38/3 (2014), 340-349; Emily R. Kaskan et. al. “Microaggression and Female Athletes”, *Sex Roles* 74 (2016), 275-287.

<sup>5</sup> Richard M. Keller – Corinne E. Galgay, “Microaggressive Experiences of People with Disabilities”, *Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestations, Dynamics and Impact*, ed. Derald W. Sue (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 241-267.

<sup>6</sup> Kevin L. Nadal et. al. “Religious Microaggressions in the United States: Mental Health Implications for Religious Minority Groups”, *Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestation, Dynamics and Impact*, ed. Derald W. Sue (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 287-310.

<sup>7</sup> Sue et. al. “Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice”, 270.

<sup>8</sup> Nadal et. al. “Religious Microaggressions in the United States”, 290.

<sup>9</sup> Derald W. Sue, *Overcoming our Racism: The Journey to Liberation* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 119; 156.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Solorzano et. al. “Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate: The Experiences of African American College Students”, *Journal of Negro Education* 69/1-2 (2000), 60-73.

<sup>11</sup> Lauren Freeman – Heather Stewart, “Microaggressions in Clinical Medicine”, *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 28/4 (2018), 411.

<sup>12</sup> Sue, *Overcoming our Racism*, 126.

<sup>13</sup> Sue et. al. “Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice”, 275.



their cultural knowledge.”<sup>14</sup> Sue and others talks about eight types of migroaggressions for Asian Americans: alien in own land, ascription of intelligence, exoticization of Asian women, invalidation of interethnic differences, denial of racial reality, pathologizing cultural values/communication styles, second class citizenship, and invisibility.<sup>15</sup>

Capodilupo and others argue that in our contemporary world where there are legal and social preventions towards overt discriminations such as racism and sexism, discriminations have not diminished but changed their nature, becoming subtler and more covert. A male boss may claim his stance on gender equality by hiring equal number or male and female workers, however intentionally or unintentionally, he may continue subtle sexism or may favour his male employees more due to cultural and social habits,<sup>16</sup> and this behaviour may be difficult to notice because its subtle nature and “it is built into cultural and societal norms.”<sup>17</sup> Swim and others also name this as everyday sexism: subtle, ambiguous, seemingly common and not openly discriminatory everyday sexist occurrences that is difficult to name and well-hidden into the daily hustle and bustle<sup>18</sup> and easy to dismiss due to it is perceived as normative and nothing unusual.<sup>19</sup> They identify the most common three as traditional gender role beliefs and prejudices, demeaning comments and behaviours, and sexual objectification. According to their research, although not as frequently as women, men also experience this modern forms of subtle sexism.<sup>20</sup> Studying on female athletes, Kaskan and others finds three types of microaggressions that female athletes experience: assumption of inferiority, sexual objectification and restrictive gender roles. They convey that female athletes are assumed to be inferior to their male versions, both in media and in sports field, their appearance is talked more than their achievements and they get criticised in case of not applying to traditional gender roles.<sup>21</sup> In the workplace gender microaggressions, women have found to experience them more than men<sup>22</sup> and it is determined that these experiences lower their organisational commitment to their workplaces.<sup>23</sup>

Freeman and Stewart discuss microaggressions in clinical medicine. They describe microaggression as the socially dominant one’s oppression the vulnerable ones, thus according to their research patients also experience microaggressions due to their vulnerable status. They argue that there are three types of microaggression in the field of clinical medicine: epistemic, emotional and self-identity microaggressions, which result in epistemic, emotional and existential harm and undermining physician-patient relations, thus, urging the physicians to be informed and avoid committing them.<sup>24</sup>

Religious microaggression is another new sphere in the microaggression research. In a 2010 paper Nadal and others hypothesise that due to changing nature of discriminations in the modern world (becoming more covert than overt) and occurring as subtle microaggressions

<sup>14</sup> Tara J. Yosso et. al. “Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate for Latina/o Undergraduates”, *Harvard Educational Review* 79/4 (2009), 667.

<sup>15</sup> Derald W. Sue et. al. “Racial Microaggressions and the Asian American Experience”, *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 13/1 (2007), 72.

<sup>16</sup> Christina M. Capodilupo et. al. “The Manifestation of Gender Microaggressions”, *Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestations, Dynamics and Impact*, ed. Derald W. Sue (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 193-216.

<sup>17</sup> Janet K. Swim – Laurie L. Cohen “Overt, Covert and Subtle Sexism: A Comparison Between the Attitudes Toward Women and Modern Sexism Scales”, *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 21 (1997), 103.

<sup>18</sup> Janet K. Swim et. al. “Everyday Sexism: Evidence for its Incidence, Nature, and Psychological Impact from Three Daily Diary Studies”, *Journal of Social Issues* 57/1 (2001), 31-53.

<sup>19</sup> Janet K. Swim et. al. “Understanding Subtle Sexism: Detection and Use of Sexist Language”, *Sex Roles* 51/3/4 (2004), 117.

<sup>20</sup> Swim et. al. “Everyday Sexism”, 31-53.

<sup>21</sup> Kaskan et. al. “Microaggression and Female Athletes”, 275-287.

<sup>22</sup> Basford et. al. “Do You See What I See?”, 344-345.

<sup>23</sup> Sharon Foley et. al. “Perceptions of Discrimination and Justice: Are There Gender Differences in Outcomes?”, *Group & Organization Management* 30/4 (2005), 442.

<sup>24</sup> Freeman – Stewart, “Microaggressions in Clinical Medicine”, 415.

more frequently than the blatant discrimination, religious discrimination probably occurs in this form as well and has to be researched.<sup>25</sup> Later, in 2012, he and his team publish a paper on the American Muslims' experience and disclose six types of microaggressions: endorsement of religious stereotypes, pathology of the religion, assumption of religious homogeneity, exoticization, discriminatory language, and alien in own land.<sup>26</sup> Focusing on Jewish and Muslim communities, Kaplin also discusses six similar types: "(a) endorse religious stereotypes, (b) engage in exoticization of Jews and Muslims, (c) pathologize different religious groups (d) assume their religious identity is the norm, (e) assume that all members of a religious faith practice their faith similarly (f) deny the existence of religious prejudice."<sup>27</sup> Both researches shed light on the religious microaggression problem with their similar results. However, comparing with other types of microaggression research, the studies on religious microaggressions are still new and in quite limited number and area.

Nevertheless, some scholars are suspicious of the microaggressions. Lilienfeld claims that the term microaggression is not well-defined and is ambiguous, the acts described as microaggressions are not always interpreted negatively by all those who experienced them, they are not implicitly prejudicial and aggressive, they base upon subjective reports and their impact on mental health are not well researched and proved. Thus, he argues microaggression is an exaggerated term and calls for the suspension of public awareness activities on the matter.<sup>28</sup> Commenting on Lilienfeld's work, Haidt furthers the discussion and finds the applications to raise public awareness and to prevent microaggression as "more damaging and less salvageable" because teaching about microaggressions is actually an "instruction in how to detect ever-smaller specks in your neighbor's eye",<sup>29</sup> advising not to see every little fault of others to find happiness in life. Thomas criticises Sue's research on microaggression and finds his arguments flawed, implying Sue misunderstands or exaggerates every incident and warning against its "chilling effect on free speech."<sup>30</sup>

Looking the claims against microaggression above, one can be reminded of a type of microaggression that Sue describes: microinvalidation. Sue explains the underestimation, denial or nullification of the experiential reality of people who experienced microaggressions as microinvalidation.<sup>31</sup> Finding microaggressions ambiguous and subjective,<sup>32</sup> and claiming that people who convey their experiences on microaggressions have depression and anxiety disorders and "the tendency to perceive oneself as a victim",<sup>33</sup> as well as dismissing their feelings on incidents<sup>34</sup> perfectly fit into the microinvalidation category. Williams responds to Lilienfeld's article refuting all his objections. She starts with sharing the clear definition of microaggression and reminds that for an experience and a feeling to be taken seriously it is not necessary for everyone who fits the category to feel the same. She argues that microaggressive acts and attitudes clearly stem from discriminative motives towards minorities, whether they

<sup>25</sup> Nadal et. al. "Religious Microaggressions in the United States", 289.

<sup>26</sup> Kevin L. Nadal et. al. "Subtle and Overt Forms of Islamophobia: Microaggressions toward Muslim Americans", *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* VI/2 (2012), 15-37.

<sup>27</sup> Daniel Kaplin, "Microaggressions and Macroaggressions in Religiously Diverse Communities", *The Official Journal of the New York State Psychological Association* XXIX/3 (2012), 16.

<sup>28</sup> Scott O. Lilienfeld, "Microaggressions: Strong Claims, Inadequate Evidence", *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 12/1 (2017), 138-169.

<sup>29</sup> Jonathan Haidt, "The Unwisest Idea on Campus: Commentary on Lilienfeld (2017)", *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 12/1 (2017), 176-177.

<sup>30</sup> Kenneth R. Thomas, "Macrononsense in Multiculturalism", *American Psychologist* 63/4 (2007), 274-275.

<sup>31</sup> Sue et. al. "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life", 274.

<sup>32</sup> Lilienfeld, "Microaggressions: Strong Claims, Inadequate Evidence", 138-169.

<sup>33</sup> Haidt, "The Unwisest Idea on Campus", 176.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas, "Macrononsense in Multiculturalism", 274-275.

are performed consciously or unconsciously, that referring on self-reports is a reliable method to assess the experiential reality of people, and reminds the studies on the effects of microaggressions on mental health.<sup>35</sup>

Microaggression is still a controversial concept. Its existence and effects are discussed among scholars. It is thought of “political correctness run amok”, it is argued that “even if the microaggression causes harm, it is everyone’s right under free speech to say it anyway”, it is criticised as feeding of the victim culture, and it is not given enough importance due to scarcity of scientific research.<sup>36</sup> However, as it is explained in the paragraph above, it is a valid concern for those who experience them, affecting their well-being seriously, thus it should be researched further.

Also called as automatic and unconscious subtle insults<sup>37</sup> or subtle discriminations these type of interactions may not always have an ill intention behind them and can seem harmless from outside.<sup>38</sup> However, encountering with seemingly innocuous or ambiguous microaggressions can be very tiresome, stressful and even harmful for those who experience them frequently.<sup>39</sup> Considering racial microaggressions, being considered as an outsider/foreigner in one’s own country<sup>40</sup> can result in “feeling invalidated, belittled and frustrated.”<sup>41</sup> Microaggressions can cause sadness, anger, frustration or anxiety, as well as some physical symptoms such as headaches and sleeping difficulties. Having to deal with microaggressions on a daily basis can also impair the academic or work performances of individuals.<sup>42</sup> Rather than dealing with microaggressive remarks, individuals can withdraw from society and prefer a social isolation or fall into loneliness. Individuals who experience microaggressions frequently can internalise the derogatory remarks they receive and can start to feel self-doubt or a sense of inferiority.<sup>43</sup> The prolonged stress caused by persisted continuous microaggressions are found to be linked to hypertension and heart diseases,<sup>44</sup> as well as increasing anger and depression and decreasing self-esteem.<sup>45</sup> Even in cases that individuals self-report their nonchalance and indifference towards discriminatory encounters, studies have found these encounters have an impact on their blood pressure, without them noticing any momentarily physical changes.<sup>46</sup> Scheitle and Ecklund also discovers that ambiguous discrimination causes more stress to ones who experience it than the clear and organisational discrimination. This is because people deploy coping mechanisms when they expect discrimination, however, they get caught off guard when it happens unexpected.<sup>47</sup> Gee and others analyse 62 empirical articles on health and discrimination relation among Asian Americans, and they conclude according to all these

<sup>35</sup> Williams, “Microaggressions: Clarification, Evidence, and Impact”, 3-26.

<sup>36</sup> Tiffany Jana - Michael Baran, *Subtle Acts of Exclusion: How to Understand, Identify, and Stop Microaggressions*. Kindle Edition. (Broadway: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2020), 256.

<sup>37</sup> Solorzano et. al. “Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate”, 60-73.

<sup>38</sup> Solorzano et. al. “Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate”, 61.

<sup>39</sup> Monnica T. Williams, “Microaggressions: Clarification, Evidence, and Impact”, *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 15/1 (2020), 3.

<sup>40</sup> Sue, *Overcoming Our Racism*, 124-127.

<sup>41</sup> Sue, *Overcoming Our Racism*, 139.

<sup>42</sup> Kevin L. Nadal et.al. “The Adverse Impact of Racial Microaggressions on College Students’ Self-Esteem”, *Journal of College Student Development* 55/5 (2014), 468.

<sup>43</sup> Solorzano et. al. “Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate”, 60-73; Chester Pierce, “Stress Analogs of Racism and Sexism: Terrorism, Torture, and Disaster”, *Mental Health, Racism, and Sexism*, eds. Charles V. Willie et. al. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995).

<sup>44</sup> Kaskan et. al. “Microaggression and Female Athletes”, 280.

<sup>45</sup> Swim et. al. “Everyday Sexism”, 31.

<sup>46</sup> Harrel et. al. “Physiological Responses to Racism and Discrimination”, 244-245.

<sup>47</sup> Christopher Scheitle et. al. “The Association between Religious Discrimination and Health: Disaggregating by Types of Discrimination Experiences, Religious Tradition, and Forms of Health”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 0 (2023), 21.

studies discriminative behaviours are linked with stress related illnesses such as depression, heart diseases and obesity, as well as lower life quality such as less educational achievement, not being able to accumulate wealth and having to live in less desirable environments.<sup>48</sup> Microaggressions can have a cumulative effect on individuals, contributing to feelings of invalidation, stress, and exclusion. They can also reinforce harmful stereotypes and perpetuate systemic inequalities. They may not be seen or experienced as traumatic life events due to their subtle occurrences, however because of their cumulative continuance, they end up having a significant impact on those who experience them daily.<sup>49</sup> Denial or underestimation of microaggressions causes lack of response from outsiders, thus leaving those who experience it left alone.<sup>50</sup>

### 1. Purpose

The concept of microaggression not being taken seriously due to the lack of evidence on its harms is an indication of how crucial it is to work on this issue. With the determination of its seriousness, an awareness can be created and those who exhibit microaggressive behaviors without even being aware of them can be informed. Thus, microaggressive behaviours against minorities, and those who are different, vulnerable or seemingly marginal can be prevented. It is important to recognise and address microaggressions in order to create a more inclusive and equitable society. This can involve calling out the negative behaviour, educating others on the impact of microaggressions, and actively working to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of life.

As a social scientist, I personally have witnessed how my Japanese Muslim friends experienced microaggression, and how it influenced their daily lives and identities. Therefore, I found it necessary to focus on the issue further. Microaggression is first noticed as racial aggressions, and in time the research extended to other areas.<sup>51</sup> Microaggression types includes but not limited to racial, gender, age, and religious ones. This study focuses on religious microaggressions Japanese Muslims women encounter in Japan. The main problem of the study is the determination of the microaggression types that Japanese Muslim women encounter in their daily lives, their responses, and what kind of an impact that microaggressions have on them.

### 2. Participants and Methodology

This is an ethnographic field study on the microaggression experiences of Japanese Muslim women. In between 2016-2017 and 2019-2020 I met and interviewed Japanese Muslim converts to hear their conversion stories, and to discover their conversion patterns and how they manage to combine two identities as a native Japanese and a Muslim. In Japanese society, Muslim identity is mostly accepted a cultural identity belonging foreigner living faraway lands. Obuse defines Muslims as “cultural others”.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, when a Japanese becomes a Muslim, they chose a strange religious identity, unknown in their society, perhaps sometimes disconcerting. The Muslim population in Japan is already very low, they are a minority group. According to

<sup>48</sup> Gilbert C. Gee et. al. “Racial Discrimination and Health Among Asian Americans: Evidence, Assessment, and Directions for Future Research”, *Epidemiologic Reviews* 31 (2009), 144.

<sup>49</sup> Pierce, “Stress Analogs of Racism and Sexism”; Jules P. Harrel et. al. “Physiological Responses to Racism and Discrimination: An Assessment of the Evidence”, *American Journal of Public Health* 93/2 (2003), 247; Swim et. al. “Everyday Sexism”, 31; Kristen P. Jones et. al. “Not So Subtle: A Meta-Analytic Investigation of the Correlates of Subtle and Overt Discrimination”, *Journal of Management* XX/X (2013), 1-26.

<sup>50</sup> Basford, “Do You See What I See?”, 341.

<sup>51</sup> Williams, “Microaggressions: Clarification, Evidence, and Impact”, 5.

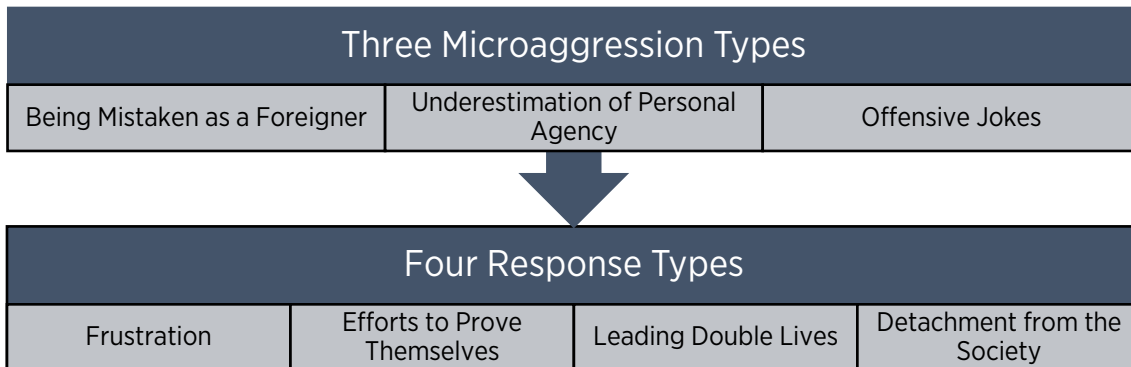
<sup>52</sup> Kieko Obuse, “Living Compound Marginality: Experiences of a Japanese Muslim Woman”, *Religions* 10 (2019), 434.

recent research Muslims in Japan is approximately 150.000,<sup>53</sup> and only 10 percent of this number is guessed to be native Japanese, the rest are immigrant Muslims.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, when a Japanese converts to Islam, they become minority among minority. How they manage to construct and maintain Japanese Muslim identity is a curious case to delve into.

During the conversion study for approximately two and half years, I conducted semi-structured interviews with thirty two Japanese Muslim women. The communication with Japanese Muslims were not confined to the interview process, it continued during our daily lives. Friendships were formed, we frequently met in our leisure times, visited cafes, museums and temples, took hiking and cultural trips. In this way, I could also carry out a throughout participant observation and witness/see the ways they carry Muslim identity in their daily lives and their interactions with the rest of the society. Although they do not experience blatant discrimination and mostly feel contended with their lives among Japanese society,<sup>55</sup> during this period, I witnessed some microaggressions towards my companions and observed their reactions. Microaggressions were mostly unintentional, and not ill-minded perhaps, however having to deal with them time after time can have an impact on people.

This research is based on participant observations, semi-structured interviews and field notes. The study examines how Japanese Muslim women experience and respond to microaggressions. The study also focuses on the extent of influence of migroaggressions Japanese Muslim women encounter casually on their identities and belonging to Japanese society. The observation and semi-structured interview data is thematically analysed.

Table 1: Microaggressions and Japanese Muslim Women's Responses



As a result, Japanese Muslim women have found to deal with three types of microaggressions and have four types of responses towards them. Three types migroaggressions are being mistaken as a foreigner, underestimation of personal agency and offensive jokes. Four types of responses are frustration, errors to prove themselves, leading double lives and detachment from the society. I will discuss these themes in the following sections.

### 3. Three Microaggression Types

Japanese Muslim women experience marginality in three ways: “marginality deriving from being a Muslim, from being a Japanese Muslim and from being a woman.”<sup>56</sup> They are marginal because

<sup>53</sup> See Hirofumi Tanada “世界と日本のムスリム人口-2018年” (World and Japan Muslim Population-2018), 早稲田大学人間科学研究 (Waseda University Faculty of Human Sciences Research) 32/2 (2019), 253-262

<sup>54</sup> Elif Büşra Kocalan, “Four Motivations of Conversion to Islam: Japanese Muslims”, *Bilimname* 47 (2022), 713-754.

<sup>55</sup> Elif Büşra Kocalan, *Müslümanlaşma Sürecine Sosyolojik Bir Yaklaşım: Japon Müslümanlar* (Çorum: Hitit Üniversitesi, Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, Doktora Tezi, 2021), 151-161.

<sup>56</sup> Obuse, “Living Compound Marginality”, 1.

they converted to Islam, a minor and a foreign religion in Japan. They are marginal because they are not immigrant born-Muslims, they are native Japanese who chose Islam. This is important due to Japanese society's acceptance and tolerance of immigrant Muslims living among them, but having difficulty to accept Japanese Muslim converts.<sup>57</sup> And lastly, they are marginal because they chose a religion that has a fame for its oppression of women.

Of the 32 Japanese Muslim women I interviewed, 14 of them talked about the difficulties, misunderstandings and subtle discriminations they had as a Muslim woman living among Japanese society.<sup>58</sup> Living though this compound marginality, Japanese Muslim women encounter three types of microaggressions in their daily lives: being mistaken as a foreigner, underestimation of personal agency and offensive jokes.

### 3.1. Being Mistaken as a Foreigner

One of the most frequently occurring theme in the microaggression studies is the assumption of being a foreigner. Belonging to a minority group and not conforming the expected and normal accepted appearance of the majority brings this assumption.

As I relayed in the beginning of this article, Japanese women who converted to Islam and chose to wear a hijab frequently get mistaken as a foreigner. Japanese society is used to seeing immigrant hijabi Muslim women, but not native Japanese hijabis. Therefore, when they encounter one, they assume she is a foreigner and approach speaking English. Most of the time this approach does not have any ill intentions behind it, however, for a Japanese woman it may appear that their Japaneseness is being questioned. For a society that gives importance to unity in their culture,<sup>59</sup> being assumed as a foreigner due to differences can be a big deal.

39 years old 36K became a Muslim 5 years ago. She says that when she started to wear a hijab, her friends and family got surprised, and she got questioned why she was wearing a hijab while she was a Japanese. "Islam was a foreigner culture once" she says "When I wear an abaya, people definitely wonder where I am from. Probably assuming I alienate from my own culture." She did not face any blatant discrimination but she recalls a moment on the train when an old man talking bitterly behind her.

56K is Muslim for more than 30 years. She explains Japanese society accepts an immigrant Muslim women wearing a hijab quite easily, considering it is their culture, thus donning one for an immigrant Muslim woman is an acceptable behaviour. However, when it comes to Japanese women, the society do not comprehend their reasons easily.

The workplaces who insist us taking off our hijab do not think it is a discriminative action. They think "You are a Japanese. You were born and raised as a Japanese. Why acting like a foreigner now?" [...] For them a Japanese and a foreigner are different. For a foreigner it is acceptable, but you are Japanese, being different is unacceptable.

— 56K

For 56K, Japanese society expects a Japanese woman behave like one, and when they encounter a marginal sight – a hijabi Japanese woman-, they get confused.

<sup>57</sup> See Kocalan, *Müslümanlaşma Sürecine Sosyolojik Bir Yaklaşım: Japon Müslümanlar*, 157-158.

<sup>58</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>59</sup> Kocalan, *Müslümanlaşma Sürecine Sosyolojik Bir Yaklaşım: Japon Müslümanlar*, 140-141.

43K is Muslim for 16 years, and she occasionally wears hijab. She tells whenever she wears one, she gets treated as a foreigner, and people get surprised when they notice she is a Japanese. "It is not such a big deal, but it made me feel different. I felt like I could not be a part of Japanese society %100 anymore" she says. 34K lives in a small town, and she says in her hometown there is not a Muslim community and the only hijabi is her. Whenever she is outside she feels the eyes staring at her and when she gets approached it is in English. "I feel like a foreigner who tries to adapt to the society." Even though she is Muslim for several years she still feels adaptation problems. 27K has an immigrant Muslim husband, lives close to the community and wears a hijab. She frequently gets assumed as a foreigner. 26K says on the streets people frequently assume that she is Indonesian. "I used to be very uncomfortable. Because I feel like a Japanese, I am a Japanese." Nowadays she feels indifferent towards these remarks. 18K says "When I wear a hijab people do not think I am a Japanese. Just because of my appearance they assume I am foreigner and talk to me in English." When people talk to her in English, rather than having to explain it every time, she just goes along with it. "Because I get so many questions. I have to explain everything." Constantly having to prove that she is a Japanese gets tiresome for her. 6K tells she is asked of her passport when she is in the city hall and they get surprised to find out she is a Japanese woman.

This theme can be seen in many racial microaggression studies of Sue. He calls it alien in one's own land.<sup>60</sup> Sue himself is an American born social scientist. His own experience of getting complimented of his fluent English or being repeatedly asked of his 'country of birth' reminds him that he is seen as an alien and not a legitimate citizen in his own hometown because of his race.<sup>61</sup> Nadal and others observe this theme in the case of American Muslims as well.<sup>62</sup>

For example, one participant shared: "I walked up and he goes, 'What are you, Indonesian?' You know he made it seem like I must be from another country or something." Individuals, such as this participant, may experience situations in which others make them feel as if they do not belong in the US even though they were born in the US or consider the US to be their home. Such experiences communicate that these individuals do not belong in the US, subtly communicating that there is a certain way of being or looking American.<sup>63</sup>

While these experiences are not ill intended and perhaps small encounters, when they get accumulated, for Japanese Muslim women, they can have consequences, which we will be discussing the next section.

### **3.2. Underestimation of Personal Agency**

Sometimes Japanese Muslim women encounter the inquiries if their husband or in-laws asked or forced them to wear hijab. Still, these inquiries may not be ill intended, however they imply lack of personal agency for Japanese women.

18K says she gets asked "Why? How? Did your husband asked you to wear it?" even when she was a single woman. Moreover, even her mother told her she can accept her hijab if she gets married and it is her husband's request. 8K is not married as well, however she says people assume she is married to a Muslim man because of her hijab. 6K also says she become Muslim

<sup>60</sup> Sue et. al. "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice", 275; Sue et al. "Racial Microaggressions and the Asian American Experience", 75-76;

<sup>61</sup> Sue, *Overcoming Our Racism*, 125.

<sup>62</sup> Nadal et. al. "Subtle and Overt Forms of Islamophobia", 15-37.

<sup>63</sup> Nadal et. al. "Subtle and Overt Forms of Islamophobia", 28.

and don hijab at her own will while she was single, but she gets asked if she wears it for her husband. 13K's friends know she had an immigrant Muslim boyfriend, and assume she dons a hijab at his request. In the beginning, 28K's parents were afraid of their daughter was being deceived by a man. They are still not comfortable of her decision and ask her not to wear a hijab around home, not to be seen with one. When 4K converted and don a hijab, her parents assumed she is applying her husband's requests and explained to their neighbours thusly. "As if I did not chose convert to Islam, but I am just adopting to my husband's culture." These type of remarks have negative effects on Japanese Muslim women because they ignore their personal choice on their decisions and imply lack of personal agency.

### 3.3. Offensive Jokes

Offensive joke is the type of microaggressions when Japanese Muslim women are called in offensive terminology in a non-confrontational and a very teasing way. It can occur as using religious stereotypes or prejudices nonchalantly during innocent daily conversations.

38K was Muslim for three years when we met and she had left her work. When we were talking about the reasons of her leaving, she relayed her boss joked around her saying "Now you become a Muslim, you can act like a terrorist too." She could not wear hijab at work due to these remarks, she could not pray openly, eventually it was too difficult for her to continue and she left. Once 8K heard a random man on a train told her "Did you marry a terrorist?" Getting terrorist jokes frustrates them. 8K calls him as "heartless". Terrorist jokes are one of the most frequent offensive jokes that Japanese Muslim women experience.

Nadal and others' microaggression study has two frequently occurring themes, one is endorsing religious stereotypes, such as assuming that every Muslim is affiliated with terrorism. In their study this theme occurs in a quite hostile way, implying Muslims are non-trustable and evil. The other theme in their study is related with the first one, it is Islamophobic and mocking language. This one occurs when Muslims are made fun of or get teased with Islamophobic nuances: getting called as Taliban or Osama bin Laden is some of them. This type of microaggression still implies that all Muslims are terrorist and dangerous by associating them with negative examples, but in a lighter tone than the first theme.<sup>64</sup> Offensive jokes can be seen in racial microaggression studies as well; this time they occur as racial ones. In Yosso and other's study, Mexican students complain that they get exposed to Mexican stereotype jokes often, and they feel frustrated.<sup>65</sup>

Another theme of Nadal and other is the pathologisation of the Islam, behaviourally or verbally implying that something is wrong or abnormal. Staring at the hijabi women and implying their actions or appearances as weird and unusual are some examples of this theme.<sup>66</sup> Japanese Muslim women receive these remarks, again, disguised in a joke form. 18K says her friends laughed at her when she shared her decision to convert to Islam with them. Another Japanese woman, 20K recalls a memory of her best friend teasing her decision of becoming Muslim: "Your head is weird, your heart is weak, that is why you think such things." She says "It was a joke but it broke my heart." From her narration it is obvious this conversation occurred in a joke form, but still, she was called as weak and weird due to her decision, and it broke her heart.

<sup>64</sup> Nadal et. al. "Subtle and Overt Forms of Islamophobia", 26.

<sup>65</sup> Yosso et. al. "Critical Race Theory", 667.

<sup>66</sup> Nadal et. al. "Subtle and Overt Forms of Islamophobia", 24.



#### 4. Four Response Types

Research shows continuous microaggressions result in a range of negative emotions; anger, frustration, contempt, sadness, shame, confusion, anxiety and disappointment, and it can be related to mental illnesses.<sup>67</sup> When students receive discriminatory remarks, it is found that their exam results get lower than their usual scores.<sup>68</sup> The literature also discuss on physical responses to microaggressions such as hypertension and heart diseases due to continuous stress.<sup>69</sup> Microaggressions may seem small and innocuous but they have impacts on those who experience them.

For the case of Japanese Muslim Women, four type of responses to microaggressive experiences are observed: frustration, efforts to prove themselves, leading double lives and detachment from the society.

##### 4.1. Frustration

Frustration is one of the most common responses to the daily microaggressions.<sup>70</sup> 8K who gets terrorist husband remarks and get approached in English frequently is very frustrated of this situation. She says “narrow minded people” with a tired voice “just because I wear different clothes stranger people thinks it is ok to talk to me like that...” 18K pretends to be a foreigner and responds in English because of this frustration. Again, 18K, as well as 4K, find people’s ignorance of their personal agency as frustrating. During the interview they repeatedly emphasised that they neither converted to Islam nor don hijab for a man.

Having to experience offensive jokes and remarks, being alienated in one’s own land or getting assumed as less intelligent or more dangerous due to your race, gender or religion daily and continuously tire people. Moreover, experiencing all these and not being able to oppose or response openly due to ambiguous nature of these remarks cause more anxiety. For example, the narration below belongs to a Latino student:

What makes it even worse is along with the joking . . . they might not be totally aware of what they’re saying. It’s kind of hard to stop them with everything that they say, and explain to them that that this is offensive to me. It’s not right . . . you don’t want to come at them hostile because of course they’ll come back at you and say ‘wait a minute.’<sup>71</sup>

Having to deal with microaggressions daily and not even being able to deal with them without getting the accusations of “‘whiners,’ ‘too sensitive’ and not being able to ‘take a joke’”<sup>72</sup> or “‘oversensitive’ or ‘paranoid’”<sup>73</sup> causes extra frustration.

##### 4.2. Efforts to Prove Themselves

Hijabi Japanese Muslim women often find themselves as representatives of Islam in Japan. Even in cases of negative experiences, they make an effort to respond and act in a positive manner hoping to represent Muslims in a good way and to eliminate possible stereotypes or negative

<sup>67</sup> Jennifer Wang et al. “When the Seemingly Innocuous “Stings”: Racial Microaggressions and Their Emotional Consequences”, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 37(12), 1673; Solorzano et. al. “Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate”, 69.

<sup>68</sup> Claude M. Steele – Joshua M. Aronson, “Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69/5 (1995), 797-811.

<sup>69</sup> Kaskan et. al. “Microaggression and Female Athletes”, 280.

<sup>70</sup> Yosso et. al. “Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate”, 670; Sue, *Overcoming Our Racism*, 139.

<sup>71</sup> Yosso et. al. “Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate”, 670.

<sup>72</sup> Yosso et. al. “Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate”, 671.

<sup>73</sup> Sue, *Overcoming our Racism*, 126.

ideas that Japanese society might have about them. Some Japanese women respond to microaggressions as in this manner.

Even though she gets frustrated by the microaggressions she experiences, 8K says she responds to the questions that she receives patiently hoping that “Maybe the image of Islam can change in this way, and it gets better. If the negative image can change a little bit, I can respond every question”, and makes a conscious effort to improve the image of Islam. 27K tries to act as a positive role model: “Because I still feel as a Japanese, not to give any wrong idea to the society, you know there are many bad news on the TV, my husband and I always communicate smiling with our neighbours.” 26K says, due to her hijab, she feels like she is representing Islam in Japanese society and is careful of how she publicly behaves. “I explain as much as I can. I try to be moral and a good example. I am trying to do good deeds. I want them to say how good Islam is. I can create a good image like this.” 6K complains about the misinformation on Islam, she feels it is her duty to explain the beauty of Islam to everyone, but she adds “I always have to make explanations. It tires me a lot.”

Members of minorities or marginal communities get frequently chosen as a spokesperson, and sometime they turn into the role models, actively trying to represent their society better and to eliminate stereotypes against them, which is a tiring role due to its continuous nature.<sup>74</sup> Hijabi Japanese Muslim women experience this situation as well.

#### **4.3. Leading Double Lives: Hiding the Religious Identity**

Many new Muslims prefer to hide their religious identity rather than experiencing microaggressions. For Japanese women, it means wearing hijab only in mosques and around Islamic communities, and taking it off whenever they are with non-Muslim Japanese.

13K who gets remarks that underestimate her personal agency on wearing a hijab due to her having an immigrant Muslim boyfriend says she does not wear scarf daily. “I do not wear it at school or at work. Sometimes I get scared. If I wear it at work my boss could question it.” 28K also hides her religious identity at work by not wearing a hijab or not praying. 43K also only wears it among Muslims. 20K, who got teased as being weak by her close friend, expresses she is afraid to tell the others. “My relationships can worsen, that’s why I don’t plan to share with others. [...] I don’t know what will happen when I tell people, it troubles me. My life can be difficult.”

Hiding their religious identity and leading double lives is a very common attitude among Japanese Muslims, men as well as women. Although its commonality decreases over time. It is seen that the more Japanese Muslims get familiar to their new identity and the more they feel comfortable of it, the more they express and live it openly in the public. The rate of avoidance conflicts and misunderstandings decreases over time.<sup>75</sup> In Nadal and others’ study, American Muslims are also seen to be in an effort to disguise their Muslim identities, such as changing their names to not to be recognised as Muslim in order to prevent daily subtle microaggressions.<sup>76</sup>

#### **4.4. Detachment from Society**

Some Japanese Muslims women distance themselves from the society due to the microaggressions they experience. Rather than having to constantly deal with microaggressive

<sup>74</sup> Yosso et. al. “Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate”, 677.

<sup>75</sup> Elif Büşra Kocalan, “Yeni Dini Kimlik Oluşum, Şekillenme ve İfade Etme Aşamalarında Sosyal Medyanın Rolü: Japon Müslümanlar Örneği”, *Bülent Ecevit Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 9/2 (2022), 245-248.

<sup>76</sup> Nadal et. al. “Subtle and Overt Forms of Islamophobia”, 24.

behaviours or comments, they prefer to cut the ties out or to not have any communication with non-Muslim Japanese at all.

38K, who received terrorist joke from her boss left her work eventually, feeling that she was not regarded as a normal member of Japanese society anymore: "I guess I am not a normal Japanese anymore. [...] I feel like less Japanese, maybe even a little bit." She is not the only one who left her job, 8K also changed her job for similar reasons.

Apart from leaving their job, an identity crisis is also observed among Japanese Muslim women. 43K expresses her concern of not being able to fit to Japanese society %100 anymore. 34K, who receives English comments says that she feels like a foreigner who tries to adapt to the Japanese society. 18K too, tells she has difficulties on belonging to Japanese society. 36K says that her social environment has changed. She has been meeting with Muslims more and more in her daily life and her friends are mostly Muslims now.

In their research, Sue et al. found that getting assumed as a foreigner results in doubts of being accused of not being a real American or of not belonging to America. Therefore feeling alienated in one's own land and distancing oneself from the society.<sup>77</sup> Students found to drop class, changing their major or even universities to distance themselves.<sup>78</sup> This situation is found to apply for Japanese Muslim women as well.

## Conclusion

Microaggressions are the innocuous and subtle verbal or behavioural discriminations that vulnerable, different, marginal and minority communities experience in their daily lives. They are difficult to detect and name due to their ambiguity. However, their cumulative impact on individuals is quite significant. This research aimed to determine and categorise the possible microaggressions that Japanese Muslim women experience, and their response to them.

It is found that Japanese Muslim women experience three types of microaggressions. They are being mistaken as a foreigner and get approached in English when they wear a hijab. Their decision to convert to Islam or follow the rules of the religion is assumed to be their husbands' or boyfriends' requests -even if they are single- thus their personal agency is underestimated. They also receive offensive remarks in the form of joke; being associated to terrorism and getting called as weird or weak due to their decision.

These microaggressions have a number of effect on them, starting from the most basic reaction, frustration. When the microaggressions continue, their responses change as well. Some try to prove themselves: their personal agency, the correctness of their decision and the beauty of Islam etc. Some prefer not to deal with or cannot deal with microaggressions and hide their religious identity. They do not wear a scarf in front of their non-Muslim family, friend and acquaintances. They do not pray openly in front of them. They prefer to live Islam silently. And lastly, some of the Japanese Muslim women detach from the Japanese society. They have identity issues, feel as if they cannot be a part of Japanese society anymore, leave their jobs and distance themselves from their friends. This is the perhaps most serious outcome of their experiences. The fact that almost half of the Japanese Muslim women in the research experience,

<sup>77</sup> Sue et al. "Racial Microaggressions and the Asian American Experience", 75-76.

<sup>78</sup> Solorzano et. al. "Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate", 69; Yosso et. al. "Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate for Latina/o Undergraduates", 670.

notice and express their feelings on the issue show the frequency of its happening among Japanese society.

It is important to notice and to name microaggressions and to raise awareness and to educate the masses in order to prevent their occurrences and to create more equal and inclusive societies.

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## Appendix I

Code	Age	... Years Muslim	Microaggression	Response
4K	50	16 Years	Underestimation of Personal Agency	Frustration
6K	31	8 Years	Being Mistaken as a Foreigner Underestimation of Personal Agency	Efforts to Prove Themselves
8K	26	<1 Year	Being Mistaken as a Foreigner Underestimation of Personal Agency Offensive Jokes	Frustration Efforts to Prove Themselves Detachment from the Society
13K	21	<1 Year	Underestimation of Personal Agency	Leading Double Lives
18K	33	6 Years	Being Mistaken as a Foreigner Underestimation of Personal Agency Offensive Jokes	Frustration Detachment from the Society
20K	33	<1 Year	Offensive Jokes	Leading Double Lives
26K	44	11 Years	Being Mistaken as a Foreigner	Efforts to Prove Themselves
27K	37	12 Years	Being Mistaken as a Foreigner	Efforts to Prove Themselves
28K	24	<1 Year	Underestimation of Personal Agency	Leading Double Lives
34K	48	13 Years	Being Mistaken as a Foreigner	Detachment from the Society
36K	39	5 Years	Being Mistaken as a Foreigner	Detachment from the Society
38K	24	3 Years	Offensive Jokes	Detachment from the Society
43K	41	16 Years	Being Mistaken as a Foreigner	Leading Double Lives
56K	~60	~30 Years	Being Mistaken as a Foreigner	-

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## Weak Thought and Religion in Gianni Vattimo: Implications and Repercussions

Gianni Vattimo'da Zayıf Düşünce ve Din: Çıkarımlar ve Olası Sonuçlar

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## Weak Thought and Religion in Gianni Vattimo: Implications and Repercussions\*

### Abstract

In this paper, I focus on controversial issues in Gianni Vattimo's later philosophy concerning religion. In his later writings, Vattimo employs his idea of "weak thought" (*il pensiero debole*) to (re)interpret Christianity by claiming that as opposed to metanarratives of modernity, a weak ontology not only weakens all foundations and dominant truth claims, but also enfeebles the strong metaphysical claims of atheism such as "God does not exist." There is no reason to be an atheist, according to Vattimo, since weak thought enables emancipation from all ideological foundations, including atheism. Therefore, Vattimo offers a new definition of secularization: In contrast to modernity's claim that secularization is to banish religion from the states of reason and progress, he changes the target of secularization from religion to metaphysics. Hence, the rigid distinction between faith and reason is nothing but another foundation that needs to be weakened. That is why the aim of secularization in the West is not separate faith and reason, but to weaken metaphysics in order to make room for faith. Put it differently, secularization is "weak thought" itself. This idea is strengthened by Vattimo's interpretation of Nietzsche's announcement of God's death. However, in Vattimian perspective, the God announced as dead by Nietzsche is not the God of the biblical text but the God of metaphysics which philosophers have believed since Pascal. Hence, the statement that "God is dead" is basically the rejection of the metaphysical foundation built by modernity this time. Like Jesus the crucified, God in the postmodern time, too, becomes weak and is tolerant toward the other. Furthermore, like the birth of Christianity, the postmodern return of religion, in fact, depends on those who receive this announcement. For postmodernity as a philosophy of event considers the Christian event in the sense of *Ereignis*. That means Nietzsche never comes to "claim" that God is dead, but rather he makes an announcement of the death of God as a historical event. That is why Vattimo maintains that postmodernity is not only the overcoming of metaphysics but also now the rebirth of Christianity after the second death of God, and proposes two constituents of the postmodern return of religion: (1) the reinterpretation of *kénois* as a diminution of all foundations, and (2) the recognition of truth as *caritas* as opposed to the metaphysical agreement over truth as an obsession with objectivity. Thus, we can conclude that Vattimo in his later writings *radicalizes* hermeneutics in terms of scrutinizing the idea of "weak thought" with Christianity. However, it also should not be unnoticed that employing his earlier thoughts to (re)interpret Christianity after Nietzsche's announcement and Heidegger's ontology, Vattimo risks the major points of his earlier consideration of hermeneutics as *koine* in the postmodern era. Though he draws a modest picture of the postmodern era, Vattimo falls into the error of reducing hermeneutics as *koine* to the Christian discourse. On the other hand, Vattimo has an idiosyncratic and outmoded understanding of what it is to be an atheist "in postmodern times". In this regard, by misapprehending the possible responses of atheistic arguments, Vattimo risks his weak thought (*il pensiero debole*) by making the religious approach "strong" in comparison not only with other religions and various traditions but also with atheism. Finally, I argue that Vattimo's rhetoric of "the return" is doomed to constitute a fundamentalist approach regarding the future of Christianity.

**Key Words:** Gianni Vattimo, Hermeneutics, Postmodernity, Weak Thought, Christianity, Catholicism, Fundamentalism.

### Gianni Vattimo'da Zayıf Düşünce ve Din: Çıkarımlar ve Olası Sonuçlar

#### Öz

Bu makalede, Gianni Vattimo'nun son dönem felsefesinde yoğunlaştığı din ile ilgili tartışmalı meselelere odaklanacağız. Geç dönemdeki yazılarında Vattimo, "zayıf düşünce" (*il pensiero debole*) fikrini, modernliğin meta-anlatılarının aksine, zayıf bir ontolojinin yalnızca tüm temelleri ve egemen hakikat iddialarını zayıflatmakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda ateizmin "Tanrı yoktur" gibi güçlü metafizik iddialarını da güçsüzleştirdiğini öne sürerek Hıristiyanlığı (yeniden) yorumlamak için kullanır. Vattimo'ya göre ateist olmak için hiçbir neden yoktur, zira zayıf düşünce ateizm de dahil olmak üzere tüm ideolojik temellerden özgürleşmeyi mümkün kılar. Bu nedenle Vattimo yeni bir sekülerleşme tanımı sunar: Buna göre sekülerleşme, modernliğin iddia ettiği gibi, akıl ve ilerleme evrelerinden dini defetmek değildir; sekülerleşmenin asıl hedefi metafiziktir. Dolayısıyla, inanç ve akıl arasındaki katı ayırım, zayıflatılması gereken bir başka temelden başka bir şey değildir. Bu nedenle Batı'da sekülerleşmenin amacı inanç ve akli birbirinden ayırmak değil, inanca yer açmak için metafiziği zayıflatmaktır. Bir başka deyişle, sekülerleşme "zayıf düşünce"nin bizzat kendisidir. Bu fikir, Vattimo'nun Nietzsche'nin Tanrı'nın ölümünü ilan etmesini yorumlamasıyla güçlenmektedir. Ancak Vattimo'nun bakış açısına göre Nietzsche'nin öldüğünü ilan ettiği Tanrı, İncil metnindeki Tanrı değil, Pascal'dan bu yana filozofların inandığı metafiziğin Tanrısıdır. Dolayısıyla "Tanrı öldü" ifadesi, temelde modernliğin bu çağda inşa ettiği metafizik temelin reddidir. Çarmıha gerilen İsa gibi, postmodern zamanda Tanrı da zayıflar ve ötekine karşı hoşgörülü olur. Dahası, Hıristiyanlığın doğuşu gibi, dinin postmodern dönüşü de aslında bu ilanın muhataplarına bağlıdır. Çünkü bir olay felsefesi olarak

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postmodernlik, İsa-Mesih olayını *Ereignis* anlamında ele alır. Bu da Nietzsche'nin hiçbir şekilde Tanrı'nın öldüğünü "iddia etmeye" gelmediği, aksine tarihsel bir olay olarak Tanrı'nın ölümünü ilan ettiği anlamına gelir. Bu nedenle Vattimo, postmodernliğin sadece metafiziğin aşılması değil, aynı zamanda Tanrı'nın bu ikinci ölümünden sonra Hıristiyanlığın yeniden doğuşu olduğunu savunur ve dinin postmodern dönüşünün iki bileşeni öne çıkarır: (1) *kénosis*'in tüm temellerin alt üst edilmesi olarak yeniden yorumlanması ve (2) bir nesnellik saplantısı olarak "hakikat" üzerindeki metafizik mutabakatın aksine hakikatin *caritas* olarak anlaşılması. Böylece Vattimo'nun son dönem yazılarında "zayıf düşünce" fikrini Hıristiyanlıkla birlikte irdelemesi bakımından hermeneutiği radikallediği sonucuna varabiliriz. Bununla birlikte, Nietzsche'nin ilanı ve Heidegger'in ontolojisinden sonra Hıristiyanlığı (yeniden) yorumlamak için daha önceki düşüncelerini kullanan Vattimo'nun, postmodern çağın "ana dili" olarak gördüğü hermenötiğin *koine* oluşunu riske attığı da gözden kaçmamalıdır. Postmodern çağın mütevazı bir resmini çizmesine rağmen Vattimo, kanaatimizce, *koine* olarak hermenötiği Hıristiyan söylemine indirgeme hatasına düşmektedir. Öte yandan Vattimo, "postmodern zamanlarda" ateist olmanın ne olduğuna dair kendine özgü ve günümüz şartlarına uymayan bir anlayışa sahiptir. Bu bağlamda, ateist argümanların olası yanıtlarını yanlış kavrayan Vattimo, dini yaklaşımı yalnızca diğer dinler ve çeşitli geleneklerle değil, aynı zamanda ateizmle de karşılaştırarak "güçlü" hâle getirerek zayıf düşüncesini (*il pensiero debole*) dedriske atmaktadır. Son olarak, Vattimo'nun "geri dönüş" retoriklerinin Hıristiyanlığın geleceğine ilişkin köktenci bir yaklaşım oluşturmaya mahkum olduğunu iddia edeceğiz.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Gianni Vattimo, Hermenötik, Postmodernlik, Zayıf Düşünce, Hıristiyanlık, Katoliklik, Köktencilik.

### Introduction

The pronouncement "God is dead" means: The suprasensory world is without effective power. It bestows no life. Metaphysics, i.e., for Nietzsche Western philosophy understood as Platonist, is at an end. Nietzsche understands his own philosophy as the countermovement to metaphysics, and that means for him a movement in opposition to Platonism.

— Martin Heidegger<sup>1</sup>

Friedrich Nietzsche's announcement that "God is dead" and Martin Heidegger's notion of the end of metaphysics eventuate in the idea of *il pensiero debole* (*weak thought*) in the philosophy of Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo. In this regard, first, the death of God does not claim an objective argument that God does not exist but announces there is no longer an absolute truth or any foundation.<sup>2</sup> Second, the end of metaphysics and the diminution of the authority of presence herald post-metaphysical thought in the postmodern era in which there are no facts but only interpretations.<sup>3</sup> No strong authority or institution can enforce its (truth) claims upon the other(s) since each thought loses its certainty. Each idea, each claim is now nothing but an interpretation, which is weak like any other.<sup>4</sup> Hence "weak thought", according to Vattimo, suggests a plurality of thoughts in the way that any interpretation is never able to apply its imperialism over another, and opens a possibility of the culture in which many truth claims coexist with respect to let the other live.<sup>5</sup>

It is significant to note that Vattimo, following Heidegger,<sup>6</sup> does not consider the end of metaphysics as an absolute overcoming or surpassing. He refuses an overcoming of

<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'", *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 61.

<sup>2</sup> Gianni Vattimo, "Toward a Nonreligious Christianity", *After the Death of God*, ed. Jeffrey W. Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 31; Gianni Vattimo, *Not Being God: A Collaborative Autobiography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 18; Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche", 57, 60.

<sup>3</sup> Gianni Vattimo, "The Trace of Trace", *Religion*, ed. J. Derrida and G. Vattimo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 93.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Carravetta, "The End(s) of Subjectivity and the Hermeneutic Task", introduction to Gianni Vattimo, *Beyond the Subject: Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Hermeneutics*, tr. Peter Carravetta (Albany: SUNY Press, 2019), xi.

<sup>5</sup> Gianni Vattimo, "The Truth of Hermeneutics", *Questioning Foundations: Truth, Subjectivity, and Culture*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (New York: Routledge, 1993), 25-26.

<sup>6</sup> Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche", 53. Heidegger uses *Umkehrung* (overturning) in the sense of a turning upside down in lieu of *Überwindung*, which literally means an overcoming, surpassing, or conquest.

metaphysics as *Überwindung* that means going “beyond” and leaving behind the past. Instead, he employs *Verwindung* in order to explain what he means by the end of metaphysics:

First, we might say that a possible *Überwindung* of metaphysics can come about only through a long *Verwindung* of metaphysics; that is to say, it can be accomplished only as a final culmination of a process that experiences metaphysics through to the end, thereby totally and boldly accepting even the technical destiny of modern man. Or in the second place we might say that on a more radical level the *Überwindung-Verwindung* nexus may be taken as an expression of the fact that we can never overcome metaphysics, whether in this or in any other possible epoch of Being.<sup>7</sup>

In his celebrated article “Dialectics, Difference, Weak Thought,” Vattimo also appeals to the notion of *Überlieferung*, which simply means the transmission of tradition into new conditions and interpretations, and claims that no thought in the postmodern era can be considered regardless of the engagement with its own tradition.<sup>8</sup> Besides, the prefix of “postmodern” indicates an awareness of being “within” an era, which is modern. Tradition comes to appear as a living organism rather than a frozen phenomenon (as proposed in historicism and historiological thinking); and accordingly, as the heir of dialectics, both dialectics and difference constitute a past for “weak thought.”<sup>9</sup> As a result, post-metaphysical thought is not any kind of defeating modernity but a transmitting of the past into new distorted and enfeebled ways of thinking.<sup>10</sup>

According to Vattimo, that each thought is weak is the main characteristic of postmodernity. Indeed, the theories pretending to be “strong” are breaking down thanks to many other postmodern philosophers and theorists: Heidegger’s interpretation of Nietzschean nihilism, Weber and Girard’s secularism, Lyotard’s metanarratives, Derrida’s deconstruction, Gadamer’s ontological hermeneutics, Foucault’s genealogy, Levinas’s “the other”, Ricoeur’s hermeneutic reception of the self, Hassan’s plurality, Jencks’ hybridization, and finally Rorty and Vattimo’s weak thought.<sup>11</sup> Rather than craving for certainty or objectivity, these recent attempts mainly stand for the idea that truth is rhetorical. This panorama leads Vattimo to argue that hermeneutics—which validates all possible interpretations equally and suggests a plurality of truth—is the common language (*koine*) of postmodern theories.<sup>12</sup>

## 1. The Postmodern Return of Religion

There are no longer strong, rational reasons for being an atheist. This is a consequence of secularization, not the consequence of desecularization. This is also very important philosophically. I would say that religion can have a religious meaning only with the help of philosophy—that is, with

<sup>7</sup> Gianni Vattimo, *The Adventure of Difference: Philosophy after Nietzsche and Heidegger*, tr. Cyprian Blamires (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 113.

<sup>8</sup> Gianni Vattimo, “The Crisis of Subjectivity from Nietzsche to Heidegger”, *Differentia* 1 (1986), 14-16.

<sup>9</sup> Gianni Vattimo, “Dialectics, Difference, Weak Thought”, *Weak Thought*, ed. G. Vattimo and P.A. Rovatti (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 39.

<sup>10</sup> Vattimo, “Dialectics, Difference, Weak Thought”, 46; “The Trace of the Trace”, 93; Peter Carravetta, *Prefaces to the Diaphora: Rhetorics, Allegory, and the Interpretation of Postmodernity* (Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1991), 227: “Thinking is really an up-setting, an oblique re-casting, or, to use Vattimo’s coin, a *de-grounding* (“sfondare”) of its own non-foundation in function of play, remembering and enabling discourse as it unveils itself in tradition (*Überlieferung*), responding to the call of being.”

<sup>11</sup> Carravetta, *Prefaces to the Diaphora*, 231.

<sup>12</sup> Gianni Vattimo and Santiago Zabala, *Hermeneutic Communism: From Heidegger to Marx* (New York: Columbia University, 2011), 6; Vattimo, “The Crisis of Subjectivity from Nietzsche to Heidegger”, 7;

the help of a theory of secularization that recognizes in many traits of the modern world the basic features of Christianity.

— Gianni Vattimo<sup>13</sup>

There are two main consequences of the weakened thought in the postmodern era. One is that even philosophy can no longer claim that it is itself the only authority on truth, nor become a universal and totalitarian discipline, nor aim at disclosing the ultimate context of human existence. The other consequence that concerns us more is the return and recovery of religion, which has been exiled from the soil of Reason by modernity, and, accordingly, the diminution of the theoretical/metaphysical arguments of atheism.<sup>14</sup> There has no longer been “strong”, or “rational” reason to be an atheist just because all kinds of rationalist and objectivist thinking are subject to be weakened thanks to the postmodern and post-metaphysical philosophies. And so, religion revives.

In his later writings, Vattimo employs his idea of “weak thought” (*il pensiero debole*) to (re)interpret Christianity by claiming that a weak ontology, as opposed to metanarratives of modernity, not only weakens all foundations and dominant truth claims but also enfeebles the strong metaphysical claims of atheism such as “God does not exist.” There is no reason to be an atheist since weak thought enables emancipation from all ideological foundations, including atheism.<sup>15</sup> Following Max Weber and René Girard, Vattimo here offers a new definition of secularization: In contrast to modernity’s claim that secularization is to banish religion from the states of reason and progress, he changes the target of secularization from religion to metaphysics. Hence, the rigid distinction between faith and reason is nothing but another foundation that needs to be weakened. That is why the aim of secularization in the West is not to separate faith and reason but to weaken metaphysics in order to make room for faith. Put differently, secularization is “weak thought” itself.<sup>16</sup>

“Weak thought” as secularization is constituted on two major Christian notions: *kenosis* (incarnation) and *caritas* (charity). *Kénosis* is the incarnation of God as Jesus. Because of the very fact that God himself descended on the earth, Vattimo maintains, Christianity is actually that which heralds the end of Platonic ideals and absolute truths. Christ, in this respect, is the one who is the agent of interpretation and accordingly the initiator of the secularization of metaphysical Truths with the capital T. The event of the incarnation of God not only makes all metaphysical foundations weak but also gives Christianity meaning.<sup>17</sup> As a result, secularization obtains a new definition as the weakening, whereas “weak thought” becomes the transcription of the Christian message in terms of the fulfillment of the history of salvation.<sup>18</sup>

The other notion reinterpreted by Vattimo, charity is both the reason and result of “weak thought” as secularization. We have mentioned philosophy no longer proposes objective and absolute truths. In addition to this, philosophy now favors consensus, dialogue, solidarity, and

<sup>13</sup> Vattimo, “A Prayer for Silence”, *After the Death of God*, 97.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Rorty, “Heideggerianism and Leftist Politics”, *Weakening Philosophy: Essays in Honour of Gianni Vattimo*, ed. Santiago Zabala (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), 151; Gianni Vattimo, “Dialogue: What Is Religion’s Future After Metaphysics?” *The Future of Religion*, ed. Santiago Zabala (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 59; Gianni Vattimo, *After Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 87; John D. Caputo, “Dialogue: On the Power of the Powerless”, *After the Death of God*, 143.

<sup>15</sup> Vattimo, *After Christianity*, 86; “A Prayer for Silence”, 97.

<sup>16</sup> Vattimo, “A Prayer for Silence”, 100; *After Christianity*, 24, 26, 45, 78.

<sup>17</sup> Carmelo Dotolo, “The Hermeneutics of Christianity and Philosophical Responsibility”, *Weakening Philosophy*, 363.

<sup>18</sup> Vattimo, *After Christianity*, 24; Nancy Frankenberg, “Weakening Religious Belief: Vattimo, Rorty, and the Holism of the Mental”, *Weakening Philosophy*, 274.

tolerance to the other.<sup>19</sup> If one of the tasks of philosophy is to find a word that can reach the ear of the other,<sup>20</sup> another is to make a healthy conversation in order to fuse the horizons of parts. Based on this aim of philosophy, Vattimo purports hermeneutics is a process of healing from the disease that metaphysics has induced.<sup>21</sup> Hermeneutics is indeed a long convalescence because one can realize whether she lives in her own illusory truths only in the case of dialogue with the other. To make a dialogue means both to let the other's truth live and to get rid of all missionary aims. That is why Vattimo believes the postmodern return of religion is persuasive rather than missionary.<sup>22</sup> Jesus as the living interpretation of the law is the one who initiates love between people and replaces truth as metaphysical objectivity with truth as charity.<sup>23</sup> Since post-metaphysical- thought enfeebles the violence of metaphysics by democratizing the object, knowledge, and the knowing subject, postmodernity eventuates in plurality in thoughts and makes the truths of other religions viable.<sup>24</sup> In doing so, Vattimo argues that charity (as tolerance to the other) replaces truth so that one religion can never claim its supremacy over another.<sup>25</sup>

To sum up, the incarnation of God and charity as tolerance to other truths have brought Vattimo to enunciate the postmodern return of religion. That is to say that the God announced as dead by Nietzsche is not the God of the biblical text but the God of metaphysics in which philosophers have believed since Pascal.<sup>26</sup> Hence, the statement that "God is dead" is simply the rejection of the metaphysical foundation built by modernity this time. Like Jesus the crucified, God in the postmodern time, too, becomes weak and is tolerant toward the other. Furthermore, like the birth of Christianity, the postmodern return of religion, in fact, depends on those who receive the announcement. For postmodernity as a philosophy of event considers the Christian event in the sense of *Ereignis*. That means Nietzsche never comes to "claim" that God is dead, but rather he makes an announcement of the death of God as a historical event. That is why Vattimo maintains that postmodernity is not only the overcoming of metaphysics but also the rebirth of Christianity after the second death of God. Here proposed two constituents of the postmodern return of religion: (1) the reinterpretation of *kénosis* as a diminution of all foundations, and (2) the recognition of truth as *caritas* as opposed to the metaphysical agreement over truth as an obsession with objectivity.

## 2. Christianity and/vs. Christendom

I have a positive theory of secularization, one that originates from a reinterpretation of scripture by the church in which there is no victimhood. Ultimately, Christianity is the religion that opens the way to an existence not strictly religious, if we take "religious" to mean binding restrains, imposition, authority—and I here might refer to Joachim of Fiore, who spoke of a third age of the history of humanity and the history

<sup>19</sup> Vattimo, *After Christianity*, 82.

<sup>20</sup> Santiago Zabala, "The Pharmakons of Onto-theology", *Weakening Philosophy*, 243.

<sup>21</sup> Vattimo, "The Age of Interpretation", *The Future of Religion*, 45; "The Trace of the Trace", 79; James Risser, "On the Continuation of Philosophy: Hermeneutics as Convalescence", *Weakening Philosophy*, 190.

<sup>22</sup> Gianni Vattimo, *The Responsibility of the Philosopher* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 69-70.

<sup>23</sup> Gianni Vattimo, "Dialogue: Christianity and Modernity", *Christianity, Truth and Weakening Faith: A Dialogue*, ed. Pierpaolo Antonello (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). Here Vattimo says, "Jesus Christ came into the world in order to reveal that religiosity consists not in sacrificing but in loving God and our neighbor."

<sup>24</sup> Vattimo, *After Christianity*, 27, 49; as he puts it briefly somewhere else: "Plurality of truth grounds tolerance and dialogue." Vattimo, *The Responsibility of the Philosopher*, 55.

<sup>25</sup> Vattimo, "Toward a Nonreligious Christianity", 44; *After Christianity*, 50.

<sup>26</sup> Vattimo, *After Christianity*, 15.

of salvation, in which the “spiritual” sense of scripture increasingly emerges and charity takes the place of discipline.

— Gianni Vattimo<sup>27</sup>

As he develops secularization (or, namely the weakening) of Being as the rebirth of Christianity, Vattimo refers to the very distinction between Christianity and Christendom.<sup>28</sup> According to the Italian philosopher, apart from the foundations like the Church initiated by the culture of Christendom, Christianity emancipates people from the domination of any power, reason, or knowledge, and mainly makes room for faith by stimulating love and charity. The culture of Christendom has so far caused two significant diseases in the history of Christianity:

(1) For one thing, the metaphysical interpretations of the biblical text have given rise to the foundations based on the culture of victimhood. Inheriting paganistic anthropology, killing the innocent victim (a surrogate victim instead of the real one) becomes a sacred ritual of religion in order to fulfill an order of God. That is to say that to sacrifice in order of God means to make the deed sacred.<sup>29</sup> However, according to Vattimo who is here following Girard’s theory, even if it is sacred, the act of “killing” is an act of violence; and violence can never be a subject to any religious activity in terms of God’s will. This dilemma is indeed an illusion of metaphysics whose existence always naturally requires an act of violence.<sup>30</sup> Yet post-metaphysics offers to get rid of violence. The Christian God, incarnating and then sacrificing himself, breaks the circularity of being a victim and killing a victim, puts an end to the metaphysical order of sacrificial violence, and finally opens a new possibility of the culture based on *caritas*, i.e., charity and love. Therefore, as opposed to the sacrificial ethics that has so far been constituted by the culture of Christendom, Vattimo, with the very help of Girard, points out a postmodern return of religion based on secularization resulting in a nonviolent and non-sacrificial interpretation of Christianity.<sup>31</sup>

(2) Another outcome of the culture of Christendom is that the Church throughout history has monopolized the meaning of the Bible by interpreting it literally. To illustrate, from the decision of the four-formed gospel to the Crusades, from the Inquisition to Galileo’s case, the literal interpretation of the biblical message dominates the believers. However, Vattimo, with the very help of the 12th-century theologian Joachim of Fiore, asserts that only one can approach the meaning of “real” Christianity through the spiritual interpretation of the biblical message. The spiritual interpretation of the Bible does not suggest that the text is composed of the commandments the believers must practice. Rather, he says, “Jesus is a living interpretation of the meaning of the law.”<sup>32</sup> That means God ascended to the earth not to dictate the divine law over people but to show how he interprets the message by living. In so doing, Christ becomes the agent and interpretation, and Christianity contributes to the philosophy of interpretation. Moreover, similarly to the fact that interpretation is an endless task, Christianity has grown with

<sup>27</sup> Vattimo, “Dialogue: Christianity and Modernity”.

<sup>28</sup> Heidegger, “The Word of Nietzsche”, 63.

<sup>29</sup> René Girard, “Dialogue: Christianity and Modernity”; René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, tr. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 1-38.

<sup>30</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 134-153. Vattimo says, “... Nietzsche is well aware that the violence that gives birth to metaphysics and that it represents is not completely gone, and in fact demands a ‘violent’ decision that eliminates it from everything by positing the real conditions of a world and of a thinking that are no longer metaphysical.” Gianni Vattimo, *Il Soggetto e la Maschera: Nietzsche e il Problema della Liberazione*, cited in Robert T. Valgenti, “Vattimo’s Nietzsche”, *Interpreting Nietzsche: Reception and Influence*, ed. Ashley Woodward (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 149.

<sup>31</sup> Vattimo, *After Christianity*, 115; Valgenti, “Vattimo’s Nietzsche”, 150.

<sup>32</sup> Vattimo, *After Christianity*, 59.

interpretation so that salvation in the Christian belief gains another meaning in terms of construing the Bible spiritually.

To conclude, the return of religion is that philosophy comes to be aware of religion (or, religious experience) as a phenomenon in one's life. There is religion, and it cannot be overcome. As is well known, in modernity, it is necessary to restrain religion and refuse the biblical message in terms of objectivity and scientific explanations. But the biblical message is not a science book.<sup>33</sup> Instead, it is a historical announcement revealing the event-like characteristic of Being just like any other event (*Ereignis*). Thus, as an interpretation of Being, the message cannot be "examined" in the sense of science searching for another kind of certainty and objective truth. That leads us to the core idea of the return of religion: In the postmodern era, to say that philosophy should rediscover religion as a living phenomenon is to bring back the messages of religion, that is also, to let religious experience and different doctrines live.<sup>34</sup> In other words, the pluralism of postmodernity allows us to hear again the voice of the biblical message since it is not the text explaining the "presence" of beings but the revealment of Being. As Vattimo states, once we stop querying what is real and what is not, these "texts" say something concerning Being. Consequently, religion transforms into a way of understanding Being and communicating with the other.<sup>35</sup>

### 3. An Aftermath of the Return of Religion: Catholicocentrism and Fundamentalism

The overcoming of metaphysics, in other words, can only take place as nihilism. The meaning of nihilism, however, if it is not in its turn to take the form of a metaphysics of the nothing —as it would if one imagined a process at the end of which Being is not and the nothing is— can only think of itself as an indefinite process of reduction, diminution, weakening. Could such a thinking be thought outside the horizon of the Incarnation? If hermeneutics really wishes to continue along the path opened by Heidegger's call to recollect Being (and thus *Ereignis*), this perhaps the decisive question to which it must seek a response today.

— Gianni Vattimo<sup>36</sup>

It is incontrovertible that the later writings of Vattimo radicalize hermeneutics in terms of scrutinizing the idea of "weak thought" with Christianity. However, it also should not be unnoticed that employing his earlier thoughts to (re)interpret Christianity after Nietzsche's announcement and Heidegger's ontology, Vattimo risks the major points of his earlier consideration of hermeneutics as *koine* in the postmodern era.

#### 3.1. The Reduction of Hermeneutics as *Koine* to the Christian Discourse

Vattimo, in his later works concerning religion and postmodernity, revises the idea of *Verwindung*. As has been covered above, the notion of *Verwindung* offers not to overcome metaphysics but to transmit (*Überlieferung*) dialectics and *difference* to the present discourse. Starting from this, Vattimo states that there is no longer non-Christian philosophy since the stream of philosophy has already been deconstructed by the event of the birth of Christianity.

<sup>33</sup> Vattimo says in "Dialogue: Faith and Relativism": "Why study chemistry? Because I can construct things that are of use to me and my neighbor. But frankly, knowing that 2 plus 2 makes 4 does nothing per se to bring me closer to God, any more than it would to believe that 2 plus 2 makes 220. Otherwise everything would be a handbook of geometry! But the Bible isn't a handbook of astronomy or cosmology, it isn't even a handbook of *theology*." (My italics)

<sup>34</sup> Vattimo, *After Christianity*, 26, 88.

<sup>35</sup> Vattimo, "The Age of Interpretation", 49; "The Trace of the Trace", 79-80, 88; "Dialogue: A Prayer for Silence", 107; *After Christianity*, 5-6, 19; Caputo, "Spectral Hermeneutics: On the Weakness of God and the Theology of the Event", *After the Death of God*, 73.

<sup>36</sup> Vattimo, "The Trace of the Trace", 95.

That is to say, one now lives in a civilization shaped by Christianity from the very beginning to modernity and postmodernity. In doing so, Vattimo acknowledges that there is no possible overcoming of the religious tradition as in the goals of the Enlightenment. Rather, it is inevitable to recognize the continuity of tradition. As a result, to say there is a philosophy in the West is to say it is indispensably a Christian philosophy.

The task of hermeneutics as the common language in the postmodern era, as Vattimo proposed earlier, is no doubt to fuse horizons regardless of excluding traditions, religions, or cultures other than the Christian, or better, the Catholic West. After all that variety and the complexity of the global market of religions, we have to question whether or not Vattimo reduces the hermeneutics as *koine* to the Christian discourse.

First of all, for Vattimo, Christianity lies at the center of the postmodern return of religion. The return per se is not to religion but to only Christianity. That means to avoid the rhetorical component of hermeneutics. To criticize the Roman Catholic Church, Vattimo addresses historical facts like the Crusades, the Inquisition, or the States; however, like Nietzsche's expression of "there are no facts but interpretations," the facts of the Roman Catholic Church are subject to different interpretations.<sup>37</sup> This may lead us to think about the role of the agent so that just as tradition forms us, we also shape our tradition not only by choosing and picking which is ours and which is not, but also by leaving out the rest. In fact, under colonialism and then globalization, other traditions and cultures have affected the West as much as the Christian modernity and the Enlightenment affected them. We have seen for a long time traditional, cultural, or religious identities have been blurred through cosmopolitanism. As Korean or Chinese Churches can be built in the US, as Kosher food is commercialized around the world, Muslims or Buddhists can do their daily prayers wherever they live. The point that needs clarification here is whether globalization is a process of enhancing tolerance toward the other (traditions, cultures, and religions), or of Westernization, i.e., Christianization utterly. If the latter is the case, does this also mean that all religious experience in the postmodern era should return only within the context of Christian faith?

Further, why Christianity is the only religion that *needs* a return? In the name of modernization, for instance, Turkey has implemented laicism over Muslim, Christian, and Jewish devotees by closing down their places of worship and education, banning headscarves and kippahs from the public sphere and even from universities, and sometimes killing or jailing people who rose against the regime. As a modernized and Westernized country, why does not Turkey deserve a "postmodern" return of religion? For over ten years, modern foundations and institutions in Turkey have been criticized and weakened. If postmodernity requires a weakening of all strong foundations in order to make room for faith, the return of religion should not be circumscribed just in favor of Christianity.

Concerning the civilization in which Vattimo lives, it may be plausible to claim that the continuity of the Western tradition covers the origins of metaphysics of presence, Christianity, modernity, and finally postmodernity. However, we should not forget that Christianity is not a single tradition in the world. Non-Western "alive" traditions such as Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, or ancient civilizations like Babylonia, Manicheism, Aztec, and Maya never appear

<sup>37</sup> Peter Carravetta, "Beyond Interpretation? On Some Perplexities Following upon Vattimo's Turn from Hermeneutics", *Between Nihilism and Politics: The Hermeneutics of Gianni Vattimo*, ed. Silvia Benso and Brian Schroeder (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010), 92.



within this picture, even though those traditions have always had an interaction with one another. For instance, just as the Greek philosophy or metaphysics of presence was deconstructed when Christianity showed up, so Jewish and Islamic scholars like Maimonides, Ibn Gabirol, Avicenna, Averroes, and Avempace deconstructed this heritage throughout the Middle Ages. Is it possible, then, to consider Western philosophy without Avicenna's influence on metaphysics or Averroes' translations and interpretations of Aristotle's philosophy?

What is more, it is arguable whether Vattimo does indeed justice to other Christian churches and sects such as Orthodox, Assyrian, Ecumenical Patriarch, or Coptic. As René Girard rightly asked Vattimo in a public conference;

Leaving the Catholic Church aside, we could ponder what has happened to the Protestant world, for example, with its fragmentation into thousands of confessions and congregations, or what has happened to Orthodoxy, the Russian and Byzantine church, which, however decadent it may appear in some respects, has kept alive a tradition in a way very different and robust from the way that prevails in the West.<sup>38</sup>

We can say that Vattimo here neglects the influences of other traditions not only broadly on Christianity but also specifically on Catholicism. That is why we are to argue that while he proposes that ontological hermeneutics is nothing but the theory of Christian modernity, Vattimo may find himself in some kind of "Catholicocentrism" in the hermeneutical discourse. For the Catholic claim of Christian faith, like any other doctrine, has taken place in history and been shaped through the endless discussions with other claims about the Christian event and through the councils arranged by Christian priests and clerics. In this regard, it can be argued that Vattimo abandons his own idea that hermeneutics is the common language of the postmodern world in which many traditions are alive regardless of claiming supremacy over one another.

### **3.2. Making Catholicism "Strong"**

As it can be predicted, the fact that Vattimo puts Catholic interpretation of the Christian event at the center of weak thought goes hand in hand with the ideology of making Catholic doctrine "strong". We are to keep in mind that according to Vattimo, both because the "strong" claims of metaphysical foundations are weakened and because postmodernity yields to plurality, post-metaphysical thought validates the truths of other religions. Concerning the critique of Catholicocentrism, now we have to ask what other narratives about Jesus, or the Christian event, matter to Vattimo.

The Orthodox interpretation of Jesus' life, Jehovah's Witnesses' reading of the Biblical message, or even the story of Jesus in the Qur'an have different versions than the Catholic mentality. Even some Gospels like Barnabas or Dead Sea Scrolls recite Jesus more than those agreed in the councils. Jesus, in this respect, is a pious, even a zealot among Essenes. That means he is a historical figure, not the descending or incarnation of God. Also, the Qur'an narrates that Jesus was not God, or even not crucified but ascended to Heaven. Like previous ones sent by God, he was a prophet, that is in the Islamic context, a messenger of God. Needless to say, the Qur'an draws another figure who does not allow us to consider his life as weakening since the incarnation (*kénosis*) is prohibited in the Islamic context. Are these truth claims still viable in

<sup>38</sup> René Girard, "Dialogue: Hermeneutics, Authority, Tradition", *Christianity, Truth, and Weakening Faith*; moreover, Girard continues to criticize Vattimo by saying that, "the problem hasn't ranged beyond a Heideggerian horizon," since Heidegger (and Nietzsche too) was Catholic.

Vattimo's reading of Christianity in the postmodern era when he says the post-metaphysical thought validates the truths and myths of other religions? But, approaching the Christian event from the view of Catholicism as if it is the only one, it seems Vattimo strengthens the truth claim of the Catholic doctrine. If the Christian event, in its uniqueness in history, is subject to interpretation, there is no reason not to hear the voice of other claims on this event.

Another reason why we think Vattimo makes the Catholic doctrine strong is, apart from the diminution of the authority of the Church, his allowance to other metaphysical foundations in the culture of Christendom. From the early career of his philosophy, Vattimo has emphasized the need for weakening the realm of metaphysics after Nietzsche and Heidegger. He is also wary of modernity's tricky move, which is to change the focus of philosophy from God to another metaphysical foundation, i.e., the Truth. However, while dealing with the strong structures of metaphysics, it seems Vattimo is obsessed with the authority of the Church, especially of the Roman Catholic one, probably because of its crucial influence on the West by which Vattimo was affected. What about other metaphysical foundations when he has inherited and esteemed two Catholic notions, *kénosis* and *caritas*? Take *caritas*, for instance. He is always critical of both the EU's and EU Parliament's Christian characteristics in terms of allowing some countries (like France) to ban wearing hijab or standing discreetly toward Muslim countries (like Turkey). On the other hand, he "literally" believes the consensus, which is *caritas* or the Christian charity for him. In this regard, we are to question if there is any guarantee that, in the postmodern era, the return of religion concerning the fulfillment of the history of salvation through charity will not turn itself into another grand narrative in the future. To what extent can we agree with the idea that any consensus (charity) in the EU replaces the truth? Moreover, does the idea of charity turn itself into a kind of "charity claim," as in the USA's claim bringing democracy to the Middle East? So, based on Vattimo's critical references to *kénosis* and *caritas*, we may conclude that since he "values" those Catholic concepts, Vattimo, intentionally or unintentionally, beefs up the Catholic claim.

What is more, and in conjunction with the previous point, it is easy to find the metaphysical terminology as the residual of modernity in Vattimo's later works concerning "weak thought" (philosophy) and Christianity (theology). The most notable one is the role of "meaning" in the context of Christianity. As mentioned above, *kénosis* gives meaning to Christianity. However, we know that Derrida is highly critical of the notion of "meaning", which is another name for the metaphysics of presence. Another notion is "secularization" so that Vattimo utterly changes its nature to the weakening of metaphysics and a plurality in thought. Even though he reinterprets secularization by stating that the Christian event itself is the process of secularization, this is not the unique interpretation of secularity. As we have discussed above, a Turkish version of laicism is a modern foundation — which is powerful and totalitarian. We can also add "emancipation" to the list because of the very fact that emancipation is one of three metanarratives that Jean-François Lyotard tells us.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, atheism becomes the practice area of the power of Vattimo's Catholicocentrism. There is no philosophical reason to be an atheist, according to Vattimo. For atheism establishes its arguments based on Reason, which is another metaphysical foundation. However, the case of being an atheist is not solely a result of developing a theoretical or philosophical atheism. There

<sup>39</sup> Carravetta, "Beyond Interpretation? On Some Perplexities Following Upon Vattimo's Turn from Hermeneutics", 89; Cf. Gianni Vattimo, "Nihilism as Emancipation", *The Italian Difference: Between Nihilism and Biopolitics*, ed. Lorenzo Chiesa & Alberto Toscano (Melbourne: re. Press, 2009).

emerges, for instance, a different kind of atheism after World War II in terms of ceasing to hope for the future and despair of believing in God. Jews exiled for thousands of years, for the first time, have become inclined to be an atheist after the catastrophe. In a similar fashion, in some Muslim countries such as Iran, Lebanon, or Tunis, most young people seem desperate for the future and God, probably because of their messianic beliefs. Moreover, Rorty explains another kind of atheism that is political, liberal, or anticleric.<sup>40</sup> Political atheism mainly suggests countering the authority of religious institutions like churches or official authorities of fatwa, but does neither intervene in the lives of religious people nor prohibit new interpretations of religious facts and texts. This decision is political rather than philosophical.

Here emerges the significant problem: atheism is usually considered as a problem of the philosophy of religion because this discipline is actually of Christianity. Theological arguments for God's existence, the problem of theodicy, or the explanation of miracles are utterly the subjects of Catholic doctrine. Based on that, we can argue that philosophical atheism appears historically by opposing the Christian arguments about God. With the overcoming of modernity and the advent of the postmodern condition, we are to see atheism has become diversified and turned from being local (Christianity) into a global condition. That is to say that those new atheistic tendencies are now facing not Christianity but religion at large. Just because of that, the question of atheism is no longer one of the problems of the philosophy of religion. It is indeed that of religion in the postmodern era. That is why, as long as atheism is to be discussed within the philosophy of religion, it is not possible to make a meaningful dialogue with atheism.

Charity or tolerance toward the other is the case for atheism as well. However, the fact that Vattimo strengthens the claims of Christianity against atheism "at large" is to avoid the task of hermeneutics in terms of finding the word that can reach the ear of the other. What is more, to twist Girard's work on violence and the sacred into our discussion, Vattimo's argument that "there is no reason to be an atheist" is literally to place atheism at the center of the return of religion and figuratively to place the victim at the center of the Christian discourse. An atheist individual, in this context, is the one coming from outside the Catholic horizon and the one who may be sacrificable in favor of philosophical or theological purposes. Hereby Vattimo, as we may propose, remains ironically within the circularity of victimhood, and neglects the responsibility toward atheism "for the sake of *caritas*." Being reveals its truth (*Aletheia*) if and only if a dialogue occurs between theists and atheists.

### 3.3. On the Way to Fundamentalism

What we have touched on above leads us to another extreme idea: The postmodern return of religion in Vattimo's thought may ironically eventuate in fundamentalism in some ways. It should be noted that Vattimo is, in fact, aware of the danger of fundamentalistic interpretation of religion.<sup>41</sup> But, even though apart from the return of fundamentalistic interpretation of religion in popular consciousness, the postmodern "return" of religion too has its own potential inclination to fundamentalism. First of all, distinguishing the faith of Christianity from the culture of Christendom seems Platonic and metaphysical in terms of hunting for another absolute so-called "real" Christianity.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, Vattimo argues that the God who is dead is the God of

<sup>40</sup> Rorty, "Anticlericalism and Atheism", *The Future of Religion*, 33.

<sup>41</sup> Vattimo, "The Trace of the Trace", 81-83. He says, "From a Heideggerian point of view, then, it is all too clear that to respond to the Babel of late-modernity by returning to God as foundation is simply to try to escape from metaphysics by setting against its final dissolution the recovery of a 'preceding' configuration; one that appears desirable just because less tightly bound —but only apparently— to the actual condition from which one wishes to escape."

<sup>42</sup> Vattimo, "A Prayer for Silence", 98.

metaphysics, of philosophers, not the God of “the Book.”<sup>43</sup> These two points can be read as fundamentalism precisely because they presuppose there is an intact message that can be reachable *through* the faith of Christianity *after* the culture of Christendom. We are historically situated human beings whose faith is shaped and colored by the culture. So, if we cannot think of faith outside culture, how are we able to differentiate “real” faith from the cultural faith?<sup>44</sup>

Hunting for the “real” or fundamental Christianity *after* the culture of Christendom also reinforces the belief in the future where the kingdom of God will be built. However, the prophecy of Vattimo entirely differs from the literal interpretation of the Bible. Rather, he favors a nihilistic and fully secularized future with the help of his earlier works on positive nihilism whose aim is to say “No” to all claims of metaphysical foundations through the transvaluation of all values.<sup>45</sup> As he says, “We haven’t yet been nihilistic enough,” Vattimo heralds a future of humanity in which a culture of consensus reigns. Moreover, if we consider the statement as a historical event like Nietzsche’s announcement “God is dead” or Heidegger’s end of metaphysics, we need to keep going further by arguing that Vattimo *may* turn himself into the harbinger of the Christian event, even into a new founder of Christianity. And yet if it is true that the kingdom of God will be built when nihilism is accepted broadly enough, then Vattimo is the one who announces the future of Christianity.

### Coda: The Beyond

A person who has no horizon does not see far enough and hence over-values what is nearest to him. On the other hand, “to have a horizon” means not being limited to what is nearby but to being able to see beyond it.

— Hans-Georg Gadamer<sup>46</sup>

Through hermeneutics as convalescence, Vattimo’s attempt to save religion from the foundations and violence of metaphysics is indeed a crucial phenomenon in the postmodern era. However, some significant questions raised in the return of religion do need to be open to discussion. Postmodern plurality validates other truth claims in dialogue, but it must also make us aware of other “horizons.” That is why Vattimo’s step toward beyond interpretation remains ambiguous and problematic.

<sup>43</sup> Vattimo, *After Christianity*, 8.

<sup>44</sup> To explain this kind of fundamentalism, the Age of Felicity in the history of Islam is a nice example. According to both many Sunni and Shia doctrines, the period from the advent of Islam to Prophet Muhammad’s death (or, to the end of the era of first four khalifas, for some) is the sacred period since the revelation still continues. But once the revelation ceased and the Qur’an is completed, Muslims started to recite the message, to remember and discuss what Prophet Muhammad said about the verse which is sent by God (the beginning of the discipline of *hadith*), and to interpret how he practiced the Qur’an in his life (*sunnah*). After the Prophet and his companions died (that is, after the Age of Felicity), only the Qur’anic message and narratives about the life and implementations of the Prophet left to the successors of the Muslim community in order to understand “the Muslim event of Being.” Then, a thousand years later, the Wahhabi movement rose in the Arabian peninsula and claimed a return to the Age of Felicity is possible when Muslims ignore the “misinterpretations” of Qur’an (just Qur’an), which had been made by Muslim scholars for centuries. In this regard, in order to reach the “real” Islam and to be a good Muslim, the fundamental return to the text and to the event of revelation is the only requirement. This Wahhabi understanding of Islam is now being defended by many Muslims probably as a response to modernity since Islam has been surrounded, colonized, and defeated politically.

<sup>45</sup> Gianni Vattimo, *Dialogue with Nietzsche* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 140.

<sup>46</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. tr. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 313.

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## Rawls' 'Justice as Fairness': Not only Political but also Metaphysical

Rawls'un "Hakkaniyet Olarak Adalet": Sadece Politik Değil Aynı Zamanda Metafiziksel

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## Rawls' 'Justice as Fairness': Not only Political but also Metaphysical

### Abstract

In his book *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls develops an account of justice, 'justice as fairness' (JAF, henceforth). In his later works, he claims that JAF is supposed to depend on neither philosophical nor religious claims but on political claims. So, the conception of justice he wishes to defend is political but not metaphysical. This political (as well as moral in a specific sense) conception of justice is supposed to apply to political, social, and economic institutions. By presenting JAF, Rawls aims to show how free and rational persons would hold the same conception of justice he defends if they have been invited to construct a just social contract. This would be the case, Rawls reasons, only if those persons determine the principles of justice as if they are in a purely hypothetical situation. Rawls calls this situation 'the original position' and thinks that in the original position, parties and decision makers can be fair and impartial to construct a social contract if they can stand behind 'The Veil of Ignorance' which is the main feature of the original position. The parties (free and rational persons) who stand behind the veil of ignorance know nothing about their place, class position, social status, intelligence, abilities, and the like in society. They do not know their conceptions of the good either. Since the parties are rational and capable of having a sense of justice, the fundamental agreement they could make behind the veil of ignorance with respect to the principles of justice will be fair. Rawls also develops an account of law (the Law of Peoples) to show that the principles of justice will be universal in its reach. He claims that both reasonably just liberal and decent hierarchical peoples (like the Muslim peoples of the utopian state, Kazanistan) would accept the principles of justice. Rawls argues, however, that since a decent hierarchical society does not consider its members as free and equal citizens as a liberal society does, it cannot be as reasonable and just as a liberal society. So, liberal peoples must encourage decent peoples to recognize the advantages of having liberal institutions and try to convince them to become more liberal in order to have a reasonably just society. In this paper, I will argue that Rawls's accounts of the original position and the Law of Peoples show that unlike what Rawls contends, JAF is not only political but also metaphysical. I will suggest that since Rawls's accounts of JAF and person require some metaphysical assumptions, theists who necessarily hold comprehensive metaphysical claims on justice and person have a good reason to reject that they should step behind the veil of ignorance in order to construct a just social contract.

**Key Words:** Religious Studies, Liberalism, Justice, Social Contract, Theism.

### Rawls'un "Hakkaniyet Olarak Adalet"i : Sadece Politik Değil Aynı Zamanda Metafiziksel

#### Öz

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* adlı eserinde 'hakkaniyet olarak adalet' kavramını geliştirmektedir. Sonraki eserlerinde ise hakkaniyet olarak adaletin felsefi ya da dini iddialara değil de siyasi iddialara dayandığını öne sürmektedir. Dolayısıyla Rawls'un savunmak istediği adalet kavramı metafiziksel değil de siyasidir. Bu siyasi (aynı zamanda özel bir manada ahlaki olan) adalet kavramının siyasi, sosyal ve ekonomik kurumlara uygulanması beklenir. Rawls hakkaniyet olarak adalet kavramını ileri sürerek özgür ve rasyonel bireylerin adil bir sosyal anlaşma kurmaya davet edilirse aynı adalet kavramına sahip olacaklarını göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Rawls'a göre bu durum ancak bireylerin tamamıyla farazi bir durum içerisindeymiş gibi adaletin ilkelerini belirlemeleri halinde mümkündür. Rawls bu durumu 'orijinal pozisyon' olarak adlandırır. Ona göre eğer partiler ve karar alıcılar orijinal pozisyonun temel özelliği olan 'Bilgisizlik Peçesi'nin arkasında kalabilirlerse orijinal pozisyonda hakkaniyetli ve tarafsız bir sosyal anlaşma yapabilirler. Bilgisizlik Peçesi arkasında duran partiler (özgür ve rasyonel insanlar) toplum içindeki yerlerini, sınıfsal pozisyonlarını, sosyal statülerini, zekalarını, kabiliyetlerini ve benzerlerini bilmezler. İyi kavramına da sahip değillerdir. Partiler, rasyonel oldukları ve adalet kavramına sahip olmaya muktedir oldukları için bilgisizlik peçesi arkasında yapacakları temel anlaşma adaletin temel prensipleri açısından hakkaniyetli olacaktır. Rawls aynı zamanda adaletin prensiplerinin sınırlarının evrensel olduğunu göstermek amacıyla bir hukuk tanımlaması (İnsanların Hukuku) geliştirir. Rawls makul bir şekilde liberal olan ve iyi hiyerarşik insanların da (Kazanistan ütopyasının Müslümanları gibi) adaletin temel prensiplerini kabul edeceğini ileri sürer. Ancak Rawls, iyi hiyerarşik bir toplumun kendi üyelerini liberal bir toplum kadar özgür ve eşit görmediği için onun liberal bir toplum gibi makul olamayacağını savunur. Böylelikle Rawls'a göre liberaller, iyi insanları liberal kurumlara sahip olmanın avantajlarını fark etmeye teşvik etmeli ve onları makul adaletli bir toplum için daha fazla liberal olmaları gerektiğine ikna etmelidirler. Bu makalede Rawls'un orijinal pozisyon ve İnsanların Hukuku kavramlarının onun ulaşmak istediği sonucun aksine, hakkaniyet olarak adalet kavramının sadece siyasi değil aynı zamanda metafiziksel olduğunu gösterdiğini savunuyorum. Rawls'un adalet ve ferde dair görüşlerinin metafiziksel varsayımlar gerektirdiği için adalet ve fert üzerine metafiziksel iddialara zorunlu olarak sahip olan teistlerin adil bir sosyal anlaşma yapma amacıyla bilgisizlik peçesi ardına geçmeyi reddetmeye dair iyi bir sebebi bulunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dini Araştırmalar, Liberalizm, Adalet, Sosyal Anlaşma, Teizm.



## Introduction

In his book *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls develops an account of justice, ‘justice as fairness’ (JAF, henceforth). Rawls suggests that JAF is political but not metaphysical because unlike other metaphysical and religious comprehensive accounts of justice, his JAF applies to only political, social, and economic institutions.<sup>1</sup> It is also a moral conception but in a limited sense as it is intended to apply to those institutions.<sup>2</sup> To construct a modern constitutional democracy, he reasons, free and rational persons would need a conception of justice by which a just social contract can be produced. Rawls suggests that JAF is the best candidate for such an aim. He invites us to imagine that free and rational persons find themselves in a hypothetical situation and they are supposed to construct a social just contract. Rawls calls this situation ‘the original position’ and argues that in the original position, free and rational persons step behind ‘The Veil of Ignorance’ to be fair and impartial decision makers. Standing behind the veil of ignorance provides a unique opportunity to the decision makers to construct the contract: they know nothing about their place, social status, intelligence, religious views, conceptions of the good, and the like. Since those rational decision makers have a sense of justice, the fundamental agreement they could make behind the veil of ignorance will be fair.<sup>3</sup> One, however, might worry that the principles of justice considered by the decision makers in the original position will be too restricted in its reach. After all, they are intended to construct a constitutional democracy. Rawls develops an account of law (the Law of Peoples) and claims that the principles of justice he considers will be universal in its reach. He suggests that not only reasonably just liberal peoples (or societies) but also decent hierarchical peoples (like the Muslim peoples of the utopian state, Kazanistan)<sup>4</sup> would accept those principles. Endorsing the same principles of justice with respect to international relationship, however, cannot make a decent hierarchical society as reasonable and just as a liberal society. For Kazanistan, for instance, does not treat its members as free and equal citizens as a liberal society does.<sup>5</sup> What liberal peoples can do with respect to keeping the principles of justice among nations is simple: encouraging other decent societies like Kazanistan to become more liberal in order to have a reasonably just society.<sup>6</sup> In this paper, I will argue that unlike what Rawls contends, his accounts of justice and person are not only political but also metaphysical.

In the following section, I will summarize Rawls’s accounts of JAF (along with the original position and the veil of ignorance). I will then explain his account of the Law of Peoples with respect to his utopia named Kazanistan. I will finally attempt to show that since JAF and Rawls’s conception of person in fact depends on metaphysical claims, the theist cannot see why it would make sense to step behind the veil of ignorance. And this would require a liberal Rawlsian to reject or modify Rawls’s two claims: the principles of justice Rawls presents are universal in its reach and JAF is political not metaphysical.

### 1. Rawls’s Original Position and the Law of Peoples

Rawls presents a conception of justice to which our knowledge of historical or particular facts about people and societies are supposed to be morally irrelevant. Rawls invites us to imagine a

<sup>1</sup> John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical”, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14/3 (1985), 223-251; John Rawls, “The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus”, *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 7/1 (1987), 1-25.

<sup>2</sup> Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical”, 224.

<sup>3</sup> John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 11.

<sup>4</sup> John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples with “The Idea of Public Reason” Revisited* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 59-88.

<sup>5</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 83.

<sup>6</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 62.

hypothetical situation in which free, rational, and reasonable people attempt to determine the fundamental principles of justice which will be a determining factor in constructing a just social contract. Since being fair and impartial about fundamental principles of justice requires that the parties (free, rational, and reasonable persons) should step behind the veil of ignorance, they lack the knowledge of the followings in that position:

No one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance. This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances. Since all are similarly situated and no one is able to design principles to favor his particular condition, the principles of justice are the result of a fair agreement or bargain.<sup>7</sup>

The veil of ignorance, then, implies that if the parties or citizens who design their society know their religious beliefs, social status, abilities, races, etc., they cannot avoid considering those circumstances; and this might lead them to suggest some subjective principles of justice based on their particular positions. The parties, by stepping behind the veil of ignorance, will be able to propose objective principles of justice to construct a just society. The fundamental principles of justice are as follows:

First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others.

Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all.<sup>8</sup>

While the first principle must precede the second, in the second principle, (a) is prior to (b).<sup>9</sup> He claims that liberties, basic rights, and opportunities are ensured by these principles as they apply to the basic structure of society.<sup>10</sup> These objective principles are general, universal, and public.<sup>11</sup> Also, the conception of right in the original position "must impose an ordering on conflicting claims."<sup>12</sup> Lastly, the principles of justice are final principles, so there are no higher standards that can override them.<sup>13</sup>

In the original position, every person can regard himself as free and equal; and as free and equal citizens, they need some primary goods to live a complete life<sup>14</sup> and "to advance their permissible conceptions of the good."<sup>15</sup> These primary goods are basic rights and liberties, freedom of movement and free choice of occupation, powers and opportunities, income and

<sup>7</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 11.

<sup>8</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 53.

<sup>9</sup> John Rawls, *Justice As Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 43; Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical", 227.

<sup>10</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 53.

<sup>11</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 113-115.

<sup>12</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 115.

<sup>13</sup> Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 116-117.

<sup>14</sup> Rawls, *Justice As Fairness: A Restatement*, 58.

<sup>15</sup> Rawls, *Justice As Fairness: A Restatement*, 61.

wealth, and conditions for self-respect.<sup>16</sup> I shall note here that when Rawls says that the parties do not know their conceptions of good, he does not mean that they do not know about these primary goods. Rather, since the two principles of justice require these primary goods, the parties shall construct their social contract with respect to them.

As noted above, Rawls argues that JAF is universal in reach. He develops an account of realistic utopia in his *The Law of Peoples* to show that JAF can be applied to international laws. Unlike its traditional meaning, the term “law of peoples” Rawls uses has a specific meaning:

By the “Law of Peoples” I mean a particular political conception of right and justice that applies to the principles and norms of international law and practice. I shall use the term “Society of Peoples” to mean all those peoples who follow the ideals and principles of the Law of Peoples in their mutual relations. These peoples have their own internal governments, which may be constitutional liberal democratic or non-liberal but decent governments.<sup>17</sup>

Considering different types of domestic societies, Rawls proposes that only reasonable liberal peoples and decent peoples are well-ordered peoples.<sup>18</sup> These well-ordered societies accept and follow the Law of Peoples; so, they deserve to have a membership in a Society of Peoples.

Rawls invites us to imagine a nonliberal decent hierarchical Muslim society named ‘Kazanistan.’ Kazanistan is supposed to satisfy two criteria: first, it does not seek influence with aggressive aims. So, it does not violate other societies’ religious and civil liberties while attempting to have influence on them.<sup>19</sup> Second, it satisfies three conditions. The first condition is that its social system protects human rights such as “the right to life (to the means of subsistence and security); to liberty (to freedom from slavery, serfdom, and forced occupation, and to a sufficient measure of liberty of conscience to ensure freedom of religion and thought); to property (personal property); and to formal equality as expressed by the rules of natural justice (that is, that similar cases be treated similarly).”<sup>20</sup> The second condition is that their system of law must impose moral duties and obligations for all members of their society. And the third condition is that the officials who are responsible for administering the legal system must defend the law and thus “the common good idea of justice.”<sup>21</sup>

Rawls believes that had the representatives of the decent hierarchical society been in the original position, they (as being decent and rational) would have adopted the same liberal principles of the Law of Peoples.<sup>22</sup> They are eight principles:

- “1. Peoples are free and independent, and their freedom and independence are to be respected by other peoples.
2. Peoples are to observe treaties and undertakings.

<sup>16</sup> Rawls, *Justice As Fairness: A Restatement*, 58-59; Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 54.

<sup>17</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 4. For why he uses the term “peoples” instead of “states” or “nations”, see: Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 24-27.

<sup>19</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 64.

<sup>20</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 65.

<sup>21</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 66-67.

<sup>22</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 69-70. He notes that an original position argument can be used for decent hierarchical societies only at the Law of Peoples level but not necessarily at the domestic level. This means that even if decent hierarchical societies do not need to advocate liberal principles of justice for their own societies, they need to honor those principles with respect to international laws. For a critical survey of this view, see: Thomas V. Pogge, “The Incoherence Between Rawls’s Theories of Justice”, *Fordham Law Review* 72/5 (2004), 1739-1759.

3. Peoples are equal and are parties to the agreements that bind them.
4. Peoples are to observe a duty of non-intervention.
5. Peoples have the right of self-defense but no right to instigate war for reasons other than self-defense.
6. Peoples are to honor human rights.
7. Peoples are to observe certain specified restrictions in the conduct of war.
8. Peoples have a duty to assist other peoples living under unfavorable conditions that prevent their having a just or decent political and social regime.”<sup>23</sup>

Further, in Kazanistan, other religions and associations are allowed to seek influence and to flourish their cultural life. Given the adaptation of the principles of the Law of Peoples, Kazanistan is not as reasonable and just as a liberal well-ordered society but still a decent society that meets moral and legal requirements to have a membership in Society of Peoples.

## **2. Situating the Problem: Are Rawls's Conceptions of Justice and Person only Political?**

Rawls's theory of justice has been criticized from different aspects. For instance, it is not obvious that the parties in the original position will not have moral disagreements which might threaten Rawls's conception of justice.<sup>24</sup> It seems also problematic to claim that Islam can offer Kazanistan as its best model.<sup>25</sup> Or it is not clear why we should accept Rawls's account of public reasoning which requires that religion (for instance, Islam) and politics should be separated.<sup>26</sup> Though these are genuine objections (whether they are right or not) that a Rawlsian should answer, I aim to focus on what I take a more fundamental problem with Rawls's account of justice: whether he is right that his accounts of justice and person do not depend on metaphysical claims.

An obvious problem for Rawls's account of justice, as he himself admits, is that it seems to presuppose (a) metaphysical conception of the person with respect to the parties in the original position and (b) a conception of justice depending on a philosophical doctrine. (a) seems to be the case because JAF holds a liberal conception of person as it sees persons as citizens first. (b) seems to be the case because the fundamental principles of justice applied to the basic structure of society and the international laws presuppose liberal rights. (a) would be a problem for Rawls's account because any metaphysical conception of the person (realist, idealist, materialist, and the like) in the original position would have implications regarding the principles of justice, human rights, obligations, etc. Since Rawls's account of justice seems to presuppose “an overly individualistic conception of persons”<sup>27</sup> (for they are citizens first), he is supposed to provide some arguments for the view that we should be willing to accept an individualistic conception of persons. (b) would also be a problem for his account because if JAF is intended to apply to the basic structure of society as a general moral conception but not as a practical political conception, a proponent of a general moral doctrine such as a utilitarian might push back and question why we cannot take a utilitarian principle like the principle of utility as a

<sup>23</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 37.

<sup>24</sup> Ryan Muldoon et al., “Disagreement Behind the Veil of Ignorance”, *Philosophical Studies* 170/3 (2014), 377-394.

<sup>25</sup> Antoine Hatzenberger, “Kazanistan: John Rawls's Oriental Utopia”, *Utopian Studies* 24/1 (2013), 105-118.

<sup>26</sup> Abdullahi Ahmad An-Na'im, “Islamic Politics and the Neutral State: A Friendly Amendment to Rawls?”, *Rawls and Religion*, ed. Tom Bailey and Valentina Gentile (NY: Columbia University Press, 2014), 242-265.

<sup>27</sup> Jean Hampton, “Should Political Philosophy be Done Without Metaphysics?”, *Ethics* 99/4 (1989), 794.

central principle to construct a social contract. This again would have some implications with respect to constructing a social contract.

Rawls argues that the argument for (a) fails because he proposes a moral conception of the person as an application of his political conception of justice. He is not developing a comprehensive general moral conception of person that can be seen in philosophical or religious approaches. And the argument for (b) fails because again, what he attempts to show is that an “informed and willing political agreement between citizens viewed as free and equal persons”<sup>28</sup> requires a conception of justice that is political and practical but not metaphysical. So, his JAF, unlike other traditional conceptions of justice which are not only political but also metaphysical, secures a willing and just agreement between citizens.

But what is wrong with defending a metaphysical conception of person and justice? Rawls holds that no general moral conception (philosophical or religious) of person or justice can provide an overlapping consensus that is needed for a constitutional democracy.<sup>29</sup> Given their nature, philosophy and religion necessarily present disputed questions and claims that political approaches cannot resolve. What makes JAF different from a philosophical or religious doctrine with respect to the conceptions of justice and person is then as follows: the former holds that given that there are “many conflicting and incommensurable conceptions of the good, each compatible with the full rationality of human persons, so far as we can ascertain within a workable political conception of justice.”<sup>30</sup> the citizens should affirm this political feature of a democratic society. And since persons are citizens, a philosophical or religious conception of person cannot secure a willing and rational agreement between citizens. The latter, however, contends that since there is only one rational conception of the good which might depend on utilitarian, religious, or the like moral assumptions, the rational citizens should affirm only that conception of the good. Rawls’s endorsement of the former then has a certain motivation: defending a reasonable pluralism in and between societies. As Wenar has pointed out, Rawls’s hope is as follows:

The religious, moral, and philosophical doctrines that citizens accept will themselves endorse toleration and accept the essentials of a democratic regime. In the religious sphere, for example, a reasonable pluralism might contain a reasonable Catholicism, a reasonable interpretation of Islam, a reasonable atheism, and so on. Being reasonable, none of these doctrines will advocate the use of coercive political power to impose religious conformity on citizens with different beliefs.<sup>31</sup>

The citizens who accept universal primary goods are reasonable citizens. Even if reasonable citizens have their own comprehensive doctrines such as Judaism, Christianity, or Islam, they do not impose them on others. As free and equal citizens, they accept *the burdens of judgment*.<sup>32</sup>

In the following section, I will argue that unlike what Rawls claims, his conceptions of justice and person have metaphysical assumptions. This presents a good reason for the theist (particularly for the theist who takes the notion of God as central for constructing a just social contract) to

<sup>28</sup> Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical”, 230.

<sup>29</sup> Rawls, “The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus”, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical”, 248.

<sup>31</sup> Leif Wenar, “John Rawls”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Access Date August 30, 2023).

<sup>32</sup> Wenar, “John Rawls”.

reject the notion of the veil of ignorance and thus the liberal assumptions that Rawls provide for his conceptions of justice and person.

### **3. A Counterargument: Why A Theist Should not Step Behind the Veil of Ignorance?**

As we have seen, Rawls argues that since there are many incommensurable conceptions of the good that can be rationally held, we need to have a conception of justice that can help to construct a just social contract in order to have a democratic regime in which the basic rights of the citizens are protected. And since the general philosophical, religious, or moral doctrines present disputed claims that might threaten the possibility of a political agreement among citizens, any conception of justice depending on these comprehensive doctrines will not secure (if not destroy) a just political agreement. JAF, as a conception of justice that applies only to political, economic, and social institutions, can secure such an agreement as it presents a unique conception of justice that can be adopted by any reasonable community (either liberal or non-liberal one like decent Muslim community, Kazanistan).

I think a theist who takes God to be central for any moral claim and individual rights and considers human beings as beings created in God's image has some good reasons to reject Rawls's conceptions of justice and person.<sup>33</sup> For this commitment has certain metaphysical implications that necessarily conflict with some liberal claims. Let's start with Rawls's conception of justice. Notice that though he claims that his conception of justice is political and does not depend on any comprehensive philosophical view including liberalism, I think he is mistaken for several reasons.

First, Rawls's account of justice assumes a hierarchy among societies. Notice that even though Rawls holds that there are many incommensurable conceptions of the good, he suggests that there are five types of societies: "reasonable liberal peoples," "decent hierarchical peoples," "outlaw states," "societies burdened by unfavorable conditions," and "benevolent absolutisms."<sup>34</sup> Rawls sees a hierarchy between these societies: the first type is the most reasonable society and the fifth one is the most unreasonable.<sup>35</sup> As noted in the first section of this paper, he proposes some liberal criteria and then determines the type of the given society (like Kazanistan) by considering whether it satisfies those criteria. The less a society satisfies a liberal criterion, the more it is unreasonable. A Rawlsian might claim that those criteria do not depend on liberalism in a comprehensive sense; rather, since they, as criteria of justice, apply to political institution, they are intended to be practical and moral in a specific sense. But then one might rightly ask what makes Kazanistan which satisfies those criteria along with eight principles of the Law of Peoples less reasonable than a liberal society. If the criteria Rawls proposes are sufficient to determine reasonability of a society, Kazanistan (a society that satisfies those criteria) should be considered as reasonable as a liberal society. The reason why Rawls considers Kazanistan as less reasonable than a liberal society, I think, should be clear: his criteria regarding basic rights and liberties depend on liberalism in a comprehensive sense. Since Kazanistan does not satisfy all other liberal principles, Rawls does not consider Kazanistan as

<sup>33</sup> In this paper, I will not attempt to show why political philosophy cannot be done without metaphysics. My aim is twofold: first, Rawls's accounts of JAF and person are incompatible with his view that JAF is political but not metaphysical; second, the theist has a good reason to reject those accounts given that they require metaphysical claims. For the investigations whether political philosophy can be done without metaphysics, see: Hampton, *Should Political Philosophy be Done Without Metaphysics?*, Patrick Neal, "Politics/Metaphysics", *A Companion to Political Philosophy. Methods, Tools, Topics*, ed. Antonella Besussi (New York: Routledge Press, 2016), 79-89, and Robert Stern, "The Relation between Moral Theory and Metaphysics", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series* 92 (1992), 143-159.

<sup>34</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 63.

<sup>35</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 74.

reasonable as a liberal society.<sup>36</sup> But notice that if Rawls is right that JAF is political not metaphysical (i.e., not depending on liberalism in a comprehensive sense), those liberal principles should not play any role in determining whether a society is reasonable or not.<sup>37</sup> It seems then that his endorsement of liberalism in a comprehensive sense also determines his principles of justice that are supposed to apply only to politics. His JAF, then, is not only political but also metaphysical.

One might suggest that the liberal principles play such a role only in a political sense. A liberal society, for instance, is more reasonable than Kazanistan because it has more political good and thus political justice. After all, JAF is not intended to show why liberalism is more reasonable than other philosophical or metaphysical views in a general sense. I think, this is mistaken. For we might rightly wonder why we should isolate the notion of justice as if it is limited to only political good. Since this limitation itself presupposes a metaphysical claim on justice, Rawls's account of JAF cannot be secured without embracing some metaphysical views which would threaten his claim that JAF is political but not metaphysical.

Second, even though Rawls argues that JAF, unlike comprehensive conceptions of justice, is not teleological, I think it is. For it aims to encourage societies to make reforms in liberal direction both at the domestic and the international levels. So, it attempts to maximize liberal values. There are two problems with this liberal aim. The first problem is that as noted in the previous section, Rawls himself proposes that there are “many conflicting and incommensurable conceptions of the good, each compatible with the full rationality of human persons.”. What does this mean? Incommensurability between values suggests that there is not a common measure by which the ranking or comparison of these values is possible:

Values or bearers of value are then incommensurable only when not even an ordinal comparison or rankings are possible. On this interpretation, incommensurability is defined as the relation that holds between two items when neither is better than other nor are they equally as good.<sup>38</sup>

This is indeed compatible with Rawls's defense of reasonable pluralism. If there are incommensurable conceptions of the good adopted by citizens or societies, the ranking or comparison of those conceptions of the good is not possible (at least in political sense). We can then accept the burdens of judgment. But if this is the case, it does not make sense for a Rawlsian to have the given aim: encouraging citizens and societies to make reforms in liberal direction. For, if there are incommensurable conceptions of the good and if each is compatible with the rationality of human persons, then why not leave societies like Kazanistan as they are instead of encouraging them to make liberal reforms. Even such hope does not seem to have a rational explanation. For one might claim that having incommensurable conceptions of the good adopted by different societies (either liberal or decent) would serve liberal political principles better by promoting toleration. It seems then that if JAF is political but not teleological (and

<sup>36</sup> We have the same problem with other types of societies. Why, for instance, should a benevolent absolutist society that secures some basic human rights and liberties but not political rights such as voting be considered a fully unreasonable society? Why should voting rights be an essential criterion to determine whether a society is reasonable or not if we are not endorsing liberalism in a comprehensive sense?

<sup>37</sup> Rawls claims that an original position argument can be used for Kazanistan only with respect to international laws but not necessarily at the domestic level. So, Kazanistan does not have to adopt liberal principles of justice at the domestic level. But if that is the case, Kazanistan, by honoring the principles of justice at the international level, must satisfy the criteria for being reasonable as a liberal society does.

<sup>38</sup> Nien-hê Hsieh and Henrik Andersson, “Incommensurable Values”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Access Date August 30, 2023).

thus not metaphysical), Rawls does not have a good explanation for why liberal societies should encourage other nonliberal societies in order to make liberal reforms. But if this liberal aim has a rational explanation, that must be JAF's inherent teleological motivation.

Further, Rawls argues that liberal societies don't (and shouldn't) have a comprehensive conception of the good. Only citizens and associations in those societies might have comprehensive conceptions of the good.<sup>39</sup> If this is the case and if liberal societies should encourage other nonliberal societies that adopt comprehensive conceptions of the good in a liberal direction, Rawls indeed proposes a claim that is both political and metaphysical: reasonable societies should not have comprehensive conceptions of the good. So, if JAF has a teleological motivation, that motivation cannot make sense without its metaphysical motivations. For the teleological motivation of JAF directed to political good will necessarily force metaphysical issues to arise: do liberal values outweigh other nonliberal values?, are there incommensurable conceptions of the good in general sense or in political sense?, would it be justified or reasonable for nonliberal societies to encourage other societies to make reforms in nonliberal direction at both domestic and international levels?, and the like.

Third, Rawls suggests that we should admit the fact of reasonable pluralism both at the domestic and the Law of Peoples (international) levels. This is indeed compatible with his view that the principle of toleration should be applied to philosophy itself. Now it is one thing to suggest that there are many conceptions of good and thus pluralism regarding comprehensive conceptions of justice and good, it is another thing to claim that there are many reasonable comprehensive conceptions of justice and good. The former only asks to recognize a fact while the latter asks to accept a metaphysical claim. As a religious society, Kazanistan, for instance, might recognize that since there are citizens and associations adopted different comprehensive conceptions of justice and good, it should secure some basic rights such as freedom of religion. But since Kazanistan holds that there is only one rational conception of the good and justice, it cannot accept Rawls's metaphysical claim that there is a reasonable pluralism regarding good and justice. This has some certain implications: unlike what Rawls demands, the representatives of religious societies cannot (either at the domestic or the international level) "ignore any knowledge of the people's comprehensive conception of the good."<sup>40</sup> Further, their deliberations cannot proceed as if they are situated behind the veil of ignorance which require only liberal conception of justice. It seems then that what Rawls asks nonliberal societies to endorse is a metaphysical claim, the claim that there are many reasonable comprehensive conceptions of justice.

If I am right, the theist has some good reasons to reject the view that reasonable societies and their representatives should step behind the veil of ignorance in order to construct a just social contract. First, stepping behind the veil of ignorance is to accept that liberal society is more reasonable than any other type of society. This is to claim that liberalism is the most reasonable comprehensive view. Second, it is to accept that the principles of justice regarding both domestic and international laws should be determined in favor of liberal values. This would require for a religious society to open its comprehensive conceptions of the good and justice to the threat of another comprehensive view, liberalism. Third, it is to abandon one of the central theistic claims: there is only one rational conception of the good and justice.

<sup>39</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 34.

<sup>40</sup> Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 34.



Let's now evaluate Rawls's conception of person. Rawls, as a liberal, considers persons citizens first. He also suggests that he is not developing a comprehensive conception of person that can be seen in philosophical or religious approaches. It is intended to apply to political institutions.<sup>41</sup> I doubt that. Notice that Rawls is inviting us to isolate the conception of person from all essential metaphysical claims on persons (what is personhood, are we created by a supreme being?, if so, what moral obligations do we have to execute?, is there an afterlife for us?, is a fetus a person?, if it is, what basic rights does it have?, and the like) and then asks us to imagine an original position in which only constructing a just social contract matters. This is no different from asking to consider persons citizens first. So, we are invited to hold the priority of the basic political rights of individuals over their other essential rights. From a theistic perspective, however, the essential metaphysical questions and their answers are prior to the question of how we can construct a social contract. For the very possibility of constructing a just social contract depends on these metaphysical questions. As it is not sufficient to accept that there is the fact of reasonable pluralism just because there is the fact of pluralism regarding justice or good, merely referring to the fact that we are born into societies and that we need a political agreement is not sufficient to accept Rawls's conception of person and thus to make sense of stepping behind the veil of ignorance. We need some additional arguments to consider persons citizens first. I cannot see how a Rawlsian can provide the needed arguments without applying to some metaphysical claims. For any definition of person will necessarily require some metaphysical claims. And any metaphysical conception of person will necessarily have some political implications. Starting from the fact that we are born into societies, thus, can provide a complete picture of personhood neither in metaphysical sense nor in political sense. The theist, then, cannot see itself or her representatives as justifiably stepping behind the veil of ignorance.<sup>42</sup>

One might suggest that Rawls's main idea is not to take persons to be citizens first in a general sense. What he asserts is that both liberal and decent societies should consider persons citizens first in political sense. Even though they might have different and even conflicting conceptions of persons in a general sense, given that they have rational decision makers, they might have the same account of justice and person supposed to apply to only political institutions. But again, this does not seem to be acceptable for the theist. For he is invited to hold that political aspect of justice and thus person can be isolated from its metaphysical aspect. We, however, have seen that this invitation itself presupposes a metaphysical claim.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I first summarized Rawls's account of justice and his arguments for the original position. I then explained how he proposes his account of justice for both liberal and nonliberal religious societies in order to show that his conceptions of justice, good, and person are universal in reach, and they are political but not metaphysical. I have argued that unlike what Rawls claims, his conceptions of justice and good are not only political but also metaphysical. I

<sup>41</sup> For some examples of criticisms of the liberal conception of person according to which persons are citizens and thus political beings first, see: Charles Taylor, "Atomism," *Powers, Possessions and Freedoms: Essays in Honor of C. B. Macpherson*, ed. Alkis Kontos (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 39-61, and Michael J. Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self", *Political Theory* 12/1 (1984), 81-96.

<sup>42</sup> Though Rawls admits that decent societies do not have to adopt his conception of person at domestic level, he demands that the representatives of decent societies should adopt that conception at the Law of Peoples level. This is, I think, only postponing the problem. For any comprehensive view holding that there is only one rational conception of person requires that we should have the same conception of person at international level as well.

have also suggested that a theist who holds a comprehensive view on justice, goodness, and personhood has some good reasons to reject Rawls's liberal theory of justice.

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## Metaphysics of Extraordinary Events

Olağanüstü Olayların Metafiziği

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## Metaphysics of Extraordinary Events

### Abstract

How can an event be extraordinary? What is the metaphysical background necessary to believe that extraordinary events are possible? The possibility of extraordinary events can be approached from metaphysical, epistemic, and scientific perspectives. Metaphysical explanations are extraordinary events that transcend nature or violate the regular structure in nature. Epistemological explanations, on the other hand, are explanations of extraordinary events by referring either to our lack of knowledge about nature or to our inadequacy of knowledge about events. Scientific explanations recognize phenomena that have been observed or experimented on but have not yet been explained by any theory. In this article, I focus on metaphysical and epistemological explanations. We see that three basic assumptions are used for a metaphysical explanation: 1) There must be an orderly operation called Nature. 2) The process in nature can be violated. 3) There is a compatibility between the mind and the world. With the adoption of these three assumptions by different philosophers in various combinations, two kinds of metaphysical explanations arise: extraordinary as supernatural and extraordinary by appealing to the principle of sufficient reason.

According to the first type of explanation, extraordinary events are events caused by what is beyond nature, exceeding nature, or violating the workings of nature. In order to explain extraordinary events with the supernatural, there is a need to violate the metaphysical necessities on which nature is based, such as the principle of causality. An approach represented by philosophers such as St. Augustine, al-Ghazālī, Richard Swinburne, and Nazif Muhtaroglu claims that it is possible for a supernatural event to occur, claiming that the functioning of nature is not necessary. But if there is no metaphysical necessity in nature such as the principle of causality, how can an extraordinary event violate anything? Both Swinburne and St. Augustine answer this question with the argument that the principle of causality is effective in nature and that principle can be violated by God, a supernatural power. Al-Ghazālī and Muhtaroglu, on the other hand, prefer not to accept the effectiveness of causality in the functioning of nature. Thus, all activity in nature will be attributed to God, and extraordinary events will gain the same status as ordinary events. The point that unites these views is the belief that the operation in nature is not necessary, with or without causality. Philosophers with this belief could not successfully explain extraordinary events because they could not ground their understanding of nature and the supernatural. Moreover, when we analyze their approach to the problem, we see that ordinary and extraordinary events cannot be separated from each other, since no other principle is put forward to replace the principle of causality.

The second type of explanation is the explanation of extraordinary events by applying the principle of sufficient reason. The philosophers represented by Ibn Sīnā and Leibniz consider it necessary both metaphysically and epistemologically that everything in nature needs sufficient reason to come to be. According to them, no event can take place without sufficient cause. In this respect, there must be sufficient reason for extraordinary events to occur as well as ordinary ones. Both philosophers argue that extraordinary events are metaphysically possible events in nature, but their occurrence does not violate principles such as causality. According to this type of explanation, extraordinary events are not supernatural. Ibn Sīnā, using the concept of nature in its metaphysical sense, argued that forces beyond matter are also effective in nature. Meanwhile, he maintained the necessity of the causality principle. In this way, it is possible to have previously unknown results from known causes. For example, the human soul can affect different bodies through celestial realms, just as it affects its own body. However, this interaction does not violate the necessity of the causality principle, on the contrary, it means the discovery of the necessary structure of nature. In short, the epistemological approaches of Leibniz and Ibn Sīnā, which they developed while preserving the metaphysical necessity of causation, do not require denying extraordinary events without examining them, but also offer a stronger basis for the possibility of extraordinary events, as they expand the limits of our knowledge of nature.

**Key Words:** Philosophy of Religion, Metaphysics, Causality, Necessity, Extraordinary, Miracle, Nature, the Principle of Sufficient Reason, Supernatural.

### Olağanüstü Olayların Metafiziği

#### Öz

Bir olayın olağanüstü olup olmadığına dair yargılar ne şekilde temellendirilebilir? Olağanüstü olayların mümkün olduğuna inanmak için gerekli metafizik arka plan nedir? Olağanüstü olayların imkanına, metafizik, epistemik ve bilimsel açılarından yaklaşılabilir. Metafizik açıklamalar, olağanüstü olayların doğayı aştığı veya doğadaki düzenli yapıyı ihlal ettiği şeklindedir. Epistemolojik açıklamalar ise, olağanüstü olayların ya doğa hakkında bilgimizin eksikliğine ya da olaylar hakkındaki bilgimizin yetersizliğine atıf yaparak açıklanmasıdır. Bilimsel açıklamalar, gözlem veya deneylerle sabit olmuş ama herhangi bir teori ile henüz açıklanamamış olayları olağanüstü kabul eder. Ben bu makalede metafizik ve epistemolojik açıklamalar üzerine eğiliyorum. Metafizik bir açıklama için üç temel varsayımın kullanıldığını görüyoruz: 1) Doğa adında düzenli bir işleyiş olmalıdır. 2) Doğadaki işleyiş ihlal

edilebilir. 3) Zihin ile dünya arasında bir uyumluluk vardır. Bu üç varsayımın çeşitli kombinasyonlarla farklı düşünürler tarafından benimsenmesiyle iki tür metafizik açıklama doğar: doğaüstü olarak olağanüstü ve yeter neden ilkesine başvuru.

İlk tür açıklamaya göre, olağanüstü olaylar doğanın ötesinde, doğayı aşan veya doğanın işleyişini ihlal eden olaylardır. Olağanüstü olayları, doğaüstü ile açıklamak için nedensellik ilkesi gibi doğanın dayandığı metafizik zorunlulukların ihlal edilmesine ihtiyaç vardır. Richard Swinburne, Aziz Agustinus, Gazâlî ve Nazif Muhtaroglu'nun temsil ettiği filozoflar doğanın işleyişinin zorunlu olmadığını ileri sürerek doğaüstü bir olayın gerçekleşmesinin mümkün olduğunu kanıtlamak istemişlerdir. Ancak doğada nedensellik ilkesi gibi metafizik bir zorunluluk yoksa, olağanüstü bir olayın herhangi bir şeyi ihlal etmesi nasıl söz konusu olabilir? Bu soruya, Swinburne ve Aziz Augustinus hem doğada nedensellik ilkesinin etkin olduğu hem de nedenselliğin doğaüstü bir güç olan Tanrı tarafından ihlal edilebileceği cevabını verirler. Gazâlî ve Muhtaroglu ise doğanın işleyişinde nedenselliğin etkinliğini kabul etmemeyi tercih ederler. Böylece doğadaki tüm etkinlik Tanrı'ya atfedilecek ve olağanüstü olaylar da olağan olaylarla aynı statüde olacaktır. Bu görüşleri birleştiren nokta, nedensellik olsun veya olmasın doğadaki işleyişin zorunlu olmadığı inancıdır. Bu inanca sahip filozoflar, doğa ve doğaüstü anlayışlarını temellendiremedikleri için olağanüstü olayları başarılı bir şekilde açıklayamamışlardır. Dahası, onların soruna yaklaşımlarını analiz ettiğimizde görürüz ki, nedensellik yerine başka bir ilke de ileri sürülmediği için, olağan ile olağanüstü olaylar birbirlerinden ayrılamaz.

İkinci tür açıklama ise olağanüstü olayların yeter neden ilkesine başvurarak açıklanmasıdır. Leibniz ve İbn Sînâ'nın temsil ettiği filozoflar, doğada olan her şeyin yeterli bir nedeni olmasını hem metafizik hem epistemolojik olarak zorunlu sayarlar. Onlara göre, yeterli nedeni olmayan hiçbir olay gerçekleşemez. Bu minvalde, olağan olaylar kadar olağanüstü olayların da gerçekleşmesi için yeterli neden olmalıdır. Her iki filozof da olağanüstü olayların, doğada metafizik olarak mümkün olaylardan olduğunu ancak gerçekleşmesi için nedensellik gibi ilkeleri ihlal etmediklerini savunurlar. Bu açıklamaya göre, olağanüstü olaylar doğaüstü değildir. İbn Sina, doğa kavramını metafizik anlamıyla kullanarak, maddenin ötesinde güçlerin de doğada etkin olduğunu savunmuştur. Bu sırada, nedensellik ilkesinin zorunluluğunu korumuştur. Bu sayede, bilinen nedenlerden daha önce bilinmeyen sonuçların çıkması mümkündür. Örneğin insan ruhu, tıpkı kendi bedenine etki ettiği gibi göksel felekler aracılığıyla farklı bedenlere de etki edebilir. Ancak bu etkileşim nedensellik ilkesinin zorunluluğunu ihlal etmez, aksine doğanın zorunlu yapısının keşfi anlamına gelir. Kısacası, İbn Sînâ ve Leibniz'in metafizik zorunluluk taşıyan nedenselliği koruyarak geliştirdikleri epistemolojik yaklaşımları, olağanüstü olayları incelemeyi gerektirmediği gibi doğa hakkındaki bilgimizin sınırlarını genişlettiği için olağanüstü olayların imkanına dair daha güçlü bir dayanak sunar.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Din Felsefesi, Metafizik, Nedensellik, Zorunluluk, Olağanüstü, Mucize, Doğa, Yeter Neden İlkesi, Doğaüstü.

## Introduction

In this article, I explore the possibility of a metaphysical explanation for extraordinary events. Could there really be an extraordinary event? If so, how can it be defended? If not, on what grounds can this be rejected? These questions are of great importance in believing that something truly extraordinary such as miracles has occurred. We believe that an extraordinary event has occurred only if a metaphysical explanation can be offered. For this reason, after briefly analyzing three basic assumptions of metaphysical explanations, I will examine in depth two different approaches to extraordinary. One refers to supernatural, the other to the principle of sufficient reason. Based on the discussions that followed, I point out that since the first kind of explanation requires violation of the causal order of nature, which has to be necessary in the first place to be violated, they fail to account for the possibility of extraordinary events. Their failure is most evident in the absence of a metaphysical criterion to distinguish an extraordinary event from ordinary events. Therefore, there is no enough articulation about the violation of the laws of nature or suspending of causality by an extraordinary event. I also argue to the extent that nature is assumed by an appeal to the principle of sufficient reason, epistemological explanations offer stronger support for their possibility.

## 1. The Concept of Extraordinary

Everyday experience gives rise to a widespread belief that the same events will produce the same or very similar results. This orderly functioning of events is interrupted when unknown results emerge from known events. When we see someone walking on a dirt road, we think that

it is a normal occurrence based on our previous experience. However, if we see someone walking on water, we are excused to call it an extraordinary event. When we see or hear about an extraordinary event, can we explain it? What do we refer to if we want to explain this? Is there any justification for the belief that an extraordinary event can actually occur?

Before we begin, I should state that there is no serious difference in terms of our reaction between encountering an extraordinary event and hearing about it. As long as the analysis made in this article is considered, whether an extraordinary event has been seen personally or heard from someone else is not significant. Whether you encounter or hear about an extraordinary event, you can still ask for an explanation or accept it without explanation. Leaving aside the emotional response to the event itself, one can always question the possibility of an event regardless of the way one encounters it.

There are three types of explanations for extraordinary events: metaphysical, epistemological, and scientific. The metaphysical explanation asserts that an ordered structure that makes ordinary events possible is interrupted, violated, or surpassed. This type of explanation must presuppose that ordinary events occur in a metaphysical order called nature. An extraordinary event originates from a cause that goes beyond nature. Thus, in metaphysical explanations, extraordinary events are supernatural. An alternative metaphysical explanation can be provided by appealing to the principle of sufficient reason. According to this explanation, everything has to have a cause. If something beyond nature provides a sufficient reason for the events in nature, an extraordinary event can be accounted for without recourse to nature itself.

The epistemological explanation goes against the immediate characterization of extraordinary events as supernatural. For this kind of explanation, an extraordinary event is one whose causes are unknown. Epistemological explanations can take two forms. First, someone making this statement might think that there is no difference between an extraordinary event and an ordinary event, assuming that nature operates in a certain order and that the causes of an extraordinary event are unknown. Second, one may avoid making any assumptions about nature because of the limitations of our knowledge and perception. For him, this extraordinary event was completely unknown to us. As for the scientific explanation, it refers to situations in which certain events cannot be explained by the current scientific paradigm. If there is an unexpected result in the observation and experiment, the theories about the observation in question are insufficient. In this case, the event is considered extraordinary until the theory is transformed, or a new theory is developed.<sup>1</sup> Metaphysical and epistemological explanations can be advanced in various ways. I will examine some of these combinations in due course. Although it is closely related to metaphysical and epistemological explanations, scientific explanations of extraordinary events are excluded from the scope of this article because of limited space, and left to be dealt with in a future article.

## **2. Three Basic Assumptions**

Metaphysical explanations of extraordinary events have three basic assumptions. The first assumption is that the world is structured as a causal order, called nature. Second, causality in nature can be violated or transcended. Third, correspondence between the mind and the world is required. The evaluation of the two metaphysical explanations is based on an understanding of these basic assumptions.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (University of Chicago Press, 1996), 52-66.

First, metaphysical explanation makes sense in cosmologies that maintain a closed structure called nature. In the classical universe picture, which was systematized with metaphysical explanations by Plato and Aristotle and became widespread with the detailed explanations of cosmologists such as Ptolemy and Galen, everything that exists forms a hierarchically integrated structure. In this structure, which has roughly two main realms, celestial bodies and the sublunar world, every object and event has a cause.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the orderly functioning of the world points to a causal connection between objects and events. Nature consists of the regular instead of irregular, unpredictable, random operation of events. This orderly function is known as the principle of causality.

According to the second assumption, although events operate in an orderly manner by the principle of causality, a single event can violate this principle. This means that a known object can be involved in an unknown event, or that known causes have unknown consequences. Thus, an extraordinary event cannot be explained by some cause in nature, as it is not based on the principle of causality. In other words, it is accepted that an event outside of causality is metaphysically possible and violates the principle of causality. For example, it is an extraordinary event for humans to fly without using tools. Because of the nature of man, mass does not normally allow man to fly without using a tool. If we see a flying person, we have to conclude that the principle of causality regarding man and mass has been violated. Thus, extraordinary events have been attributed to supernatural powers, and often to God's direct intervention.

God, who is the creator of order in theistic beliefs, can make extraordinary interventions in nature called miracles. By allowing the breaking or surpassing of the principle of causality, a metaphysical explanation implies that the principle of causality is not metaphysically necessary. However, this implication is inconsistent with our first assumption. This assumption, on which an order in nature is required, seems to be threatened when the order is contingent. For an event to be supernatural, there have to be natural events. Theist theologians and philosophers have tried to eliminate this threat by ascribing the aforementioned necessity to the imposition of God.

The third basic assumption concerns the connection between the mind and world. To provide a metaphysical explanation of an extraordinary event, there should be no doubt that there is a certain level of correspondence between the mind and the world. This shows that metaphysical explanations depend on the condition that causes in nature are explanations at the same time. The repetition of events that occur as a cause and effect in nature allows us to recognize the objects involved in these events. For ordinary events, every explanation is a reason. If there is no correspondence between the mind and world, it is not possible to explain the metaphysical causes of an event. Even though the world and its structure are mind-independent, our minds are capable of figuring out its functioning insofar as to justify that an extraordinary event has taken place. Our minds may not be capable of completely uncovering the causal structure, but a partial correspondence is sufficient to argue for orderly functioning. In other words, explanations of extraordinary events inevitably depend on realist metaphysics.

To summarize, metaphysical explanations of extraordinary events are possible when a causal order called nature is assumed, but this order can be violated or surpassed in some way. It is also assumed that the mind and world correspond at least partially. We can now proceed to the evaluation of two metaphysical explanations based on these assumptions.

<sup>2</sup> İshak Arslan, *Çağdaş Doğa Düşüncesi* (Küre Yayınları, 2016), 40.



### 3. Metaphysical Explanations for the Extraordinary Events

Although there might be multiple metaphysical explanations, I should point out that the following two are the most commonly appealed, especially among theist philosophers of religion. While the two can be defended separately or in combination, I will evaluate them better by treating them as separate explanations to demonstrate their strengths.

Extraordinary as supernatural: Some metaphysical views hold that there are things beyond the natural world that cannot be explained by science or empirical observation. These may include supernatural beings or phenomena, such as God, angels, or miracles. From this perspective, an event is extraordinary if it goes beyond the laws of nature and cannot be explained by purely naturalistic means. The born without a father, the resurrection of the dead, and the splitting of the sea are examples of such events.

Extraordinary as violating the principle of sufficient reason: The principle of sufficient reason is the idea that everything that exists must have an adequate explanation or a cause. In this view, anything that goes against this principle is extraordinary because it lacks an explanation or has an incomprehensible and mysterious explanation, such as events that supposedly transcend nature. This kind of explanation finds the reasons for extraordinary events in nature because nature, which is said to be surpassed, must possess epistemic integrity.

In general, the metaphysical notion of the extraordinary involves a departure from the ordinary or expected, and often raises fundamental questions about the nature of reality and our ability to understand it. Explanations of the metaphysical status of extraordinary events have an interesting theoretical background that clearly reveal assumptions about nature and how natural knowledge is obtained.

#### 3.1. Extraordinary as Supernatural

Richard Swinburne describes the regularity in the world with laws of nature as “simply summaries of the powers and assets that have the same powers and assets as other substances of the same kind.”<sup>3</sup> Swinburne’s approach to extraordinary events is also shaped within this framework.

First, Swinburne wanted to prove the existence of God based on the orderly functioning of the universe. Although this cannot be proven with certainty, according to him, God’s existence is more likely than his non-existence because of design in nature. Before proposing this reasoning, we see that Swinburne speaks of two types of regularity in nature. Spatial regularity refers to the harmony of all beings in the universe, as in the human eye, or the structure of galaxies. William Paley’s famous watchmaker argument was put forward based on the spatial order.<sup>4</sup> Swinburne says that there is a second regularity, which he calls temporal upon which he based his argument. Temporal regularity occurs when one event follows another, such as falling to the ground if one jumps from a height. Accordingly, temporal regularity explains spatial regularity.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, what can explain the temporal order?

According to Swinburne, science explains the regularity of exchanges between objects through nature’s laws.<sup>6</sup> For example, if we jump from a high place, we fall according to the law of gravity. Therefore, what is the explanation of nature’s laws? Swinburne concludes that the laws of nature

<sup>3</sup> Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press, 2004), 277.

<sup>4</sup> William Paley, *Natural Theology*, ed. Matthew D. Eddy - David Knight (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.

<sup>5</sup> Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 167.

<sup>6</sup> Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 155 f.

cannot be explained by science and that science can explain the most constrained laws of nature with more general laws. But ultimately, because these general laws are scientifically unexplained, a person outside of nature must exist to explain the laws of nature. It is especially important that this being is a person because temporal regularity in the laws of nature always works to achieve a purpose. As Swinburne observed, acting with purpose is only a characteristic of beings with personality. In conclusion, since there is no other explanation for the orderly functioning of the laws of nature, the most plausible explanation is that a person other than nature creates nature in an orderly fashion. Swinburne shared the first basic assumption of a metaphysical explanation.

Swinburne's attempt to explain extraordinary events has come under this framework. First, the condition for an event to be defined as supernatural is that the objects of the type involved in the event behave differently in that single event from in similar events. For example, walking on water is supernatural compared to similar events involving water and human objects. Of course, Swinburne also considered the possibility that the event in question could be explained by the as-yet-unknown laws of nature. However, this possibility should be considered if, for example, more than one person walks on water in different places, because it is very complicated to explain an event that happens only once with a completely unknown, extremely closed, distant, or incomprehensible law. The explanation that this event was brought about by a supernatural being like God, who can violate the laws of nature, is preferred to a complex explanation because it is simpler. In other words, according to Swinburne, it is more plausible to describe a one-time extraordinary event as a violation of a known law by supernatural intervention rather than being dependent on an unknown law.<sup>7</sup> Such singular cases are extraordinary enough to be explained by science. Swinburne also embraces the second basic assumption of metaphysical explanations.

Hume's critique of miracles can be directed toward Swinburne's argument. What if an event that seems extraordinary to us is in itself an irregularity in our perception? Hume strongly emphasized the importance of background information when evaluating events. What we refer to when trying to explain an event we encounter is the "relevant" background information that we have built up from previous experiences. Swinburne defends himself against this criticism by questioning his background knowledge. If the background of someone encountering an extraordinary event is based on explaining the orderly functioning of the laws of nature as dependent on God, then the same person may interpret this experience as God's violation of natural laws.<sup>8</sup> The background knowledge of someone who sees God as a designer of nature is directly related to the violation of the laws of nature. Swinburne's commitment to the third basic assumption cannot be overlooked. He believes that the mind and world correspond to the extent to which we can know what is going on in nature, even if it is partial knowledge.

Swinburne adopted all three basic assumptions. However, an important objection to the explanation that extraordinary events can be supernatural has been made by J. L. Mackie. He claims that while evaluating the possibility of miracles, first of all, the person who claims that an extraordinary event has had a double obligation:

...where there is some plausible testimony about the occurrence of what would appear to be a miracle, those who accept this as a miracle have the double burden of showing both that the event took place and that it violated the laws of nature. But it will be very hard to sustain this double

<sup>7</sup> Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 279.

<sup>8</sup> Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 284.

burden. For whatever tends to show that it would have been a violation of natural law tends for that very reason to make it most unlikely that it actually happened.<sup>9</sup>

But that's not all. Because, according to Mackie, the same event can be explained in accordance with the laws of nature. Moreover, it may be possible to extend the relevant laws of nature to explain such situations. Therefore, liability does not end even if the event is proven. According to him, the second obligation included two separate tasks. For an event to be supernatural, it must first be fully proven, and second, the event described as supernatural must be proven to be an exception. According to Mackie, meeting the first obligation is quite difficult because the laws of nature cannot be broadly formulated to cover all ordinary events. Known laws allow only short-term forecasts to be made using available data. For example, there is no theory explaining the highly complex radio waves received from deep space. However, the fact that these waves were detected does not indicate that they operate according to any law. On the other hand, if the second task also claims that the event described as supernatural constitutes an exception to the law, it is very difficult to prove. In the same example, if radio waves carry a supernatural feature, to say that they exist despite certain laws of nature, there must be completely comprehensive knowledge of the law of nature. Based on this reasoning, Mackie argued that the evidence was too weak to believe that extraordinary events, including miracles, occurred.

Do Mackie's objections require denying that an event is extraordinary even if it cannot be proven? He admitted that the possibility of supernatural events cannot be denied a priori. In this case, is Swinburne's claim that the laws of nature are violated by God as a supernatural power more acceptable? Even if this is true in principle, the tasks Mackie proposed show that it is extremely difficult to characterize an event as metaphysically ordinary or extraordinary. Whether you have heard it from someone or witnessed it yourself, your background knowledge must accompany you to determine the metaphysical state of an extraordinary event. However, does someone with a theistic background need a criterion to distinguish between ordinary and extraordinary events? In other words, even if God is acclaimed as the designer of nature, it is not possible to judge a supernatural event by looking at it. We do not have a metaphysical criterion in the theistic background that can distinguish between an event conforming to the laws of nature and a supernatural event. When we believe that God brought about both kinds of events, it is more important to have a metaphysical criterion that distinguishes the two types of events. The basic assumptions underlying Swinburne's account fall short of giving him a criterion.

Probably due to the difficulty of distinguishing between ordinary and extraordinary events, St. Augustine says that miracles are actually part of nature, that is extraordinary events as attributable to nature as ordinary events that we observe in the universe, of which God is ultimately the creator.<sup>10</sup> Blurring the line between miracles and natural events St. Augustine seeks to come up with a single metaphysical principle to explain all events. However, a single principle of causality fails to account for two types of events. On the one hand the existence of miracles by direct intervention of the creator God implies that nature is open to change. On the other hand, the causal laws of nature remain operative by the work of the creator God. St. Augustine states also in some other place that God can create without recourse to causes in nature.<sup>11</sup> His commitment to the first and second assumptions is clear. However, attributing the

<sup>9</sup> J. L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism: Arguments for and against the Existence of God* (Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 26.

<sup>10</sup> Saint Augustine, *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII* (CUA Press, 2008), 431 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Hasan Aydın, *İlkçağdan Ortaçağa Doğa Tasarımları ve Nedensellik* (İstanbul: Bilim ve Gelecek Kitaplığı, 2022), 253.

orderly functioning of nature to human cognition, he seems unwilling to embrace the third assumption, which makes it difficult to expect a criterion from him for distinguishing between ordinary and extraordinary events.<sup>12</sup> In this case, St. Augustine joins Swinburne in having an unjustified assumption that there is a fundamental divide between natural and supernatural events. It can be maintained that this assumption is not supported by any evidence and that it is therefore unreasonable to posit the existence of supernatural entities or phenomena.

Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī proposes a radical solution to the problem. al-Ghazālī argued that extraordinary events such as miracles cannot be rejected with a theoretical explanation such as causality. He attributed the regularity in nature to God's orderly creation. According to him, there is no difference between God's creation of objects in ordinary events and His creation in extraordinary events. Al-Ghazālī does not believe that objects have a power of their own. There is no essence. He argues that the regularity in nature is attributed to God's habitual creation. He concludes that so-called causality between objects does not hold, let alone imply necessity. When the principle of causality is invalidated, the involvement of any object in ordinary and extraordinary events is the same thing from the point of view of God's power. God, who creates nature regularly, can create known objects in unknown events whenever He wishes since He is not subject to any obligation. This is no different from God's first creation of the world and its contents. For al-Ghazālī, the objects in the world do not have the property of necessitating themselves or anything else. He claims that an extraordinary or ordinary event can be explained by a supernatural rather than a natural connection.<sup>13</sup> In this sense, it seems that al-Ghazālī defends the metaphysical possibility thesis in a theological context, but still accepts that the regularity in nature actually stems from the habit of the succession of events. At this point, it is not entirely clear whether the habit (custom) is in God's creative activity or the human mind. The first option represents God's creation in an order, termed *sunnatullah*, which is an appeal to the second basic assumption for metaphysical explanations. Given al-Ghazālī rejects the first assumption, what seems like nature in al-Ghazālī's world crumbles into a series of contingent events. If 'habit' is understood as in the second option, it implies a rejection of the third assumption.<sup>14</sup> Although al-Ghazālī did not hesitate to attribute an epistemological certainty to causality in his other works, he opposes that causality expresses metaphysical necessity.<sup>15</sup> Whether al-Ghazālī supports either of the options, it should not be overlooked that his main thesis is metaphysical.<sup>16</sup> In any case, if both ordinary and extraordinary events indicate God's direct creation, then no criterion is needed because, from his theological standpoint, every event becomes ultimately extraordinary. To put it briefly, al-Ghazālī tries to solve the problem by dissolving the difference between ordinary and extraordinary in favor of the latter. Even though this move maintains the possibility of extraordinary events, it does not provide us with a metaphysical criterion.

<sup>12</sup> John A. Hardon, "The Concept of Miracle from St. Augustine to Modern Apologetics", *Theological Studies* 15/2 (May 1954), 229-257.

<sup>13</sup> al-Ghazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers=Tahāfut Al-Falāsifah: A Parallel English-Arabic Text*, trans. Michael E. Marmura (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1997), 173.

<sup>14</sup> İsmail Hanoğlu, "Gazali Düşüncesinde Nominalizm ve Eşyanın Hakikati Sorunu", *Birey ve Toplum Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 2/3 (2012), 85-97.

<sup>15</sup> Kemal Batak, "Doğa Yasalarının Zorunluluğu, İlahi Fiil Ve Mucize -Tanrı Dünyada Fiilde Bulunabilir Mi?", *Sakarya Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 11/20 (2009), 23-47.

<sup>16</sup> Oliver Leaman, *An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 97.

Expressing more strongly the view that everything is extraordinary, Nazif Muhtaroğlu touched on the problem of criterion. Muhtaroğlu, who evaluates the issue from an occasionalist perspective, claims that limited beings cannot cause other limited beings and that all of them were created and therefore everything created will be considered a miracle. According to him, the element of wonder that distinguishes between ordinary and extraordinary events is psychological and draws attention to the divine meaning behind the superficial regularity in nature.<sup>17</sup> However, Muhtaroğlu is still aware of the need to distinguish between ordinary and extraordinary events. Thus, he evaluates miracles in three hierarchical orders. The first order includes ordinary events, the second order includes practically impossible but physically possible events, and the third order includes events that seem to transcend nature as we know it. While things, like moving at a speed that seems impossible according to the laws we know, can be examples of miracles of the second level, it is difficult to find examples of miracles of the third level. Because:

...with new scientific discoveries what we have termed as “the laws of nature” may turn out to be just particular generalizations of more intricate laws. Newtonian laws were supposed to be universally valid; this came to an end with the discovery of the laws of quantum mechanics. Now, most scientists consider the laws of quantum mechanics to be deeper laws from which the Newtonian laws can be derived, but the reverse is not true. Thus, an event which contravenes Newtonian physics might be consistent within quantum mechanics. In addition, the prophetic miracles, such as Prophet Muhammad’s splitting of the moon into two or Prophet Moses’s parting of the Red Sea might be able to be explained by some laws which have as yet not been discovered. Who can guarantee that these events are not part of the phenomenal order?<sup>18</sup>

It should be noted that the extraordinary events that Muhtaroğlu thinks can take place in the third order are the ones that can be easily evaluated in the second order. Especially if a causal explanation of a third-order event is made as a result of scientific research, it should be said that they are also secondary-order events. However, according to Muhtaroğlu, who did not leave the subject here, a pragmatic criterion such as establishing prophethood can be applied to events from the third level:

It is very plausible to believe that God changed his manner of creation to confirm the prophecy claim of His messengers against any challenge, allowing them to be perceived by others as the messenger of the Creator of this universe.<sup>19</sup>

However, it is clear that this criterion will not be sufficient to separate ordinary and extraordinary events from a metaphysical point of view. Because the “ordinary miracle” in the first order and the “extraordinary miracle” in the second and third orders are in the same (limited or possible) metaphysical category. At this point, the criterion that he presented as “content supporting prophecy” can only distinguish these events from extraordinary events that cannot be considered a miracle, not from ordinary events. Extraordinary events in cults and occult teachings, common folk beliefs, legends, and fairy tales share with miracles the feature of not being denied a priori. Since these too would be considered extraordinary, Muhtaroğlu’s criterion of “support” only determines the religious value of an event. Following al-Ghazālī’s lead,

<sup>17</sup> Nazif Muhtaroğlu, “An Occasionalist Approach to Miracles”, *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi* 22 (2009), 71–93.

<sup>18</sup> Muhtaroğlu, “An Occasionalist Approach to Miracles”, 84.

<sup>19</sup> Muhtaroğlu, “An Occasionalist Approach to Miracles”, 90.

Muhtaroğlu's account renounces the first basic assumption while clinging firmly to the second. Although it is not clear whether he also follows al-Ghazālī in doing away with the third assumption, a metaphysical criterion for distinguishing between ordinary and extraordinary events is not offered. Muhtaroğlu insists that the occasionalist perspective does not allow postulating such a criterion.

While the “everything is extraordinary” approach may avoid the problem of setting criteria for distinguishing between the ordinary and the extraordinary, it does not provide a strong position to offer a metaphysical explanation of extraordinary events. Although he strongly criticizes metaphysical justification for the principle of causality, Hume also denies the possibility of miracles on similar grounds. Just as one cannot claim that there is a necessary cause-effect relationship between objects of experience, he cannot claim either that causes and effects are metaphysically tied directly to God. Because, according to Hume, causes and effects are drawn from experience as a mental habit. Since God is not an object of experience, a relationship between God and nature cannot be habitually deduced.<sup>20</sup>

### **3.2. The Structure of Nature and the Supernatural**

Perhaps the most important question to be answered, by those who think extraordinary events are supernatural and reject causality, is whether order in nature is necessary. For these thinkers who take nature as contingent, of course, the laws of nature seem to be open to surpassing or violating. If the laws of nature and causality are not necessary, of course, the cause of the order in question must be beyond nature. But what if the laws of nature are necessary? The basic assumption of Swinburne and others who offer similar arguments is that the laws of nature are not necessary. To speak from Hume's critique of causality, we only experience successive events in nature. However, it is not logically possible to deduce from this experience that there is necessity in nature. But then is it possible to deduce from this experience that there is no necessity? Of course, it is possible that the sun will rise in the west tomorrow, but it is very improbable. To say that the sunrise in the west is logically possible means that it is conceivable. Yet, it is also considered improbable because this possibility denotes only conceivability. In order to understand whether the sunrise from the west is metaphysically possible, we need to know everything about the sun, planets, and other forces in space, matter, and energy. Since we do not know these in full, it would be an argument from ignorance to say that the sun can actually rise in the east. Although it cannot be claimed a posteriori that causality is necessary, it cannot be claimed a posteriori either that causality is not necessary. In fact, if we look at the orderly operation in nature, the principle of causation is more likely to be necessary. All we can state is that if the principle of causality in nature is necessary, extraordinary events such as miracles cannot have a metaphysical basis.

Can this conclusion be avoided? If we reason similarly to Mackie's, we must prove that causality in nature is not necessary before we assert that things yet to be explained by laws of nature have supernatural causes. This task demands more than just being able to conceive of something in nature in ways we have never seen before (like a person walking on water). We have to admit that it is an incredibly difficult task. But even if we somehow manage to do this, a more difficult task awaits us. In a contingent nature, the event in question must be proven to be supernatural. How can it be argued that an event is based on causes beyond nature when nature is not

<sup>20</sup> David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding: A Letter from a Gentleman to His Friend in Edinburgh*, ed. Eric Steinberg (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1977), 47.

necessary? Here we are faced with a conceptual puzzle. Even if we were to explain the regularity in nature, in the way al-Ghazālī did, by habit, no event would be supernatural. Therefore, if causality in nature is not necessary, extraordinary events such as miracles cannot even be claimed to be supernatural.

### 3.3. Appealing to the Principle of Sufficient Reason

The second metaphysical explanation offered for extraordinary events arises from the principle of sufficient reason. The principle of sufficient reason is the idea that everything that exists must have an adequate explanation or cause. According to this principle, an event is extraordinary if it lacks any explanation or simply has an incomprehensible or mysterious explanation. Although it is accepted that events transcend nature in this way, causality is not actually suspended. This means that an extraordinary event is actually against an epistemic integrity that we know as nature. This will reveal the inadequacy of our knowledge of nature if the event actually occurs. An extraordinary event is thus metaphysically inseparable from a normal event. By adhering to the principle of sufficient reason, more information is gained about metaphysical nature.

In modern philosophy, the principle of sufficient reason is associated with the rationalist philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who argued that everything that exists must have a sufficient cause, which can be explained in terms of its nature or its relation to other things. Leibniz defends this principle in several of his works, including his *Monadology* and *Discourse on Metaphysics*. In his *Monadology*, Leibniz argues that everything in the universe is made up of indivisible units called monads, self-contained substances that are closed, have their nature, and can only interact with other monads through pre-established harmony.<sup>21</sup> He argues that the existence and actions of monads must be explained by the principle of sufficient reason, that there must be a reason why each monad is unique and interacts with other monads in this way. Leibniz, again in his *Discourse on Metaphysics*, argues that the principle of sufficient reason is a necessary condition for knowledge and understanding. Knowledge requires, he argues, that we be able to explain why things are the way they are, and that the principle of sufficient reason provides a way of doing this by showing that everything that exists or happens always has a cause or justification.<sup>22</sup>

Leibniz did not use the concept of the extraordinary in the sense we use it today. According to him, the only an extraordinary event that can be evaluated as supernatural is the creation of the universe.<sup>23</sup> The principle of sufficient reason, however, has a different relation to the concept of the extraordinary. From the Leibnizian point of view, a miracle or spontaneous event that seems to have no apparent cause can be considered extraordinary. But since the principle of sufficient reason implies that everything happening must have an explanation or cause, there is no truly extraordinary event in the sense of events that have no explanation or cause.<sup>24</sup> A law that we consider violated can only be a subordinate maxim. Even events that seem to suspend regularity “conform to the universal law of the general order.”<sup>25</sup> This means that we may view some events as extraordinary because we do not have the knowledge or understanding to fully explain them.

<sup>21</sup> Lloyd Strickland, *Leibniz's Monadology* (Edinburgh University Press, 2014) , 20-21.

<sup>22</sup> Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra, *Leibniz: Discourse on Metaphysics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020) , 110-111.

<sup>23</sup> Strickland, *Leibniz's Monadology*, 52.

<sup>24</sup> Rodriguez-Pereyra, *Leibniz: Discourse*, 127.

<sup>25</sup> Rodriguez-Pereyra, *Leibniz: Discourse*, 124.

Ibn Sîna has an important place among those who apply the principle of sufficient reason in metaphysical explanations.<sup>26</sup> According to Ibn Sîna, who explains everything in existence with a modal metaphysical (necessary, possible, and impossible) system, God as the First Being necessitates that the existence of everything depends on another cause, except God himself. He is the Cause of Causes. He points out that there are compelling reasons for every event that takes place, and that the consequences emerging from individual events cannot be otherwise. In this case, everything in nature occurs through the necessary interaction between essences. In Ibn Sina's modal metaphysics, the principle of causality answers the question of how God creates nature.<sup>27</sup> Nothing can come into existence without a sufficient cause and remains only as a "possible in itself."

Ibn Sina's understanding of the extraordinary was also shaped within this framework. He embraces the first basic assumption for extraordinary events while rejecting the second. However, he firmly holds the third. In this respect, an extraordinary event can happen in accordance with the knowledge of God, who is the final and effective sufficient cause of nature. But the same is true for ordinary events. This means that both types of events occur by causality since they are made "necessary" by the knowledge of God. For an extraordinary event, we cannot say that the causes are supernatural, but that we simply do not know the causes. Ibn Sîna argues that the seeming randomness and unpredictability of events in the world stem from our limited understanding of the underlying causes and principles that govern them. According to him, if we had perfect knowledge of the world, including nature and spirit, we could explain every event according to its causes and justifications, and nothing would seem extraordinary to us. It is understood from this that an extraordinary event as the violation of laws of nature has no place in Ibn Sîna's metaphysics because nature is explained by metaphysical necessity. Thus, Ibn Sîna considers epistemological explanation sufficient for extraordinary events.<sup>28</sup> However, Ibn Sîna thinks that extraordinary events can happen within nature. Considering Ibn Sîna's view on nature is not only material but also spiritual, he admits non-material causation into the picture. According to him, the higher powers of the human spirit can act on matter in various ways, causing objects to take on previously unknown forms. In other words, extraordinary events actually show the metaphysical power of the soul over nature.<sup>29</sup> However, this activity of the soul is not metaphysically different from man's effect on his own body and other objects throughout his body. Hence, he firmly acknowledges the assumption of correspondence. The mind does not just correspond to the world but also is an active power in nature.

It is obvious that Ibn Sîna explains extraordinary events epistemologically because the revelation of a soul's power that was not known before is already among the metaphysically possible events. Although it costs Ibn Sîna a metaphysical criterion for distinguishing between ordinary and extraordinary events, his strong appeal to the powers of the human soul not only admits extraordinary events in his metaphysics but also provides us with an epistemological criterion. It is an extraordinary event if its causes are unknown.

In a nutshell, although Ibn Sîna also acknowledged the possibility of miracles that could be considered extraordinary in terms of events that seem to violate the laws of nature, he argued

<sup>26</sup> Kara Richardson, "Avicenna and the Principle of Sufficient Reason," *Review of Metaphysics* 67/4 (2014), 743–768.

<sup>27</sup> Avicenna, *Ibn Sina's Remarks and Admonitions: Physics and Metaphysics: An Analysis and Annotated Translation*, trans. Shams Constantine Inati (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 492–494.

<sup>28</sup> Catarina Carriço Marques de Moura Belo, *Chance and Determinism in Avicenna and Averroës* (Leiden: BRILL, 2007), 89.

<sup>29</sup> Yasin R. Başaran, "Avicenna on the Soul's Power to Manipulate Material Objects," *Eskiyeni* 30 (2015), 145–157.



that even miracles must have a sufficient reason or justification that could be related to God's will or some other divine principle. Therefore, Ibn Sînâ's account does not allow beyond an epistemological explanation for an extraordinary event by expanding the definition of nature to encompass a greater range of metaphysically possible events.

We see that Ibn Sînâ and Leibniz jointly examined nature with the principle of sufficient reason, and as a result, they reached an understanding of nature in which causality is necessary. For both, nature has a divine and immutable structure that contains the metaphysical causes of objects and events. For them, nature has a divine aspect because the principle of sufficient cause of the nature is God's creation. Nature is also immutable. Because according to Ibn Sînâ God's knowledge<sup>30</sup> and according to Leibniz His will<sup>31</sup> necessitate everything in nature that exists as it is. In this sense, it is out of the question for objects that have causal connections in nature to take part in an event contrary to their essential qualities. Extraordinary events such as miracles, according to them, are due to the limitedness of our knowledge. Consequently, according to both, an extraordinary event is metaphysically inseparable from an ordinary event. What distinguishes the two kinds of events is our limited knowledge of necessary causes.

How does the principle of sufficient reason enable this epistemological explanation of extraordinary events? If according to Ibn Sînâ or Leibniz, the principle of causality in nature was contingent rather than necessary, then they would join those who understand extraordinary events as supernatural in the conceptual puzzle. If causality were contingent, no event could be said to violate causality because there is no metaphysical criterion to distinguish regular events in nature from supernatural ones. How can God's intervention in nature by violating causality be separated metaphysically from God's creation of causality? Ibn Sînâ and Leibniz, accepting the absence of such a metaphysical criterion, went on to offer an epistemological explanation for extraordinary events. Using the principle of sufficient reason, they were able to define nature as a whole and thus emphasized that events that can be seen as supernatural actually happen in the causal order of nature. This is a very strong emphasis that shows that there can be an epistemological rather than a metaphysical explanation for extraordinary events. Rather than understanding the extraordinary as supernatural, Ibn Sîna and Leibniz explain extraordinary events within the limits of causality in nature.

## Conclusion

In this article, I have examined two metaphysical explanations for the possibility of extraordinary events. Based on three metaphysical assumptions, I discuss the ideas of Richard Swinburne, al-Ghazālî, and Nazif Muhtaroglu who defends identifying extraordinary events as supernatural. Meanwhile, making use of J. L. Mackie and David Hume, my criticisms of them focus on the fact that it is unclear what is meant by the supernatural since no criterion can be presented to separate the supernatural from the natural. My discussion points out that it is difficult to maintain an understanding of the supernatural without assuming nature and the principle of causality. I also argue that extraordinary events can be explained more strongly by appealing to the principle of sufficient reason by which laws of nature are necessary and causality is not violated. Although Ibn Sînâ and Leibniz fail to offer metaphysical criteria too, they position nature in a

<sup>30</sup> Michael E. Marmura, "Some Aspects of Avicenna's Theory of God's Knowledge of Particulars," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 82/3 (1962), 303.

<sup>31</sup> Rodriguez-Pereyra, *Leibniz: Discourse*, 17-18.

solid place in their metaphysics that extraordinary events find a stronger epistemological support.

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## Exploring the Interplay between Religion, Health, and Subjective Well-Being in Turkey

Türkiye'de Din, Sağlık ve Öznel İyi Olma Hali Arasındaki Etkileşimin Araştırması

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## Exploring the Interplay between Religion, Health, and Subjective Well-Being in Turkey

### Abstract

Religion, a primary part of human life, has long been granted as an influential drive shaping individuals' beliefs, values, and behaviors. It permeates numerous aspects of life, granting support, guidance, and a sense of purpose to billions of adherents around the world. This paper investigates the intricate link between subjective well-being and religion by focusing on the influence of religious beliefs and practices on happiness, life satisfaction, and subjective health outcomes. While previous findings have provided inconsistent evidence about this relationship, most of it has been conducted in Western and Judeo-Christian contexts. Even though there are few studies addressing religion and subjective well-being in Turkey this study presents a different perspective by surveying national-level data from Turkey. Existing literature on religion and subjective well-being presents a divided narrative; while some studies suggest that religion positively affects well-being, others claim that it has negative or neutral effects. However, this paper enhances the existing literature by exploring these relationships within the framework of Islamic beliefs and practices examining how religious beliefs and practices influence subjective well-being outcomes in the Muslim framework. The study analyzes subjective well-being, including happiness and life satisfaction, in both cognitive and emotional dimensions. It also explores the connections between religion and subjective mental and physical health investigating the possible moderating effect of religion on Subjective wellbeing and health outcomes. First, it explores the moderating role of religion in the association of subjective well-being and subjective health. In addition, from an Islamic viewpoint, this study focuses on the multiple dimensions of religiosity in a Muslim-populated nation where religious membership and participation concepts vary from Western Christian societies. Islamic beliefs emphasize the importance of living a disciplined and devoted life by focusing on inner virtues and moral behavior. Islam advances a perception of happiness that transcends hedonism and highlights eudaimonic well-being by prioritizing the hereafter over worldly pleasures. The impact of religion on the well-being of Turkey, which has a unique cultural and political structure, is complex. This dichotomy of being secular and religious at the same time allows for significant religious differences, making Turkey an interesting subject of study. The research uses a series of hypotheses exploring the links between religion, happiness, life satisfaction, and health. Its aim is to reveal the relationships between these variables and to determine how religiosity directs these relationships. In addition, the research also investigates how subjective well-being results differ depending on the level of religiosity in Turkey. The data of this study are based on the well-known World Values Survey (WVS) 2012. Three dependent variables were used in the study: happiness, life satisfaction, and subjective health. Three religious determinants measure religious beliefs and practices, and a set of control variables accounts for sociodemographic factors. The findings of this study will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the complex interaction between religion and health and well-being in different cultural and religious settings. The results present a series of multinomial logistic regression models designed to explore the relationships between independent variables and dependent outcomes. These models discover complex patterns in the data and offer insights into direct and indirect effects, as well as the moderating role of religion in mental health outcomes.

**Key Words:** Religion, Subjective Well-Being, Health, Islam, Turkey.

### Türkiye'de Din, Sağlık ve Öznel İyi Olma Hali Arasındaki Etkileşimin Araştırması

#### Öz

Din, insanlık tarihi boyunca, bireylerin inanç sistemlerini, değer yargılarını ve davranış biçimlerini şekillendiren güçlü bir etken olarak varlığını sürdürmüştür. Milyarlarca insan için bir amaç, rehberlik ve anlam içeren din, hayatın çeşitli alanlarına derinlemesine nüfuz etmektedir. Mutlu olma, hayattan memnun olma, ve sağlıklı bir hayata sahip olma isteği insanlığın en temel amaçlarını teşkil etmektedir. Bu makale, dini inançlar ve pratiklerin insanların mutluluk, yaşam doyumu ve genel sağlık durumları üzerindeki etkisini incelemekte ve bu konudaki karmaşık ilişkiyi aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu ilişkinin tespiti üzerine yapılan daha önceki çalışmalar, çeşitli sonuçlar ortaya koymuş olsa da, bu çalışmaların büyük bir kısmı Batı dünyası ve Yahudi-Hristiyan kültürleri üzerinden gerçekleştirilmiştir. Her ne kadar bu konuda bazı çalışmalar yapılmış olsa da, Türkiye gibi Batılı olmayan ve çoğunlukla Müslüman nüfusa sahip fakat seküler ve demokratik bir yönetime sahip bir ülkeden elde edilen verileri ulusal düzeyde analiz ederek, konuya dair yeni ve farklı bir perspektif sunmaktadır. Bu çalışma ayrıca dinin mutluluk ve yaşam doyumu gibi insanların "iyi olma hali" ile öznel sağlık algıları arasındaki ilişkiye doğrudan ve dolaylı olarak nasıl bir etkide bulunduğunu da araştırmaktadır. Bu çalışmada kullanılan ulusal ölçekteki veri seti, 2012 yılında gerçekleştirilen Dünya Değerler Araştırması'ndan alınmıştır. Din, öznel iyi olma hali ve bedensel sağlık üzerine mevcut literatür incelendiğinde, araştırmacılar arasında bir görüş birliği olmadığı açıkça görülmektedir. Bazı araştırmalar, dini inançların bireylerin iyi olma halini olumlu yönde etkileyebileceğini savunurken, diğer bazı çalışmalar ise bu etkinin olumsuz veya nötr olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Bu makale, Müslüman bir ülkede dini inanç ve pratiklerin öznel iyi olma ve beden sağlığı üzerindeki etkisini inceleyerek, bu konudaki mevcut bilgi birikimine katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemektedir. Çalışmamız, öznel iyi olma halini hem bilişsel hem de duygusal boyutlarıyla ele alarak, mutluluk ve yaşam memnuniyeti gibi konuları incelemektedir. Ayrıca, dinin bireylerin fiziksel ve zihinsel sağlıkları üzerindeki etkilerini de araştırmaktadır. Dinin, iyi olma hali ve

sağlık arasındaki ilişki de düzenleyici bir rol oynayıp oynamadığını incelemekte, bu bağlamda Türkiye özelinde dindarlık kavramının çeşitli boyutlarına odaklanmaktadır. İslam, bireyleri içsel erdemlere ve ahlaki davranışlara yönlendiren, disiplinli ve fedakar bir yaşam tarzını teşvik eden bir dindir. Bu inanç sistemi, dünyevi zevklerin ötesine geçen ve ahireti merkeze alan bir mutluluk anlayışını benimsemektedir. Türkiye'nin kendine has kültürel ve siyasi yapısı, dinin toplum üzerindeki etkilerini karmaşık bir hale getirmekte, laik ve dindar unsurlar arasındaki dengeyi sürdürmeye çalışmaktadır. Bu ikilem, Türkiye'yi dini inanç ve pratiklerin iyi olma hali üzerindeki etkilerini incelemek için oldukça ilginç bir vaka haline getirmektedir. Bu araştırma, dinin mutluluk, yaşam doyumu ve sağlık üzerindeki etkilerini anlamak amacıyla bir dizi hipotez kullanılmaktadır. Bu çalışma nicel veri seti olarak, 2012 Dünya Değerler Araştırması'ndan elde edilen veriler kullanılmaktadır. Araştırmada, mutluluk, yaşam memnuniyeti ve öznel sağlık olmak üzere üç bağımlı değişken; dini inanç ve uygulamaları ölçen üç dini belirleyici ve sosyodemografik faktörleri açıklayan bir dizi kontrol değişkeni kullanılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma, dini inanç ve pratiklerin öznel iyi olma hali üzerindeki etkilerini Türkiye özelinde inceleyerek, literatürdeki mevcut boşluğu doldurmaya ve Batılı olmayan, Hıristiyan olmayan bir toplumda dinin refah üzerindeki etkilerine dair kapsamlı bir anlayış sunmaktadır. Elde edilen bulgular, farklı kültürel ve dini bağlamlarda din ile öznel iyi olma hali arasındaki ilişkinin daha derinlemesine anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunacaktır. Sonuçlara bakıldığında, bağımsız ve bağımlı değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri araştırmak için tasarlanmış bir dizi çok terimli lojistik regresyon modeli sunmaktadır. Bu modeller verilerdeki karmaşık kalıpları keşfetmekte ve doğrudan ve dolaylı etkilerin yanı sıra dinin iyi olma hali sonuçlarındaki düzenleyici rolüne dair içgörüler sunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Din, İyi Olma Hali, Sağlık, İslam, Türkiye.

## Introduction

Religion has played a significant and multifaceted role in societies across the world, shaping the beliefs, values, and lifestyles of people. While it is an age-old subject of interest and inquiry, over the centuries, Turkey has stood at the crossroads of religious traditions, with Islam as the dominant faith and hosting significant Christian and Jewish communities. This unique cultural and religious atmosphere provides a compelling backdrop to explore how religion impacts the subjective well-being of its inhabitants.

The existing body of literature provides a nuanced view of the connection between religion, health and well-being. Some studies suggest that religion serves as a positive determinant of happiness and life satisfaction<sup>1</sup>. It is posited that religion provides individuals with a sense of purpose, social support networks, and a moral framework, all of which contribute to elevated subjective well-being. Moreover, religious beliefs and practices can offer solace in times of adversity and foster resilience, further bolstering overall life satisfaction. The link between religion and health is well-documented, with research indicating a protective effect of religious involvement on mortality and demonstrating that religious practices may have as much or more impact on longevity as certain established health behaviors<sup>2</sup>.

Recent studies have shed light on the "dark side" of religion, revealing potential negative effects on mental health and well-being. While many studies have traditionally emphasized the positive effects of religious belief, critics such as Ellis<sup>3</sup> (1962, 1983) have indicated that certain sides of religious experience could have harmful consequences. This "dark side" of religion, as

<sup>1</sup> C. G. Ellison - J. S. Levin, "The Religion-Health Connection: Evidence, Theory, and Future Directions", *Health Education & Behavior: The Official Publication of the Society for Public Health Education* 25/6 (1998), 700-720; Ali Ayten, "Din ve Sağlık: Bireysel Dindarlık, Sağlık Davranışları ve Hayat Memnuniyeti İlişkisi Üzerine Bir Araştırma", *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 13/3 (2013), 7-31; Akgün Yeşiltepe et al., "Investigation of the Effect of the Life Satisfaction and Psychological Well-Being of Nursing Students on Their Happiness Levels", *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care* 58/2 (2022), 541-548; Morgan Green - Marta Elliott, "Religion, Health, and Psychological Well-Being", *Journal of Religion and Health* 49/2 (2010), 149-163.

<sup>2</sup> Yoichi Chida et al., "Religiosity/Spirituality and Mortality: A Systematic Quantitative Review", *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* 78/2 (2009), 81-90; Kai Li et al., "The Effects of Subjective Social Class on Subjective Well-Being and Mental Health: A Moderated Mediation Model", *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 20/5 (2023), 4200; Liman Man Wai Li et al., "Societal Emphasis on Religious Faith as a Cultural Context for Shaping the Social-Psychological Relationships Between Personal Religiosity and Well-Being", *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 53/3-4 (2022), 306-326; Giancarlo Lucchetti et al., "Impact of Spirituality/Religiosity on Mortality: Comparison With Other Health Interventions", *Explore* 7/4 (2011), 234-238.

<sup>3</sup> Albert Ellis, *The Case against Religiosity* (New York: Institute for Rational Emotive Therapy, 1983), 343-348.

documented by Exline<sup>4</sup> (2002) and Pargament<sup>5</sup> (2002), comprises spiritual strains, including interactional (divine) struggle, intrapsychic struggle, and interpersonal struggle within religious communities. Interactional struggle involves troubled relationships with God, often leading to feelings of estrangement, judgment, or abandonment, which can contribute to mental health issues such as depression and suicidal ideation. Similarly, intrapsychic struggle with sustaining faith and negative interactions within faith communities can also significantly impact emotional well-being, particularly among clergy and lay leaders<sup>6</sup>. This growing body of literature highlights the nuanced and complex relationship between religion and subjective well-being, underscoring the need to explore its potential adverse effects further<sup>7</sup>.

In addition to its impact on mental well-being, religion has also been associated with subjective-rated physical health. Research indicates that individuals who actively engage with their religious beliefs and communities tend to report better physical health<sup>8</sup>. The mechanisms behind this relationship are manifold and may include reduced stress levels, healthier lifestyle choices, and increased social integration within religious communities. However, it is essential to recognize that the relationship between religion and well-being is not one-size-fits-all, and this paper seeks to explore the contextual nuances within Turkey. This article hypothesizes that the influence of religion on well-being may vary across different religious levels of religious commitment, and socio-demographic factors.

Furthermore, this study aims to investigate whether religion moderates subjective well-being over subjective physical health within the Turkish context. While the positive influence of religion on subjective well-being has been widely documented, it remains an intriguing question whether these effects differ from those on physical well-being. We intend to explore the mechanisms underlying this potential moderating effect.

This paper enhances the existing studies in some ways. First, to analyze subjective well-being that has multi-dimensional complexity such as cognitive vs. affective, this article includes both aspects of the issue that are happiness and life satisfaction. Second, the research evaluates the relationship between religion, and subjective mental and physical health in a Muslim-populated nation. Third, the present paper not only investigates the association between religion and subjective health outcomes but also exhibits how religion moderates the relationship between those outcomes. Last, Turkey has become a more interesting nation for academic inquiry, particularly during the last two decades, due to its unique geopolitical position, dynamic socio-economic transformations, and rich cultural heritage.<sup>2</sup>

The association between religion, health, and subjective well-being (SWB) is a multifaceted topic that has been studied through various theoretical perspectives and empirical inquiries. The interplay among these factors is complicated, and they usually interact with each other directly

<sup>4</sup> Julie Juola Exline, "Stumbling Blocks on the Religious Road: Fractured Relationships, Nagging Vices, and the Inner Struggle to Believe", *Psychological Inquiry* 13/3 (2002), 182-189.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth I. Pargament, "The Bitter and the Sweet: An Evaluation of the Costs and Benefits of Religiousness," *Psychological Inquiry* 13/3 (July 2002), 168-181.

<sup>6</sup> Neal Krause et al., "Church-Based Emotional Support, Negative Interaction, and Psychological Well-Being: Findings from a National Sample of Presbyterians", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37/4 (1998), 725-741; Julie Juola Exline et al., "Guilt, Discord, and Alienation: The Role of Religious Strain in Depression and Suicidality", *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 56/12 (2000), 1481-1496; Christopher G. Ellison - Andrea K. Henderson, "Religion and Mental Health: Through The Lens of the Stress Process", in *Toward a Sociological Theory of Religion and Health* (Brill, 2011), 11-44.

<sup>7</sup> Christopher G. Ellison - Jinwoo Lee, "Spiritual Struggles and Psychological Distress: Is There a Dark Side of Religion?", *Social Indicators Research* 98/3 (September 1, 2010), 501-517.

<sup>8</sup> Chida et al., "Religiosity/Spirituality and Mortality.", 81-90.

or indirectly. Several explanations can be extracted from the existing literature to understand the theoretical mechanism of how religion influences SWB and health. First, the stress-buffering hypothesis posits that religious belief and practice can mitigate the negative effects of stress on health and well-being<sup>9</sup> provides a sense of coherence and meaning, which can be crucial in coping with life's adversities<sup>10</sup>. Also, the social support theory suggests that religious communities offer social resources that can promote health and enhance SWB<sup>11</sup>. Religion may also influence health behaviors, since many religious traditions order lifestyles that promote physical health, such as prohibitions against substance abuse and encouragement of cleanliness and dietary regulations<sup>12</sup>. These behaviors can have a direct impact on physical health, which in turn may influence SWB.

Religion can moderate the link between health and SWB in various ways. Park<sup>13</sup> found that religious individuals often reinterpret stressful events in a way that gives them meaning and purpose, which can alleviate distress and promote a sense of well-being. This re-appraisal mechanism can moderate the impact of health on SWB. Moreover, religious practices such as meditation and prayer can induce a relaxation response, which has been shown to have beneficial effects on various health outcomes<sup>14</sup>. This relaxation response can moderate the relationship between SWB and health by reducing the physiological impact of stress. Koenig et al.<sup>15</sup> have documented the positive associations between religious involvement and mental health outcomes, including SWB. These relationships are often mediated by the social support provided by religious communities and the positive coping mechanisms encouraged by religious teachings. For physical health, a meta-analysis by Powell, Shahabi, and Thoresen<sup>16</sup> showed that religious involvement is significantly connected with lower mortality rates, signifying a protective impact of religion on physical health, which could promote higher SWB.

Interaction effects among religion, health, and SWB have also been reported. Idler et al.<sup>17</sup> suggest that the effect of religion on health may vary depending on an individual's age, race, and socioeconomic status, indicating complex interaction effects. Additionally, Ellison et al.<sup>18</sup> found that the relationship between religious involvement and SWB is stronger among people with chronic illnesses, suggesting that religion may have a more significant moderating effect on SWB in the context of poor health.

Recent empirical studies continue to explore these relationships. For example, a study by Shoda et al.<sup>19</sup> found that choir singing, which can be a religious activity, was associated with decreased physiological stress in older adults, which in turn correlated with improvements in cognitive

<sup>9</sup> Ellison - Levin, "The Religion-Health Connection", 700-720.

<sup>10</sup> Aaron Antonovsky, *Unraveling the Mystery of Health: How People Manage Stress and Stay Well* (San Francisco, CA, US: Jossey-Bass, 1987), 179-182.

<sup>11</sup> Neal Krause, "Gratitude Toward God, Stress, and Health in Late Life," *Research on Aging* 28/2 (2006), 163-183.

<sup>12</sup> Harold George Koenig et al., *Handbook of Religion and Health* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2012), 53.

<sup>13</sup> Crystal L. Park, "Religion as a Meaning-Making Framework in Coping with Life Stress," *Journal of Social Issues* 61/4 (2005), 707-729.

<sup>14</sup> Teresa E. Seeman et al., "Religiosity/Spirituality and Health. A Critical Review of the Evidence for Biological Pathways", *The American Psychologist* 58/1 (January 2003), 53-63.

<sup>15</sup> Harold G. Koenig et al., "Religion and Psychiatry: Recent Developments in Research", *BJPsych Advances* 26/5 (2020), 262-272.

<sup>16</sup> Lynda H. Powell et al., "Religion and Spirituality: Linkages to Physical Health", *American Psychologist* 58/1 (2003), 36-52.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen L. Idler et al., "Measuring Multiple Dimensions of Religion and Spirituality for Health Research Conceptual Background and Findings from the 1998 General Social Survey" *Research on Aging* 25/4 (2003), 327-365.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher G. Ellison et al., "Religious Involvement, Stress, and Mental Health: Findings from the 1995 Detroit Area Study", *Social Forces* 80/1 (2001), 215-249.

<sup>19</sup> Haruka Shoda et al., "Effects of Choir Singing on Physiological Stress in Japanese Older Adults: Its Relationship with Cognitive Functioning and Subjective Well-Being", *Arts & Health* (2023), 1-13.



functioning and SWB. This suggests an interaction effect where the benefits of religious activities on health may also enhance SWB.

### **1. Theological Background of Subjective Well-being and Physical Health in Islam**

The pursuit of well-being is strongly rooted in the Islamic teachings providing a holistic approach to life where mental and physical health are intertwined. The Quran and Hadith guide how to achieve a balanced life and scholars have long discussed the pathways through which this balance can be attained.

Islam teaches that humans are born in a state of 'fitrah' (innate purity), predisposed to a balanced state of mind and body. The Quran states, "So set your face toward the religion as a Hanif [in pure monotheism], Allah's fitrah with which He has created mankind. No change should there be in the creation of Allah." (Quran 30:30). This natural disposition is the foundation of psychological well-being, as it aligns one's inner state with the harmony and order of creation. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Take advantage of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness..." (Hadith, Al-Hakim). This hadith emphasizes the importance of valuing and maintaining one's physical health<sup>20</sup>.

Also, the concept of Tawhid is the central doctrine of the Islamic belief system. It provides a sense of coherence and meaning to life's experiences. The Quranic verse, "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (Quran 51:56), highlights the purpose of life, which, when understood, can bring about a profound sense of peace and well-being. The belief in Tawhid also introduces a sense of responsibility towards one's body as a trust in God. The Quran says, "And He enforces the balance. That you exceed not the bounds; but observe the balance strictly and fall not short thereof." (Quran 55:7-9). This balance includes the physical health that is to be maintained through moderation in diet, sleep, and exercise.

Acts of worship in Islam, such as prayer (Salah), are not mere rituals but are considered to be sources of comfort and solace. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said, "O Bilal, call for the prayer and give us rest by it." (Hadith, Abu Dawood). This indicates the psychological relief and subjective well-being that can be found in the regular remembrance of God. Also, physical acts of worship, such as the five daily prayers, involve movements that promote flexibility and circulation. Fasting during Ramadan is another practice that has been linked to various health benefits, such as improved blood sugar control and cardiovascular health<sup>21</sup>.

The objectives of Islamic law (Maqasid al-Shariah) aim to protect the fundamental aspects of life. The preservation of the mind ('aql) and life is one of these objectives, and it is reflected not only in the prohibition of substances that damage mental capabilities and in the encouragement of seeking knowledge to conserve a healthy mind but also in the protection and promotion of physical health. This is evident in the prohibition of harmful substances and the encouragement of cleanliness and dietary regulations.

The concept of 'Ummah' emphasizes the importance of a supportive community for individual well-being. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "The believers, in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other are like a single body; if one part of it feels pain, the whole

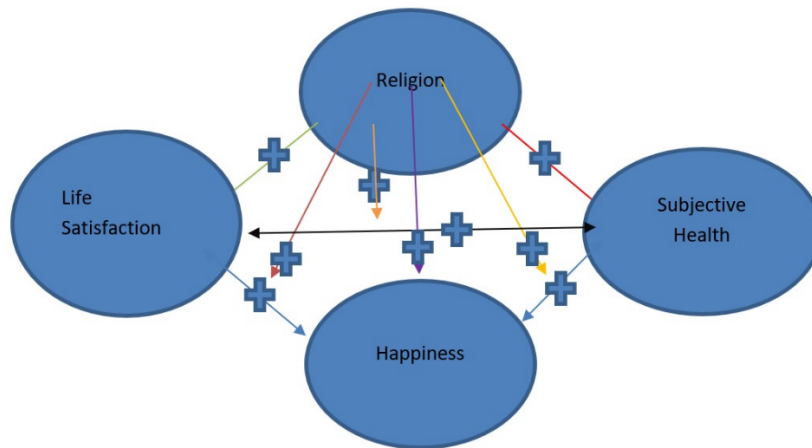
<sup>20</sup> Ali Muhammad Bhat, "Human Psychology (Fitrah) from Islamic Perspective", *International Journal of Nusantara Islam* 4/2 (2016), 61-74.

<sup>21</sup> Masood Ahmad et al., "A Critical Review of Islamic Teachings on Mental Health Policies and Practices for School Children", *The Scholar Islamic Academic Research Journal* 7/1 (2021), 1-12.

body will suffer in sleeplessness and fever." (Hadith, Sahih Muslim). This hadith underscores the psychological impact of social support and communal harmony on individual well-being. Islamic teachings provide strategies for coping with life's challenges. In addition, the Islamic tradition of community support extends to health care. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "There is a reward in serving any living being." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari). This has led to the establishment of waqf (endowment) hospitals and charitable care for the sick, recognizing the social dimension of health.

Patience ('sabr') is considered a virtue, as mentioned in the Quran: "O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient." (Quran 2:153). Patience and trust in God's plan are advocated as means to cope with illness and adversity. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari). This perspective helps believers find meaning in suffering, which can be a source of psychological comfort and resilience.

Figure 1. The Theoretical Outline of Existing Relationship among Religion, Subjective Health and Subjective Well-being



### 2.3 Hypotheses

H1: Religion's variables are more likely to have a positive relationship with subjective rated mental and psychical health outcomes.

H2: People who have greater levels of happiness are more likely to report better health status and a greater life satisfaction rate.

H3: More satisfied people in their lives are more likely to be happier and report better health status.

H4: Healthier people are more likely to be happier and more satisfied in their lives.

H5: Less happy but more religious respondents are more likely to report greater health status than less happy and less religious people.

H6: Less satisfied but more religious people are more likely to report greater health status than less satisfied and less religious people.

H7: Less satisfied but more religious people are more likely to report greater happiness than less satisfied and less religious people.

H8: Less healthy but more religious people are more likely to report greater happiness than less healthy and less religious counterparts.

H9: Less healthy but more religious people are more likely to report greater life satisfaction than less healthy and less religious counterparts.

H10: Less happy but more religious respondents are more likely to report greater life satisfaction than less happy and less religious respondents.

### 3 Method

#### 3.1 Sample

This study is based on the 6th wave of the World Values Survey (WVS) Turkey's sample that was conducted in 2012. The WVS is a well-known source for empirical research that provides access to study across nations. The WVS is a five-year time-span cross-national data source the first wave of WVS was conducted in 1981 and the last was published in 2014. The data sets contain more than 250 variables that scrutinize the values, manners and behaviors of people by using a survey question to grade the strength of individual opinions and values. Turkey's sample of data comprises 1271 individuals that are randomly selected from all regions of Turkey. The procedure of the data collection was by face-to-face interviews that included Turkish adults over 17 years of age, and both male and female participants.

#### 3.2 Dependent Variables

In this study, three dependent variables were used to measure respondent's level of subjective and psychical health status.

**1. Subjective Health:** Individuals' self-assessed health status, influenced by both physical and psychological dimensions. Religion is hypothesized to play a significant independent role in shaping perceptions of health, providing coping mechanisms and a sense of community<sup>22</sup>. The last dependent variable asks respondents: "All in all, how would you describe your state of health these days?" The answers are categorical from 0 to 3, while "0" means "poor health", "3" means "very healthy".

**2. Happiness:** Reflecting the affective and cognitive evaluations of one's life, happiness is anticipated to be positively correlated with religious engagement and beliefs. The unique religious landscape of Turkey provides a rich context for exploring this relationship<sup>23</sup>. The WVS respondents were asked "Taking all things together, would you say that you are very happy, quite happy, not very happy, or not at all happy?" Responses range from "not happy at all" (coded 0) to "very happy" (coded 3). A greater score shows a higher level of happiness.

**3. Life Satisfaction:** About the cognitive judgments individuals make regarding the quality of their lives, life satisfaction is expected to be influenced by religious practices and beliefs. The study aims to uncover how these influences manifest in the Turkish context<sup>24</sup>. The life satisfaction question is a continuous variable ranging from "0" (Not at all satisfied) to "9" (completely satisfied).

<sup>22</sup> Yeşiltepe et al., "Investigation of the Effect of the Life Satisfaction and Psychological Well-Being of Nursing Students on Their Happiness Levels". 541-548.

<sup>23</sup> Julia Brailovskaia et al., "The Association between Depression Symptoms, Psychological Burden Caused by Covid-19 and Physical Activity: An Investigation in Germany, Italy, Russia, and Spain", *Psychiatry Research* (2021), 1-6.

<sup>24</sup> Julia Brailovskaia et al., "The Relationship among Psychological Distress, Well-Being and Excessive Social Media Use during the Outbreak of Covid-19: A Longitudinal Investigation", *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy* 30/5 (2023), 1013-1019.

### 3.3 Independent Variables

Three religious predictors were used to measure health-related outcomes for the Turkish sample. The data set allows conceptualizing the available religious measures within three sub-categories: first, belief; second, behavioral dimension of religion; and last, belonging<sup>25</sup>.

**1. Importance of God:** The belief dimension of religion includes a variable that asks respondents how important God is in their lives. The significance placed on divine beliefs and their centrality in an individual's life. This aspect of religion is hypothesized to influence subjective well-being and health positively, providing individuals with a sense of purpose and meaning in life<sup>26</sup>.

**2. Prayer:** Engagement in prayer is considered a spiritual practice that fosters resilience, providing individuals with a sense of peace, connection, and stability. It is anticipated to have a positive correlation with subjective well-being and health<sup>27</sup>. Prayer represents behavioral religion. In the survey, the individuals were asked: "Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you pray? The answers were recorded into three categories 0= more than once a week; 1=once a week; and 2=less than once a week. This variable needs some clarification due to its different concept in Islam. Islam obligates Muslims to pray five times a day. This obligatory of prayer has specific forms that might be practiced as individually or with communion form in Mosques within five different periods of a day. On the other hand, prayer has also other meanings for Muslims that as praying to God to communicate with him as in Christianity. Namely, Muslims pray to God to will something to seek forgiveness or to thank him for the given things. The last type of prayer is very common among Muslims regardless of their religiosity level; however, the first type of prayer which is called "namaz" in Turkish and "salah" in Arabic, is more difficult to practice, because it requires washing the body parts before to practice five times in a day including before the sunrise and after sunset. The prayer is translated as an obligatory prayer in this wave that is included in this study.

**3. Religiosity:** The last religion variable is the importance of religion which asks respondents "For each of the following, indicate how important it is in your life. Would you say it is: religion very important; rather important; not very important; not important at all?" These variables measure the belonging dimension of religion. The variables the importance of God and religion were dummy coded as 1= very important vs. 0= less than very important. This encompasses adherence to religious doctrines, rituals, and community participation. Previous studies have highlighted the role of religiosity in providing a support network and a framework for meaning-making, which is crucial for subjective well-being<sup>28</sup>.

### 3.4 Control Variables

In order to control the relationship between religion and health-related measures eight socio-demographic predictors were included in this study. The first control variable is dummy coded gender "1=male". The second variable is the highest level of educational attainment which has nine categories range from "0=no education" to "8= graduate level". The third variable is personal income that has 8 steps. The following item is age that has ten-year categories from

<sup>25</sup> Christian Smith, "Theorizing Religious Effects Among American Adolescents", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42/1 (2003), 17-30.

<sup>26</sup> Dmitriy S. Kornienko - Natalya A. Rudnova, "Exploring the Associations between Happiness, Life-Satisfaction, Anxiety, and Emotional Regulation among Adults during the Early Stage of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Russia", *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art* 16/1 (2023), 99-113.

<sup>27</sup> Li et al., "Societal Emphasis on Religious Faith as a Cultural Context for Shaping the Social-Psychological Relationships Between Personal Religiosity and Well-Being", 306-326.

<sup>28</sup> Ben-Willie Kwaku Golo - Ernestina E. Novieto, "Religion and Subjective Well-Being: Perspectives of Early Career Professionals in Ghana's Public Universities", *Journal of Religion in Africa* 52/3-4 (2022), 317-347.

15-24 to 75-86 years of age. The fifth one is the marital status that is dummy coded “1=married”. The next control variable is dummy coded spoken language at home “1=Kurdish” as many studies considered ethnicity a significant determinant<sup>29</sup> (other ethnic languages have no variance to use in the sample). The seventh one is the agriculture type of work that measures urban vs rural differences as a dummy coded covariate. The last control variable is the region which is dummy coded as “1=southeast”. The southeastern part of Turkey has distinct characteristics historically as being Kurdish territory.

#### 4. Results

Table 1 provides a brief overview of the descriptive statistics for the studied variables. The average scores for happiness, life satisfaction, and health are quite high; This shows that the Turkish world they represent generally perceives itself as happy, satisfied and healthy. The marriage rate in the sample is quite high at 68%, with a fair share between genders. The education level in the sample is predominantly at the high school diploma level, indicating its popularity as the final educational stage of the Turkish people. The average weight score is 2.9 years, with rates trending towards a younger demographic. Table 1 also sheds light on the religious dimensions of Turkish society. The data reveal strong religious characteristics; The importance of God and the importance of religion are rated at 0.7 and 0.68 out of 1, respectively. This is further emphasized by the average prayer rating of 2.44 out of a possible 3, reflecting a high level of religious practice. These numbers indicate the deep religiosity of the social distribution in Turkey, as revealed by the variables presented.

Table 1. The Descriptive statistics of the variables

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Happiness</b>	1276	0	3	2.187	0.77079
<b>Satisfaction</b>	1274	0	9	6.2735	2.07883
<b>Health</b>	1276	0	3	1.8205	0.80294
<b>Importance of God</b>	1276	0	1	0.6998	0.45854
<b>Frequency of prayer</b>	1276	0	3	2.4398	0.84478
<b>Importance of Religion</b>	1276	0	1	0.6865	0.46411
<b>Gender (Male)</b>	1276	0	1	0.5173	0.49989
<b>Education (nine steps)</b>	1276	0	8	3.8828	2.37723
<b>Income (ten steps)</b>	1256	0	9	4.5436	1.86967
<b>Age (ten-year categories)</b>	1276	1	6	2.9721	1.48014
<b>Married</b>	1276	0	1	0.6879	0.46355
<b>Kurdish (at home)</b>	1276	0	1	0.0467	0.21113
<b>Agriculture</b>	1241	0	1	0.0423	0.20138
<b>Southeast</b>	1276	0	1	0.0606	0.2387

Table 2 shows the odd ratios of models that predict the relationship between independent variables and subjective health outcomes that were derived from Multinomial logistic regression analyses. There are 13 models in Table 2 in total that reveal the nested effect of the independent variables for recognition of direct and indirect of independent variables besides the analyses of the moderating effect of religion on mental health outcomes. The models are categorized into three sub-groups that illustrate poor, fair and quiet health vs very healthy comparisons as a result of a Multinomial level of analysis. In the first model, the results demonstrate that even though two of religion variables are significant, they exhibit a reverse effect on the analysis. If a

<sup>29</sup> Ellison - Henderson, “Religion And Mental Health”, 11-44

subject were to increase in frequency of prayer by one unit, the relative risk for reporting poor health to very health would be expected to decrease by a factor of 0.611 given the other variables in the model are held constant. More generally, we can say that if a subject were to increase in prayer score, we would expect being more likely to report very health over poor health while reporting very important of God has a related risk of being in the group of reporters of poor health by 4.40.

The Importance of God is statistically significant and positive across models that are created for measuring poor vs very health analysis, but not significant in the remaining models. Happiness and life satisfaction variables are statistically significant and are more likely related to very health over poor health. In model 4a we can see the importance of religion variable has a positive moderating effect on the link between happiness and health. In the control variables we can see that living in the Southeast and older are significant and the relative risk of preferring poor health over very health would be expected to increase by 24.874 and 1.872 respectively while income is expected to decrease by .74. The other groups' models illustrate parallel finding with the first group of models except for interaction variables. In the second group, any interaction term is significant while in the third group of models, both the importance of religion and prayer variables interacted with happiness variables. The models have interesting findings which whenever an interaction term is added in the model, the actual religion variable loses its significance which means they have an indirect relationship with health when they interact with happiness. With these findings, H1 is supported partially and found a reverse effect with the belief dimension of religion, while H2, H3, and H4 are supported.

Table 2. Multinomial Logistic Regression Models for Self-rated Health

	Poor health vs. Very health				Fair health vs. Very health				Quite health vs. Very health				
	Model 1a	Model 2a	Model 3a	Model 4a	Model 1b	Model 2b	Model 3b	Model 4b	Model 1c	Model 2c	Model 3c	Model 4c	Model 5
	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR
Constant	0.63	0.572	0.535	0.552	0.876	0.855	0.851	0.884	0.856	0.864	0.87	0.888	0.87
Gender (Male)													
Education (nine steps)	0.9	0.888	0.872	0.895	0.894*	0.899*	0.895*	0.895*	0.956	0.959	0.959	0.957	0.958
Income (ten steps)	0.742**	0.828*	0.931	0.831*	0.827**	0.878*	0.924	0.879*	0.957	1	1.022	1.004	0.998
Age (ten-year categories)	1.872***	1.975***	1.979***	1.995***	1.629***	1.711***	1.712***	1.705***	1.427***	1.48***	1.484***	1.479***	1.486***
Married	0.579	0.866	0.821	0.897	0.969	1.129	1.123	1.134	0.827	0.92	0.944	0.936	0.927
Kurdish (at home)	2.301	2.341	2.951	2.423	0.418	0.393	0.415	0.383	1.17	1.152	1.131	1.135	1.174
Agriculture	0.626	0.486	0.441	0.517	0.618	0.635	0.583	0.635	0.847	0.828	0.793	0.826	0.815
Southeast	24.874*	20.584*	16.528*	20.232**	17.734*	18.084**	16.531**	18.489**	13.457*	14.026*	13.298*	14.1**	14.326*
Importance of God	4.405**	4.01**	4.094**	3.957**	1.167	1.144	1.197	1.131	1.151	1.128	1.181	1.113	1.11
Importance of Religion	0.926	1.222	1.371	0.954	0.581*	0.752	0.772	0.925	0.544**	0.664*	0.667*	0.777	0.657*
Frequency of prayer	0.611*	0.682	0.622*	0.676	0.699**	0.769*	0.766*	0.767*	0.89	0.952	0.963	0.948	1.038
Happiness		0.074**	0.137***	0.079***		0.189***	0.278**	0.188***		0.315***	0.397***	0.314**	0.317***
Satisfaction			0.579**				0.691**				0.789**		
Imprelig*Happiness				0.346*				0.707				0.521*	
Prayer*Happiness													0.703*
N	1221	1221	1221	1221									1221

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001  
Odds Ratios are reported

In Table 3, the odds ratios of multinomial logistic regression of self-rated health are presented via a similar procedure in Table 2. However, because any interaction term was statistically significant, Table 3 does not include interaction models. The first group of models' results reveal that religion's variables are not significant for predicting not all happy vs very happy relationships while they are negative predictors for remaining models with the exception of the importance of god variable which has not been statistically significant across models. Health

and satisfaction variables are statistically significant predictors for better happiness score. Within control groups, only income, age and marital status appear as significant covariates. All three variables have negative signs in their associations within the group models means people who have more income, are older and are married are more likely to report greater levels of happiness when we compare the categories of happiness outcomes.

Table 3. Multinomial Logistic Regression Models for Happiness

	Not all happy vs. Very happy			Not very happy vs. Very happy			Rather happy vs. Very happy		
	Model 1a OR	Model 2a OR	Model 3a OR	Model 1b OR	Model 2b OR	Model 3b OR	Model 1c OR	Model 2c OR	Model 3c OR
<b>Constant</b>			***	**	***	***	***	***	***
<b>Gender (Male)</b>	0.843	0.981	0.913	1.086	1.212	1.045	1.166	1.224	1.176
<b>Education (nine steps)</b>	1.092	1.198*	1.149	0.909	0.941	0.921	0.94	0.956	0.947
<b>Income (ten steps)</b>	0.729***	0.774**	1.005	0.793***	0.842**	0.975	0.923*	0.951	1.008
<b>Age (ten-year categories)</b>	1.227	1.02	1.003	1.055	0.885	0.877	0.981	0.894*	0.901
<b>Married</b>	0.387**	0.388**	0.353**	0.779	0.757	0.708	0.769	0.772	0.759
<b>Kurdish (at home)</b>	1.844	1.698	2.807	1.015	1.048	1.266	1.817	1.913	1.77
<b>Agriculture</b>	1.87	2.297	1.455	0.269	0.323	0.253	0.658	0.7	0.676
<b>Southeast</b>	2.21	1.397	0.982	2.233	1.312	0.993	1.256	0.884	0.81
<b>Importance of God</b>	2.368	1.595	1.703	1.074	0.914	0.942	1.068	1.024	1.075
<b>Importance of Religion</b>	0.661	0.587	0.722	0.589*	0.573*	0.651	0.486***	0.506***	0.536***
<b>Frequency of prayer</b>	0.871	1.061	0.814	0.652**	0.736*	0.675**	0.713***	0.753**	0.757**
<b>Health Satisfaction</b>		0.117***	0.191***		0.201***	0.282***		0.457***	0.561***
			0.374***			0.48***			0.68***
<b>N</b>	1221	1221	1218						

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001  
Odds Ratios are reported

Table 4 is designed to analyze life satisfaction outcome with religion and other subjective health measures. The linear regression analyzing technique is used and coefficient estimates are reported here. In the first model, only the importance of religion is statistically significant and has a positive impact on life satisfaction holding other variables constant. However, when the happiness variable entered in model 2, the religion impact washed out which indicates religion has an indirect effect on life satisfaction. However, when we take out happiness and add the health variable in Model 3, we find that the importance of religion remains significant. In models 4 and 5, the existing interaction effects are included. The results exhibit prayer variable has a positive effect on the happiness and life satisfaction relationship as well as health and life satisfaction.

Table 4. Linear Logistic Regression Analyses for Life Satisfaction

	Model 1 B	Model 2 B	Model 3 B	Model 5 B	Model 6 B
<b>Constant</b>	5.031***	2.913***	3.577***	5.586***	5.142***
<b>Gender (Male)</b>	-0.087	-0.079	-0.143	-0.084	-0.159
<b>Education (nine steps)</b>	-0.01	-0.024	-0.034	-0.022	-0.036
<b>Income (ten steps)</b>	0.292***	0.211***	0.236***	0.212***	0.233***
<b>Age (ten-year categories)</b>	-0.1*	-0.069	0.011	-0.072	0.014
<b>Married</b>	0.123	-0.058	0.083	-0.07	0.048
<b>Kurdish (at home)</b>	0.16	0.294	0.163	0.282	0.153
<b>Agriculture</b>	0.032	-0.096	-0.092	-0.074	-0.062
<b>Southeast</b>	-0.682*	-0.431	-0.296	-0.413	-0.246
<b>Importance of God</b>	-0.053	0.038	0.052	0.05	0.067

<b>Importance of Religion</b>	0.329*	0.129	0.275*	0.139	0.257*
<b>Frequency of prayer</b>	0.024	-0.09	-0.07	-0.068	-0.056
<b>Happiness</b>		1.334***		1.307***	
<b>Health</b>			0.937***		0.933***
<b>Pray*Happiness</b>				0.287***	
<b>Pray*Health</b>					0.268**
<b>R</b>	0.08	0.31	0.2	0.32	0.21
<b>N</b>	1218	1218	1218	1218	1218

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001

The overall results mostly support the hypotheses based on the theoretical framework. With the current findings we can conclude that while H2, H3, H5, H9, and H10 are fully supported, H6, H7, and H8 are not supported. The remaining H1 and H4 are partially supported.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The discussion of the findings from the statistical analyses must be contextualized within the theoretical framework outlined in the "Theoretical and Empirical Background" section. The results from the multinomial logistic regression analyses provide a nuanced understanding of the interplay between religion, health, and subjective well-being (SWB) within a Turkish context.

The findings suggest that religious practices, particularly the frequency of prayer, are associated with better health outcomes. This supports the stress-buffering hypothesis<sup>30</sup> and the notion that religious practices can induce a relaxation response beneficial to health<sup>31</sup>. The significant inverse relationship between the importance of God and poor health outcomes may reflect the re-appraisal mechanism posited by Park<sup>32</sup>, where religious individuals reinterpret stressful events, giving them meaning and purpose, which can alleviate distress and promote well-being.

However, the complexity of these relationships is evident in the interaction effects. The significance of religious variables in predicting health outcomes diminishes when they interact with happiness, suggesting that the relationship between religion and health is mediated by happiness. This aligns with the findings of Idler et al.<sup>33</sup> and Ellison et al.<sup>34</sup>, who suggest that the effect of religion on health and SWB may vary depending on individual circumstances, such as chronic illness.

The results also indicate that happiness and life satisfaction are significant predictors of better health, supporting hypotheses H2, H3, and H4. This is consistent with previous research documenting the positive associations between religious involvement and mental health outcomes, including SWB<sup>35</sup>. The findings that happiness and life satisfaction are significant

<sup>30</sup> Ellison - Levin, "The Religion-Health Connection", 700-720.

<sup>31</sup> Seeman et al., "Religiosity/Spirituality and Health. A Critical Review of the Evidence for Biological Pathways", *sayfa numarası*

<sup>32</sup> Park, "Religion as a Meaning-Making Framework in Coping with Life Stress", 707-729

<sup>33</sup> Idler et al., "Measuring Multiple Dimensions of Religion and Spirituality for Health Research Conceptual Background and Findings from the 1998 General Social Survey", 327-365

<sup>34</sup> Ellison et al., "Religious Involvement, Stress, and Mental Health", 215-249.

<sup>35</sup> Koenig et al., *Handbook of Religion and Health*. 53-55.



predictors of health outcomes underscore the bidirectional relationship between SWB and health.

Interestingly, the importance of religion has a positive impact on life satisfaction, but this effect is moderated by happiness. When happiness is accounted for, the direct effect of religion on life satisfaction becomes non-significant, suggesting that happiness may be a more immediate determinant of life satisfaction than religious importance. This could be interpreted within the Islamic context, where the pursuit of well-being is a holistic concept encompassing both mental and physical health, as guided by the Quran and Hadith<sup>36</sup>.

The lack of support for hypotheses H6, H7, and H8 may indicate that the moderating effect of religion on the relationship between satisfaction, health, and happiness is not as strong as hypothesized. This could be due to the multifaceted nature of SWB and the various factors that influence it, including economic and social variables, as indicated by the significance of income, age, and marital status in predicting happiness.

The overall pattern of results suggests that while religion plays a significant role in the lives of the Turkish population, its direct impact on SWB and health may be less pronounced than its indirect effects through other variables such as happiness and life satisfaction. This is in line with the theoretical framework that posits a complex interaction between religion, health, and SWB, where religion may serve as a coping mechanism and provide social support, but its effects are mediated by individual perceptions and experiences of happiness and satisfaction<sup>37</sup>.

In conclusion, the findings from this study contribute to the understanding of the intricate relationships between religion, health, and SWB in a predominantly Muslim context. They highlight the importance of considering the multidimensional aspects of SWB and the mediating role of happiness and life satisfaction in the relationship between religion and health. Future research could further explore these complex interactions and the role of other socio-economic and demographic variables in shaping these relationships.

### **5.1 Limitations and Directions for Future Study**

The study has some limitations. The data utilized were cross-sectional and therefore it is impossible to ascertain the causal ordering of the relations among the variables in the models. Furthermore, the sample was made up of mostly Muslim people. Compared to people from other countries, the sample may be comparatively showing more religious homogeneity among respondents. Another restriction is the variable of attendance at religious services. In Turkey, generally, men attend religious services. Therefore, we did not use the attendance predictor in our analysis, although most of studies that examined the association between religion and happiness, include attendance at religious services. Despite these limitations, the findings of this study have contributed to the literature on religiosity outcomes, theoretical perspectives, and systematical analysis. Therefore, this study and its findings can be more constructive for future studies.

<sup>36</sup> Bhat, "Human Psychology (Fitrah) from Islamic Perspective", 61-74.

<sup>37</sup> Koenig et al., *Handbook of Religion and Health*, 54-55.

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## Sadr al-Sharī'a's Criticisms of the Mātūrīdī Tradition in the Context of the Attribute of *Takwīn*

Tekvīn Sıfatı Bağlamında Sadruşşerī'a'nın Mātūrīdī Geleneğe Eleştirileri

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## Sadr al-Sharī'a's Criticisms of the Mātūrīdī Tradition in the Context of the Attribute of *Takwīn*

### Abstract

The focus of this study is twofold. First, the figures who are highly representative of the Mātūrīdī tradition's view in the discussions on the attribute of *takwīn* will be analysed. The purpose of this examination is not to reveal what the Mātūrīdī view of *takwīn* is. Instead, the aim is to trace Sadr al-Sharī'a's (d. 747/1346) criticisms of the Mātūrīdīs before him. After this, Sadr al-Sharī'a's approach will be presented, and his criticism of the earlier Mātūrīdīs and his solution will be presented. Since the Ash'arite aspect of the subject is also central, the aspects of differentiation between the Mātūrīdīs and the Ash'arites in the discussion of the attribute of *takwīn* will be mentioned first. The debate on *takwīn* stems from the disagreement over which attribute is the attribute through which God's creation is realised. While the Mātūrīdīs accept that God's creation is directly realised through the attribute of *takwīn*, the Ash'arites think that it is realised through the attribute of power (*al-qudra*). The Mātūrīdīs' belief that the attribute of power is insufficient for creation arises from the fact that they define power differently from the Ash'arites. While the Ash'arites define power as "the power to do something and the one who does it with his power", the Mātūrīdīs define it as "the power to do something". Hence, for the Ash'arites, the presence of the attribute of power in the agent means realising the thing. In contrast, the Mātūrīdīs think that the presence of power is not enough, that power is the power to do the act, and that *takwīn*, an attribute other than power, is necessary for the realisation of the thing. The Ash'arites objected that the attribute of *takwīn*, which is eternal according to the Mātūrīdīs' acceptance, would require the created things to be eternal as well. The Mātūrīdīs, on the other hand, answered the objection by explaining that the attribute of creation, "*takwīn*, is eternal, and the act is created". Sadr al-Sharī'a, one of the theologians representing the later period of the Mātūrīdī School, proposed to address the issue through "states" (*aḥwāl*) due to the problems he saw in the tradition mentioned above's explanations of the attribute of *takwīn*. According to him, like the attributes of essence, the attributes of action are also eternal. There is no problem in accepting the attributes of action as *qadīm* because they are the origin of action. While the origin of the act is the attribute of *takwīn*, which is eternal, acts are states that are expressed as "neither existing nor non-existent". Sadr al-Sharī'a's criticism of the tradition he belongs to focuses on the fact that Mātūrīdī theologians are not aware of the distinction between acts and the attribute that is the origin of acts. "He thinks that the sentence, 'Creation is eternal, and the act is created', does not make sense, and states that God's act in the sense of creation cannot be eternal since He is the *fā'il al-mukhtār*. According to him, while there is no problem among the Mātūrīdīs about the eternity of essential attributes, there is ambiguity about the eternity of attributes of action. Therefore, he proposes that the actional attribute *takwīn* be accepted as the origin of actions. While the attribute of *takwīn*, which is the origin of the act, is eternal, the act in the sense of *īqā'* (*ijāt*) should be regarded as a state (neither existing nor non-existent). According to Sadr al-Sharī'a, the Mātūrīdīs who do not accept *ijāt* as a state are as mistaken as the Ash'arīs who do not accept that the origin is eternal. Thus, by distinguishing between the origin of the act and the act, he justifies the view of *fā'il al-mukhtār* and shows that contrary to the Ash'arites' claim, creation is realised by an attribute other than the attributes of will and power.

**Key Words:** Kalām, Attributes of God, Attribute of *Takwīn*, Ḥanafī-Mātūrīdī School, Mātūrīdī-Ash'arī Disagreements, Sadr al-Sharī'a.

### Tekvīn Sıfatı Bağlamında Sadruşşerī'a'nın Mātūrīdī Geleneğe Eleştirileri

#### Öz

Bu çalışmanın odağı iki yönlüdür. İlk olarak Mātūrīdī geleneğin tekvīn sıfatı tartışmalarındaki görüşünü temsil kabiliyeti yüksek isimler üzerinden incelenecektir. Bu incelemedeki amaç Mātūrīdīlerin tekvīn görüşünün ne olduğunu açığa çıkarmak değildir. Asıl amaçlanan şey, Sadruşşerī'a'nın (ö. 747/1346) kendisinden önceki Mātūrīdīlere yönelik eleştirilerinin izini sürmektir. Bundan sonrasında Sadruşşerī'a'nın yaklaşımı sunulacak ve önceki Mātūrīdīleri eleştirisinin ve çözümünün ne olduğu ortaya konulacaktır. Konunun Eş'arilerle bakan yönü de merkezi olduğu için burada Mātūrīdīlerle Eş'ariler arasındaki tekvīn sıfatı tartışmasındaki farklılaşma yönleri de zikredilecektir. Tekvīn tartışmaları Allah'ın yaratmasının gerçekleştiği sıfatın hangisi olduğuna dair ihtilaftan kaynaklanmaktadır. Mātūrīdīler Allah'ın yaratmasının doğrudan tekvīn sıfatı ile gerçekleştiğini kabul ederken, Eş'ariler kudret sıfatı ile gerçekleştiğini düşünmektedir. Mātūrīdīler'in yaratma için kudret sıfatının yeterli olmadığını düşünmeleri, kudret sıfatını Eş'ariler'den farklı bir şekilde tanımlamalarından kaynaklanmaktadır. Eş'ariler kudret sıfatını "bir şeyi yapabilme gücü ve o işi kudretiyle yapan" şeklinde tanımlarken, Mātūrīdīler ise "bir şeyi yapabilme gücü" olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bundan dolayı Eş'ariler için fâilde kudret sıfatının bulunması o şeyin gerçekleştirilmesi anlamına gelirken, Mātūrīdīler ise kudretin bulunmasının yeterli olmadığını, kudretin fiili yapabilme gücü olduğunu ve şeyin gerçekleşmesi için kudret dışında bir sıfat olan tekvīn'in gerekli olduğunu düşünmektedir. Eş'ariler, Mātūrīdīler'in kabulüne göre ezeli olan tekvīn sıfatının, yaratılmış olanların da ezeli olmasını gerektireceği itirazında bulunmuşlardır. Mātūrīdīler ise yaratma sıfatı olan "tekvīn'in ezeli, fiilin ise hâdis olduğu" açıklamaları ile itirazı cevaplamışlardır. Mātūrīdī ekolün müteahhir dönemini temsil eden kelâmcılardan biri olan Sadruşşerī'a, sözü edilen geleneğin tekvīn sıfatına dair açıklamalarında gördüğü sorunlardan dolayı,

meselenin “haller” üzerinden ele alınmasını teklif etmektedir. Ona göre, zâtî sıfatlar gibi fiilî sıfatlar da kadîmdir. Fiilî sıfatların fiilin menşei olmalarından dolayı kadîm kabul edilmelerinde herhangi bir problem yoktur. Fiilin menşei kadîm olan tekvîn sıfatı olup, fiiller ise “ne mevcut ne madum” şeklinde ifade edilen hallerdir. Sadruşşerîa'nın mensubu bulunduğu geleneğe yönelik eleştirileri Mâtürîdî kelâmcıların fiiller ile fiillerin menşei olan sıfat arasındaki ayrımın farkında olmamaları noktasına yoğunlaşmaktadır. “Yaratma kadîmdir, fiil hâdistir” cümlesinin anlamlı olmadığını düşünen Sadruşşerîa, Allah'ın fâil-i muhtâr olduğundan dolayı yaratma anlamındaki fiilin kadîm olamayacağını belirtmektedir. Ona göre Mâtürîdîler arasında zâtî sıfatların kadîm olması noktasında bir problem yok iken, fiilî sıfatların kâdeminin sunumunda problem vardır. Bundan dolayı o, fiilî sıfat olan tekvîn, fiillerin menşei olarak kabul edilmesini teklif etmektedir. Fiilin menşei olan tekvîn sıfatının kadîm, îka' anlamındaki fiilin ise (icat) hal (ne mevcut ne madum) kabul edilmesi gerekmektedir. Sadruşşerîa'ya göre kadîm menşein kadîm olduğunu kabul etmeyen Eş'arîler kadar, hal olan icadî kabul etmeyen Mâtürîdîler de hatalıdır. Böylece o, fiilin menşei ile fiil arasını ayırarak fâil-i muhtâr görüşünü temellendirmekte ve yaratmanın Eş'arîlerin iddiasının aksine irade ve kudret sıfatları dışında bir sıfatla gerçekleştiğini göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kelâm, Allah'ın Sıfatları, Zâtî-Fiilî Sıfatlar, Tekvîn Sıfatı, Mâtürîdî-Eş'arî İhtilafları, Sadruşşerîa.

## Introduction

There are disagreements among the schools of thought about how the attributes of God should be understood. Although there is no dispute on the point that the names or meanings attributed to God express perfection (*kamāl*), the dispute between the representatives of religious thought and the followers of philosophical systems is about the sense in which the attributes of God express perfection. For example, the Peripatetic tradition in general and Avicenna (d. 428/1037) in particular think that all of the attributes used for God should be taken in the *selbī* sense in such a way that they do not require multiplicity (*terkīb*) in Him.<sup>1</sup> This means that the names attributed to God are not His essential meanings and should be regarded as mere identification. On the other hand, the representatives of religious thought who accept the separation of God and the universe and hence do not explain God's actions in the universe in a deterministic way but instead accept the concept of *fā'il al-mukhtār* think that God's will and intervention should be grounded in attributes. To them, God has attributes for the necessity of the separation of God and the universe and God's intervention in the functioning of the universe. In other words, God's intervention in things has to be explained by referring to attributes unless *şudūr* is accepted.

Although theologians agree on God's true attributes and that some are essential (*zātī*) and some are actual (*fiilī*), they disagree on which attributes should be evaluated under this division. The three schools that should be mentioned here are the Mu'tazilites, Ash'arites, and Mâtürîdites. Mu'tazilite and Ash'arite thinkers are of the opinion that the actual attribute is the act itself. However, they put forward different criteria for determining the actual attributes. According to the Mu'tazilite theologians, attributes of action can be used with negative and positive forms of sentences. For example, the adjectives that can be used as “Allāh created someone” and “Allāh did not create someone” that are mentioned in the texts in this way are considered actual attributes. This is because this usage does not reveal any impossibility about God.

On the other hand, the Ash'arites consider the attributes that require deficiency due to the negation of the attribute as essential and the attributes for which this is not the case as actual. The negative use of the attribute of knowledge implies ignorance, which is impossible for God. Similarly, the incapacity that arises when the attribute of power is negated is also impossible for God. Therefore, while these attributes are considered essential, the negation of attributes such as giving life, death, creation, and providing sustenance does not result in any impossibility for Allāh. For this reason, to them, such attributes are considered actual. As mentioned earlier, since the Ash'arites accept the attributes of action as the act itself, according to them, these attributes

<sup>1</sup> Avicenna, *Kitāb al-Shifā al-Ilāhiyāt*, trans. Ekrem Demirli - Ömer Türker (Istanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2013), 2/102, 114; Avicenna, *al-Risālat al-Arshiyya fī Ḥaqā'iki al-Tawḥīd wa l-thbāti al-Nubuwwa*, ed. İbrahim Hilal (Cairo: Jamiat al-Azhar, 1980), 21.

are created (*ḥādīth*).<sup>2</sup> In other words, in the Ash'arite and Mu'tazilite schools, it is possible to discuss the difference between the essential and the actual attributes. Among the schools mentioned above, the Ash'arites, in particular, accept the essential attributes as eternal, whereas they argue that the attributes of action are created. The Māturīdīs, on the other hand, do not accept a difference between the essential and the actual in terms of existence. According to them, the actual attributes are referred to as the attribute of *takwīn*, and the attribute of *takwīn* is eternal.

After this general introduction, it would be appropriate to mention that this study will not examine the Mu'tazilite School's approach to attributes. This study aims to show how, in the debate on *takwīn* between the Ash'arites and the Māturīdīs, an explanation offered by the Māturīdīs in response to an objection from the Ash'arites was criticised by Sadr al-Sharī'a (d. 747/1346). Although the Māturīdī tradition has recently received relatively more attention, the theological thought of Sadr al-Sharī'a, one of the theologians representing the later period of the tradition, has not been the subject of attention apart from a few exceptional studies. Hence, presenting his criticisms of the earlier Māturīdīs on a specific topic would be helpful. In a previous study on Sadr al-Sharī'a, it was stated that Sadr al-Sharī'a criticised the previous Māturīdīs' approaches to the attribute of *takwīn*. However, the study above focused only on the views of Abu al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1115) and Nur al-Dīn al-Şābūnī (d. 580/1184) and did not address whether the views of other figures in the Māturīdī tradition were subjected to Sadr al-Sharī'a's criticisms.<sup>3</sup> In this respect, this article aims to fill the gap in previous studies by focusing on the views of highly representative figures in the tradition and examining whether Sadr al-Sharī'a's criticisms should be extended to their views. For this purpose, I will first point out the general debates on the attribute of *takwīn*. I will analyse the objection of the Ash'arites and the Māturīdīs' response to this objection. Finally, I shall explain Sadr al-Sharī'a's reasons for not being pleased with the response from the tradition he belonged to and point out where his solution fit into his ontology.

## 1. Discussions on the Attribute of *Takwīn*

The issue between the Māturīdīs and the Ash'arites regarding the attribute of *takwīn* is actually a dispute over which attribute is the attribute through which God's creation is realised. While the Māturīdīs believe that God's creation is realised through *takwīn*, the Ash'arites claim that creation is realised through the attribute of power and that no other attribute other than power is necessary for creation.<sup>4</sup> The basis of this disagreement between the Māturīdīs and the Ash'arites lies in the difference in their definitions of power. While the Māturīdīs define power as "the power to do something", the Ash'arīs define it as "the power to do something and the one who realises it with his power".<sup>5</sup> According to their definitions, since the Ash'arites regard the

<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Fūrek, *Mujarred al-Maqālat al-Shaykh Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī*, ed. Daniel Gimaret (Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1987), 268; Nur al-Dīn al-Şābūnī, *al-Kifāya fi al-Hidāya*, ed. Muḥammad Aruci (Beirut-İstanbul: Dar al-Ibn Hazm, 2014), 137.

<sup>3</sup> Güvenç Şensoy, *Sadrüşşerī'a'nın Kelāmı Ta'dīl Teşebbüsü Varlık ve Ulūhiyyet Merkezli Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2023), 341.

<sup>4</sup> Mehmet Bakır, "Allah'ın Fiili Sıfatlarında Zaman Sorunu", *Kader* 1/2 (2003), 101; Mustafa Aykaç, "Osmanlı Kelâmında Mātūrīdīlik Vurgusu: Şerḥu'l-'Aḳāid Haşiyelerindeki Tekvin Tartışmaları Bağlamında Bir İnceleme", *Kader* 18/1 (2020), 7.

<sup>5</sup> Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Bāqillānī, *Temhīd al-Awā'il wa Talkhīs al-Dalā'il*, ed. İmād al-Dīn Aḥmad Haydar (Beirut: Muassasāt al-Utubi al-Sakāfiyya, 1987), 246; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Muḥaṣṣal*, ed. Eşref Altaş, tr. Eşref Altaş (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2019), 163; Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī, *al-Tamhīd fi Beyān al-Tawhīd*, ed. Ömür Türkmen (Ankara-Beyrut: TDV Yayınları and Daru Ibn Hazm, 2017), 124; Abū al-Yusr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Husayn al-Pazdawī, *Usūl al-Dīn*, ed. Hans Peter Lins (Cairo: Dār Iḥya al-Kutub al-Arabiyya, 1963), 80; Abu al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī, *Tabsirat al-Adillah fi Usūli al-Dīn*, ed. Muḥammad Anwar Hamid İsa (al-Mektabat al-Azhariyya li't-turas & al-Jazira li'n-neşri wa't-tevzi', 2011), 1/536; Ala al-Dīn al-Usmānī, *Lubāb al-Kalām*, ed. M. Sait Özervarlı (Ankara: TDV İSAM Publications, 2019), 97; Jalāl al-Dīn 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Khabbāzī, *Kitāb al-Hādī fi Usūli al-Dīn*, ed. Adil Bebek (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2006), 112.

one who possesses the attribute of power as the one who performs the work, they think that God does not need any attribute other than the attribute of power for creation. According to them, creation, therefore, is realised through the created relation of God's attribute of power. From this point of view, according to the Ash'arites, the attribute of power is eternal and subsistent with God's essence, whereas creation is created. They think that the attribute of power has two aspects. These aspects are eternal and created. Since the attribute of power has eternal and actual aspects, the eternal aspect functions as the preparation for the creation of contingents, and the actual aspect functions as their creation. Therefore, according to the Ash'arites, the attribute of power is eternal, not creation.<sup>6</sup> In this respect, to them, the attribute of creation belongs to the created being.

In this issue, Māturīdī theologians like Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī (d. after 460/1068), Abū al-Yusr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Husayn al-Pazdawī (d. 493/1100), Abu al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī, Ala al-Dīn al-Usmānī (d. 552/1157 [?]), Abu al-Thenā Maḥmūd b. Zayd al-Lāmīshī (d. 7th/12th century first half), al-Şābūnī, Jalāl al-Dīn 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Khabbāzī (d. 691/1292), Abū Muḥammad Rūknūddīn Ubaydullah b. Muḥammad b. Abdūlazīz al-Samarqandī (d. 701/1301), Abu al-Barakāt al-Nasafī (d. 710/1310) first try to emphasise that *takwīn* and created by *takwīn* are different things. Their interlocutors here are the Mu'tazilites, the Karrāmiyya, and the Ash'arites. Again, unlike the Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites, the Māturīdīs do not accept the division of attributes into essential and actual.<sup>7</sup> While al-Sālimī thinks that the question is actually about whether God's attributes are created or not, he emphasises the impossibility of the claim that they are created. He presents this claim as "according to the Ahl al-Sunnah".<sup>8</sup> By using the exact phrase, al-Pazdawī emphasises that Abū Mansūr al-Māturīdī was of the same opinion.<sup>9</sup> Al-Nasafī's explanations directly target the Ash'arites and point out that while *takwīn* is accepted as created, the claim that other essential attributes are eternal is meaningless.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the attributes of knowledge, will, and power, al-Usmānī points at length to the impossibilities that arise if the attribute of eternal creation is not accepted.<sup>11</sup> al-Lāmīshī, al-Şābūnī, and al-Khabbāzī present the assumptions of the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition in similar terms.<sup>12</sup> In his objection to al-Rāzī, al-Ruq̄n al-Dīn al-Samarqandī states that God's creation is not only by power but that the attributes of knowledge, will, and power are the conditions of *takwīn*.<sup>13</sup> Almost all scholars in the tradition discuss the issue in the same terms.

As can be seen, the discussions on *takwīn* in the Māturīdī tradition continue without separating *takwīn* as an attribute from the act of creation as a verb. I will touch on this point, which will be the basis of Sadr al-Sharī'a's criticism of the Māturīdīs before him, in a later section. Again, it can be noted that the arguments for *takwīn* in the Māturīdī tradition are repeated in almost the same way. They think that even in cases where creation is created, the attribute of "being a creator"

<sup>6</sup> al-Rāzī, *al-Muḥaṣṣal*, 163; Baktır, "Allah'ın Fiili Sıfatlarında Zaman Sorunu", 102.

<sup>7</sup> al-Sālimī, *ial-Tamhīd*, 136 ff; al-Pazdawī, *Usūl al-Din*, 76 ff; al-Nasafī, *Tabsira*, 1/535 ff; al-Usmānī, *Lubāb al-Kalām*, 96 ff; Abu al-Thenā Maḥmūd b. Zayd al-Lāmīshī, *Kitāb al-Tamhīd li Kavāidī al-Tawḥīd*, ed. 'Abd al-Majīd Turki (Paris: Dāru al-Garb al-Islāmī, 1995), 77 ff; al-Şābūnī, *al-Kifāya*, 143 ff; al-Khabbāzī, *al-Hādī*, 111 ff.; Abū Muḥammad Rūknūddīn Ubaydullah b. Muḥammad b. Abdūlazīz al-Samarqandī, *al-Aqīdat al-Rūknīyye fī Sherhī Lā İläha İllallāh Muḥammadun Rasūlullāh*, ed. Mustafa Sinanoğlu (İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2008), 66 ff; Abu'l-Barakāt al-Nasafī, *Sharḥ al-Umda*, ed. Abdullah Muḥammad Abdullah İsmail (Cairo: al-Mektebet al-Azhariyya li't-Turas, 2012), 197 ff.

<sup>8</sup> al-Sālimī, *al-Tamhīd*, 137.

<sup>9</sup> al-Pazdawī, *Usūl al-Din*, 77.

<sup>10</sup> al-Nasafī, *Tabsira*, 1/565.

<sup>11</sup> al-Usmānī, *Lubāb al-Kalām*, 96.

<sup>12</sup> al-Lāmīshī, *Kitāb al-Tamhīd*, 77; al-Şābūnī, *al-Kifāya*, 144; al-Khabbāzī, *al-Hādī*, 112.

<sup>13</sup> al-Samarqandī, *al-Aqīdet al-Rūknīyye*, 71.



is not created but must be eternal. That is to say, *takwīn* is not the attribute of the created but the agent's attribute. The Māturīdīs also base these assumptions on Abū Ḥanīfah. In his work *al-Waṣīyya*, he defends the view that "good deeds are realised by God's *tahlīq*, that is, *takwīn*."<sup>14</sup> Here, as will be pointed out later, the statement "being a creator is eternal even though creation is created" is one of the points subject to Sadr al-Sharī'a's criticism. Sadr al-Sharī'a thinks that the ontological categories of the attribute of being a creator, the thing that is the subject of creation, and the act of creation in this statement should be questioned carefully. So, what is the Ash'arite objection that compels the Māturīdīs to this statement? The answer is that the Ash'arites claim that the eternity of *takwīn* entails the eternity of created. It will be helpful to examine this objection and answer separately.

## 2. Does the Eternity of *Takwīn* Necessitate the Eternity of Created (*Mukawwan*)?

We can evaluate the criticisms of the Ash'arites against the Māturīdīs on the attribute of *takwīn* under two headings. The first is the accusation of *bid'ah* and the second is the criticism that if *takwīn* is accepted as eternal, then created must also be eternal. In their encounters with the Māturīdīs, the Ash'arites stated that the claim that the attribute of *takwīn* is eternal was a *bid'ah* that had never been defended by any scholar before. This is a severe accusation for a school that considers itself to adhere to the Sunnah. In response to this accusation, al-Pazdawī mentioned that Imam Māturīdī also held this view, and al-Nasafī listed the names of scholars in Samarkand who held this view.<sup>15</sup> By referring to Imam Māturīdī as the person who best understood Abū Ḥanīfah's system, these two theologians point out that the accusation of *bid'ah* is baseless.

According to the second criticism of the Ash'arites, which is the main focus of this study, the claim that *takwīn* is eternal entails the eternity of *mukawwan*.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, according to them, the attribute of *takwīn* must be created. Because, in fact, according to the Ash'arites, *takwīn* is not a real attribute. The attributes of knowledge, will, and power are real, and creation is realised through the attribute of power. Therefore, in their view, what should be said about God in terms of eternity is not that He is the creator in eternity but that He is capable of creation.<sup>17</sup> According to them, creation, which means *kawn*, is a property that should be attributed to the creature, not the creator, because *kawn* is an accident.<sup>18</sup> Al-Razī expresses this as follows:

If what is meant by *takwīn* is the effect of the power on the *maqdūr*, this is a relative thing, and what is relative is created because it exists with that to which it is subject. If what is meant by *takwīn* is an effective property that affects the existence of the work, this is the power itself.<sup>19</sup>

al-Rāzī distinguished between effect and attribute in the topic of *takwīn*. He emphasises that the effect is created, whereas the attribute is eternal power. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, in line with the Ash'arites before him, he states that the subject of discussion is the attribute of eternal power through which creation takes place and that there is no need for an attribute other than

<sup>14</sup> Numan bin Thabit Abū Ḥanīfa, "al-Waṣīyya", tr. Mustafa Öz, *İmâm-ı A'zam'ın Beş Eseri* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2006), 88.

<sup>15</sup> al-Pazdawī, *Usūl al-Dīn*, 77; al-Nasafī, *Tabsira*, 1/551-558.

<sup>16</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Munāzarāt* (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2016), 35.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn al-Fūrek, *Mujarred*, 268.

<sup>18</sup> Hikmet Yaman, "Small Theological Differences, Profound Philosophical Implications: Notes on Some of the Chief Differences between the Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 51/1 (2010), 187.

<sup>19</sup> al-Rāzī, *al-Muḥaṣṣal*, 163.

the attribute of power because of its definition. In other words, while the effect is an attribute of creation, it is an eternal attribute of power, which is subsistent with God.

The Māturīdīs answer the objection that if *takwīn* is eternal, then created must also be eternal by pointing out that *takwīn* and created are different things. According to them, the attribute of knowledge refers to the cognisance of things, the attribute of will refers to allocation, and the attribute of power refers to the possessor's power over contingents. Since these three attributes do not have the meaning of creation, the attribute of *takwīn*, through which creation is realised, must be considered as a separate attribute.<sup>20</sup> While the attribute of *takwīn* is eternal, the creature is created, and *takwīn* should be considered the attribute of the creator, not the creature. Then, how can one respond to the Ash'arites' objection that "if *takwīn* is accepted as eternal, then the created must also be accepted as eternal?" At this point, the Māturīdīs offer another answer by pointing to the Ash'arites' assumptions. Just as, according to the Ash'arites, the eternity of the attribute of power and the existence of its relation does not necessitate the eternity of the created thing, the eternity of the attribute of *takwīn* does not necessitate the eternity of creation.<sup>21</sup> For this answer to be valid, it must be clarified that *takwīn* is an attribute of the creator, not of the created. The Māturīdīs tried to show this by pointing to their assumption that *takwīn* is eternal and the creation is *ḥādith*.

I find it useful to mention Abu al-Barakāt al-Nasafī here for the reason that he differs from the previous scholars by referring to the view of *fā'il al-mukhtār* after the general discussions. Abu al-Barakāt, who thinks there would be no need for creation since power encompasses all subject to power, points out that God would have two powers if *ijāt* is also realised through power. According to him, the existence of a thing is not realised by power but by *iqā'*. The existence is realised by invention and power, so Allāh is the *fā'il al-mukhtār*.<sup>22</sup> Although it is not clear here, Abu al-Barakāt's distinction can be regarded as the first form of Sadr al-Sharī'a's distinction between *iqā'* and *ijāt*, which I will examine later. Notably, this distinction presented prominently and perfectly in Sadr al-Sharī'a, was also attempted to be expressed in an ambiguous way before him.

To summarise, according to the Māturīdīs, while *takwīn* is eternal, the act is created. They stated that the attribute of creation is eternal, and the act of creation is created in order to avoid the criticism of the Ash'arites that if *takwīn* is eternal, the created will also be eternal. According to Sadr al-Sharī'a, this approach, which is common to almost all Māturīdīs, stems from the inability to distinguish between the attribute of *takwīn*, which is the origin of the act, and the act itself. We can now move on to Sadr al-Sharī'a's criticisms.

### 3. Sadr Al-Sharī'a's Approach to the Attribute of *Takwīn* and His Criticism of the Māturīdī Tradition

As one of the thinkers representing the later period of the Māturīdī tradition in terms of changing conceptual schema and content, Sadr al-Sharī'a presents his explanations on the attribute of *takwīn* together with his objections to al-Rāzī from the Ash'arite school and al-Sālimī, al-Pazdawī, al-Nasafī, al-Şābūnī, al-Lāmishī, and al-Khabbāzī from the Māturīdī school. In fact, the objection Sadr al-Sharī'a presents here is an objection that covers all of the Māturīdīs before him in terms of meaning. Still, it is understood that he refers to the names explicitly mentioned

<sup>20</sup> al-Nasafī, *Tabsira*, 1/307-308; al-Rāzī, *Munazarat*, 37. Also cf. n: 6.

<sup>21</sup> al-Nasafī, *Tabsira*, 1/349; al-Şābūnī, *al-Kifāya*, 143-144.

<sup>22</sup> al-Nasafī, *Sharḥ al-Umda*, 203.

in the words he uses in his objection. Other scholars say the same thing in terms of meaning; according to all of them, the creation is eternal while the one created is created.

In order to understand Sadr al-Sharī'a's explanations, it is necessary to mention the distinction he makes between *īqā'* and *ījāt*. According to him, the act has two meanings. The first of the meanings is the external form of the action. This is the meaning that occurs with *masdar* (*ḥāsīl bi al-maṣdar*). The second meaning of the verb is the *īqā'* of the external form observed with the senses.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Sadr al-Sharī'a has also dealt with this issue in his *Tawzīh*. Sadr al-Sharī'a uses the same binary division to explain the meanings of the act.<sup>24</sup> Based on this distinction, Sadr al-Sharī'a states that the acts observed with the senses exist, whereas the origin of these acts, *īqā'*, is neither existing nor non-existent. This is because if this *īqā'* is considered to exist, the problem of infinite regress arises. If it is considered to be non-existent, the problem of non-actualisation of actions arises. The only way to avoid these two problems is to accept a means that is neither existing nor non-existent. Therefore, his proposal here is basically based on the expansion of ontological categories, i.e., the category of neither existing nor non-existent should be added to the categories of existent and non-existent. Since our aim in this study is not to present Sadr al-Sharī'a's criticisms of the Ash'arite theologians but to show his criticisms of the explanations of the theologians in the Māturīdī tradition before him, we can leave aside how Sadr al-Sharī'a would respond to the Ash'arite approach and move on to the impact of his approach on the attribute of *taqwīn*.

He makes a clear distinction between attribute and act in the discussions of *takwīn* and bases his explanations on this distinction. According to him, the attribute of *takwīn* is not the same as actions but the origin of actions. In this respect, the attribute is the ground of the act. He explains what he means by action with the following phrase: "Allāh brought Zayd into existence at such and such a time", where "'bring into existence' means to bring something into existence when it does not exist. This must be regarded as an act which differs from *takwīn*. While *takwīn* is the eternal origin of this act, the act is not eternal.<sup>25</sup> This points to a distinction that Sadr al-Sharī'a presented that is not in the tradition before him. I have already mentioned above that only Abu al-Barakāt presents a similar, albeit somewhat vague, distinction. However, there is no point in his taxonomy from which we can infer that *takwīn* is the ground of the actual attributes in terms of meaning. Then, according to Sadr al-Sharī'a, is this act existent? As mentioned earlier, the answer given by the Māturīdīs before him to this question is that the act is created. Since this is the point that Sadr al-Sharī'a criticises, it would be useful to first look at the part where he presents the views of the previous Māturīdīs.

Even though the leaders of the school (*mashāyikh*) accept the attribute of *takwīn* since they are concerned about Allāh's being the subject of created (*ḥawādīth*), they accept that the attribute of *takwīn*, which means creation, is eternal (*qadīm*) and the created is *ḥādīth*.<sup>26</sup>

According to Sadr al-Sharī'a's presentation, the Māturīdī theologians, whom he calls "mashāyikh", accept the attribute of *takwīn* but think that the attribute is eternal, and the act is created. In other words, they say that *takwīn* (i.e., *ījāt*), accepted as creation, is eternal, whereas the act of creation is created. For Sadr al-Sharī'a, this is a problematic point of view. This is

<sup>23</sup> Ubaydullah Ibn Mas'ūd Sadr al-Sharī'a, *Sharḥ Ta'dīl al-'Ulūm* (Süleymaniye Library, Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 188b.

<sup>24</sup> Ubaydullah Ibn Mas'ūd Sadr al-Sharī'a, *al-Tawzīh Sharḥ al-Tanqīh*, ed. Muḥammad Adnan Darwish (Beirut: Dāru al-Arḡam, 1998), 1/382.

<sup>25</sup> Sadr al-Sharī'a, *Ta'dīl* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 185a.

<sup>26</sup> Sadr al-Sharī'a, *Ta'dīl* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 187b.

because the fact that what is called *takwīn*, creation, or invention is *qadīm* is incompatible with the conception of a God who is *fā'il al-mukhtār*. Since God is *fā'il al-mukhtār*, His creation can't be eternal. Or, to put it differently, to say that creation is eternal means accepting that God is the *mūjib* himself because it is impossible to claim that the created thing is not eternal after saying that the attribute of creation is eternal (*qadīm*). In this respect, claiming that God's existent attribute is eternal after accepting that He is *fā'il al-mukhtār* causes a contradiction. Therefore, to say that the attribute of creation is eternal means accepting that God is the creator in eternity by necessity from His essence (*mūjib bi al-dhāt*). This is a position that all theologians should reject. This assumption of *mūjib bi al-dhāt* is directly one of the assumptions of the theory of emanation. Samarqandī also addresses the issue in this way. According to him, the *mūjib* is not the one who performs the act when he wishes and does not perform it when he wishes. This is because the one accepted to be *mūjib* is from whom the action must necessarily emanate. Therefore, it is impossible to say that an agent has a will after it is accepted that he is *mūjib*.<sup>27</sup> Sadr al-Sharī'a also draws attention to this when he says that the eternity of power contradicts the understanding of a God with the will.

So, how should Māturīdī theologians avoid this problem? According to Sadr al-Sharī'a, the point where the Māturīdī theologians fall into error is not being aware of the distinction between the act and the attribute that is the origin of the act. While it is clear that the essential attributes of God are eternal since He is not subject to *hawādīth*, there is ambiguity in the case of the attributes of action. To eliminate this ambiguity, it is necessary to accept that actions have an eternal origin. Returning to the question posed above, what is the problem with this act being created? To clarify this, to say that the act of creation, i.e., *ijāt*, is created entails accepting that this creation exists. The problem here is that it is necessary to investigate precisely what "the existing *ijāt* exists" means. When we ask the same question for the second and subsequent creations, the way to avoid infinite regress would be to say that it was the same one that brought that act into existence. However, this is an impossibility expressed as a *dawr*.

Due to the possibilities of infinite regress and *dawr* that arise when it is assumed to exist, Sadr al-Sharī'a argues that while the attribute of *takwīn*, which is the origin of the act, is eternal, the act (*ijāt*) is neither existent nor non-existent.<sup>28</sup>

The acceptance of the attribute that is the origin of the action, the assertion of the eternity of that attribute, and the assertion that the action is neither existent nor non-existent, are the elimination of errors, the details of which have already been mentioned.<sup>29</sup>

Sadr al-Sharī'a proposes a solution to the issue that the previous Māturīdīs thought to be erroneous with the theory of state (*ḥāl*). For Sadr al-Sharī'a, the use of the theory of state is not limited to this issue. Due to the errors he encountered while questioning the ontological categories of concepts such as *ijāt*, *takwīn*, and *ikhtiyār*, such as infinite regress, *ijāb*, and *dawr*, he proposes the acceptance of things that have external relations but are neither existent nor non-existent.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ashraf al-Ḥusaynī al-Samarqandī, *al-Saḥāif al-Ilāhiyya*, ed. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Sharīf (Kuwait: Mektebat al-Falaḥ, 1985), 2/1118 ff.

<sup>28</sup> Sadr al-Sharī'a, *Ta'dīl* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 188a.

<sup>29</sup> Sadr al-Sharī'a, *Ta'dīl* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 188a.

<sup>30</sup> Sadr al-Sharī'a, *al-Tawzīḥ*, 1/194-198. On the issues that led al-Sadr al-Sharī'a to accept states, see. Şensoy, *Sadrüşşerī'a'nın Kelâmı Ta'dīl Teşebbüsü*, 159-177.

The correct view regarding the relative things is that they are considered mediators [between existence and non-existence]. Because when someone kills someone, it means that he has created (*ijāt*) the act of killing. It is not correct to say 'he did not (*ijāt*)', which would mean 'he did not kill'. Therefore, his *ijāt* of killing is not non-existent in this sense.<sup>31</sup>

Sadr al-Sharī'a points to the problems that arise when concepts such as *ijāt* and *ikhtiyār* are regarded as existing or non-existent. Realising an act means making that act exist externally. For example, when the act of killing is realised, it is not possible to accept this act as non-existent. Because, as it was said at the beginning, the act of killing has taken place. So, what is the problem with saying that it exists? For the external *ijāt*, which is to perform the act of killing, to exist, there must be another *ijāt*, and since the same issue would apply to the second *ijāt*, it would lead to infinite regress. In this case, because of the problems that arise in the case of accepting the non-existent and the existing, it is necessary to accept that the *ijāt* is neither existing nor non-existent.<sup>32</sup>

Sadr al-Sharī'a, who continues his analysis here in the same way on the issue of *takwīn*, considers the attribute of *takwīn*, which is the origin of the act, as *qadīm* and the act (i.e., *ijāt*) as neither existent nor non-existent. Considering the act as non-existent, in terms of the example of the creation of the universe, means that no creation actually took place. On the other hand, accepting the act as existent would require infinite regress, which, as pointed out above, is impossible to defend.

The Māturīdīs present the view that "creation is eternal and its creation is created" in terms of meaning, though not entirely in terms of expression. Sadr al-Sharī'a's main criticism is directed at this sentence. The expression "creation is eternal while the created is created" means "the act of *ijāt* is eternal while the effect of the act is created". God can't create someone at a specific time to be eternal. However, accepting *takwīn*, the origin of the act, as eternal and the act of creation itself as neither existent nor non-existent eliminates the aforementioned problems.

### Conclusion

The debate on *takwīn* stems from the disagreement over the attribute through which God's creation is realised. While the Māturīdīs accept that God's creation is directly realised through the attribute of *takwīn*, the Ash'arites think that it is realised through the attribute of power. The Māturīdīs' belief that the attribute of power is not sufficient for creation stems from their definition of the attribute of power differently from the Ash'arites. While the Ash'arites define the attribute of power as "the power to do something and the one who does it with his power", the Māturīdīs define it as "the power to do something". Therefore, for the Ash'arites, the presence of the attribute of power in the agent means the realisation of the thing. In contrast, the Māturīdīs think that the presence of power is not sufficient, that power is the ability to do the act, and that *takwīn* an attribute other than power, is necessary for the realisation of the thing. The Ash'arites objected that the attribute of *takwīn*, which is eternal according to the Māturīdīs' acceptance, would require the created things to be eternal as well. The Māturīdīs, on the other hand, answered the objection by explaining that the attribute of creation, "*takwīn*, is eternal, and the act is created".

<sup>31</sup> Sadr al-Sharī'a, *Ta'dīl* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 150a, 194b.

<sup>32</sup> Sadr al-Sharī'a, *Ta'dīl* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 150a.

Sadr al-Sharī'a, one of the theologians representing the later period of the Māturīdī school, proposes to deal with the issue through "states" (*aḥwāl*) due to the problems he sees in the aforementioned tradition's explanations of the attribute of *takwīn*. According to him, the actual attributes are also eternal, like the essential attributes. There is no problem in accepting the attributes of action as *qadīm* because they are the origin of action. While the origin of the act is the attribute of *takwīn*, which is *qadīm*, acts are states that are expressed as "neither existent nor non-existent". His criticism of the tradition focuses on the fact that the Māturīdī theologians were not aware of the distinction between acts and the attribute that is the origin of acts. "He thinks that the sentence, 'Creation is eternal and the act is created', does not make sense, and states that God's act in the sense of creation cannot be eternal since He is the *fā'il al-mukhtār*. According to him, while there is no problem among the Māturīdīs about the eternity of essential attributes, there is ambiguity about the eternity of attributes of action. Therefore, he proposes that the actional attribute *takwīn* be accepted as the origin of actions. While the attribute of *takwīn*, which is the origin of the act, is eternal, the act in the sense of *īqā'* (*ījāt*) should be considered a state (neither existent nor non-existent). Therefore, according to Sadr al-Sharī'a, the Māturīdīs who do not accept *ījāt* as a state are as much at fault as the Ash'arites who do not accept that the origin of the act is *qadīm*. Thus, by distinguishing between the origin of the act and the act, he justifies the view of *fā'il al-mukhtār* and shows that contrary to the Ash'arites' claim, creation is realised by an attribute other than the attributes of will and power. Since this study focuses only on the analysis of Sadr al-Sharī'a's criticisms of his tradition, the extent to which his criticisms were taken seriously by later theologians, and especially the extent to which theologians within the Māturīdī tradition applied them, remains to be studied.

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## Religious Attitudes Towards Ethical Problems in the Greenhouse Vegetable Cultivation in Türkiye

Türkiye'de Örtüaltı Sebze Yetiştiriciliğinde Etik Sorunlara Yönelik Dini Tutumlar

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# Religious Attitudes Towards Ethical Problems in the Greenhouse Vegetable Cultivation in Türkiye

## Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to determine the level of influence of religious sensitivity regarding the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation and to investigate the possibility of religious contribution to the solution of ethical problems arising on the ground of greenhouse cultivation. Religious sensitivities of greenhouse vegetable growers, where physical conditions are controlled and industrial production is dominant, were analyzed through main categories such as daily life and religion, pesticides and health, genetics and nature. The study aims to provide a background reading of specific moral issues in the context of religious sensitivity analysis.

The data were collected by means of questionnaires arranged in accordance with the purpose, by interviewing 430 producers growing vegetables in greenhouses within the borders of Antalya province located in the Mediterranean Region of Turkey. An index was created to analyze the religious mentality of greenhouse vegetable growers and to show their religious sensitivity levels in solving ethical problems. The characteristics of the producers, their attitudes and behaviors in the production process are known as the factors that affect the religious sensitivity towards the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation. These factors were tested with a multiple linear regression model whose dependent variable was the religious sensitivity index.

Producers who think that they are praying while doing their work in the greenhouse vegetable production process and quit their job to perform the Friday Prayer have been found to be more religiously sensitive to ethical issues than other producers. Religion was found to be important in the daily lives of the producers and it was stated that religion affected behaviors on the basis of mentality. The level of religious sensitivity was determined to be quite high, that a mistake they made in greenhouse vegetable growing activities would be punished not only in the hereafter but also in this world. This situation shows that in order to overcome the ethical problems in greenhouse vegetable cultivation, the strategies to be followed should be considered within the religious framework. In the linear regression model, it can be said that the producers with high school and undergraduate education levels have higher religious sensitivity to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation compared to the producers with primary education level. Certain experiences of greenhouse vegetable growers may be linked to their general religious attitudes. In this respect, it can be said that the religious sensitivity of the producers, who have been doing greenhouse cultivation for a long time, towards ethical problems is more important than the less experienced ones.

The religious sensitivity index for greenhouse vegetable cultivation is the first in the literature. The religious sensitivity index, whose relationships are analyzed in the form of daily life and religious perception, genetics and nature, greenhouse vegetable production and the hereafter, chemical spraying and health, non-compliance with the spraying time and seeing the return in life, moral consistency and market conditions, seems to have the potential to guide further studies.

**Key Words:** Sociology of Religion, Greenhouse, Vegetable Cultivation, Ethical Problems, Linear Regression Model.

## Türkiye'de Örtüaltı Sebze Yetiştiriciliğinde Etik Sorunlara Yönelik Dini Tutumlar

### Öz

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, sera sebze yetiştiriciliğindeki etik sorunlara ilişkin dinsel duyarlılığın etki düzeyini belirlemek ve sera yetiştiriciliği zemininde ortaya çıkan etik sorunların çözümüne dini katkının imkanını araştırmaktır. Fiziki şartların kontrol edildiği ve endüstriyel üretimin hâkim olduğu sera sebze yetiştiriciliğinde dinsel duyarlılıklar gündelik hayat ve din, ilaçlama ve sağlık, genetik ve fitrat gibi ana kategoriler üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. Bu anlamda çalışma, dinsel duyarlılık çözümlemesi bağlamında spesifik ahlaki sorunların bir arka plan okumasını amaçlamaktadır. Zira toprak ve insan ilişkisi, toprağı kullanma ve çiftçilik mesleğı, tarımsal dönüşümler ve gelişmişlik, makineleşme ve modernlik, teknolojik dönüşüm ve toplumsal farklılaşmalar, etik ve gündelik gerçeklik, tüketim ve sağlık gibi kavramsallaştırmalar, kırsal yaşam ve çiftçilik mesleğinin hem insanlık tarihinde oynadığı role hem de çiftçilik mesleğinin dönüşümüne ve toplumsal farklılaşmayı anlamadaki önemine işaret etmektedir.

Veriler, Türkiye'nin Akdeniz Bölgesi'nde yer alan Antalya ili sınırları içinde serada sebze yetiştiren 430 üretici ile karşılıklı görüşülerek, amaca uygun olarak düzenlenmiş anket formları aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Sera sebze yetiştiricilerinin dinsel zihniyetini analiz etmek ve etik problemlerin çözümünde ilişkin dinsel duyarlılık düzeylerini gösteren endeks oluşturulmuştur. Üreticilerin karakteristikleri, üretim sürecindeki tutum ve davranışları; sera sebze yetiştiriciliği etik sorunlarına karşı gösterilen dinsel duyarlılığı etkileyen faktörler olarak bilinmektedir. Bu faktörler, bağımlı değişkeni dini duyarlılık endeksi olan çoklu doğrusal regresyon modeli ile test edilmiştir.

Sera sebze üretim sürecindeki işlerini yaparken ibadet yaptığını düşünen ve Cuma Namazını kılmak için iş bırakan üreticiler, diğer üreticilere göre etik sorunlara dinsel duyarlılığı daha fazla bulunmuştur. Üreticilerin, gündelik hayatlarında din önemli bulunmuş ve dinin zihniyet temelinde davranışları etkilediği ifade edilmiştir. Sera sebze yetiştiriciliği faaliyetlerinde yaptıkları bir hatanın sadece ahirette değil bu dünyada da karşılığının görüleceğine yönelik dinsel duyarlılık düzeyi oldukça yüksek ölçülmüştür. Bu durum, sera sebze yetiştiriciliğinde etik sorunların üstesinden gelebilmek için izlenecek stratejilerin dinsel çerçevede ele alınması gerektiğini göstermektedir. Doğrusal regresyon modelinde, ilköğretim eğitim düzeyine sahip üreticilere göre lise ve lisans eğitim düzeyi olan üreticilerin sera sebze yetiştiriciliği etik sorunlarına karşı dinsel duyarlılıklarının daha yüksek olduğu söylenebilir. Sera sebze yetiştiriciliği yapan üreticilerin, belirli deneyimleri genel dinsel tutumlarıyla bağlantılı olabilmektedir. Bu açıdan, uzun süredir seracılık yapan üreticilerin daha az deneyimlilere göre etik sorunlara yönelik dinsel duyarlılığının önemli olduğu söylenebilir.

Sera sebze yetiştiriciliği özelinde dinsel duyarlılık endeksinin çıkartılması, literatürde ilk olma özelliğini taşımaktadır. Gündelik hayat ve din algısı, genetik ve fitrat, sera sebze üretimi ve ahiret, kimyasal ilaçlama ve sağlık, ilaçlama zamanına uymama ve hayattayken karşılığını görme, ahlaki tutarlılık ve piyasa şartları şeklinde ilişkileri analiz edilen dinsel duyarlılık endeksi daha sonraki çalışmalara rehberlik etme potansiyeline sahip gözükmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Din Sosyolojisi, Sera, Sebze Yetiştiriciliği, Etik Sorunlar, Doğrusal Regresyon Modeli.

## Introduction

Greenhousing is a production activity where production conditions are controlled and maximum production can be made from a smaller area compared to traditional agriculture. Generally, two applications come to the fore in the context of food safety in greenhouse vegetable growing activities. The first of these is the practice of agricultural spraying; the second is seed breeding. Food safety and ethical issues in greenhouse vegetable cultivation, each stage of which is transformed into industrial production, are constantly on the agenda and discussed in terms of public health. Cardoso and James<sup>1</sup> list the examples they call controversial practices in agricultural production as follows: Chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, planting genetically modified crops. In another study, ethical issues in agriculture are discussed in the following main points: food safety, technological change and agricultural production techniques, pollution and environmental sustainability, corruption of regulators and policymakers.<sup>2</sup> Ethical issues such as the application of biotechnology to food products, genetic modification of plants, and large-scale agricultural technologies need to be analyzed both structurally and sociologically.<sup>3</sup> Human-centered problems, such as the use of harmful drugs, violating safe food rules, and the preferences of political decision-makers, are behavioral and can be evaluated according to generally accepted social principles.

These scopes in greenhouse vegetable cultivation include certain rules and temporal regulations and require scientific and technological solutions to ensure safe food. These scopes in greenhouse vegetable cultivation include certain rules and temporal regulation and require scientific and technological solutions to ensure safe food. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and other relevant public institutions contribute to the sustainability of production processes in line with the relevant legislation. Especially in the production process, if the pesticides licensed and recommended by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry for diseases and pests are applied on time and at the appropriate dose; if the waiting period is observed, the products can be harvested and put on the market without chemical residues. In addition, public institutions and organisations have the authority to carry out residue analyses at regular

<sup>1</sup> Sarika P. Cardoso - Harvey S. James, "Ethical Frameworks and Farmer Participation in Controversial Farming Practices", *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 25/3 (2012), 377-404.

<sup>2</sup> Harvey S. James, "On Finding Solutions to Ethical Problems in Agriculture", *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 16 (2003), 439-457.

<sup>3</sup> Saamer K. Alhamidi et al., "A Study of the Traditional Farming System in the Ghouta, Oasis of Damascus, Syria", *Agriculture and Human Values* 20 (2003), 231-240.

intervals by the relevant ministry at production sites and fruit and vegetable markets and to impose penal sanctions in case of residues above the limit values.<sup>4</sup> At this point, the human element, more specifically, the religious mentality (morality and ethics) of the human being is neglected in terms of safe food or it is thought that it does not affect the production process. On the contrary, religion-based beliefs and rituals are at the forefront of the determining factors in the daily lives of greenhouse vegetable producers.

These provide moral and behavioral patterns of personal and social life.<sup>5</sup> From this perspective, it is very difficult to separate the production culture and religion formed within the framework of greenhouse vegetable cultivation. When the problem of food safety and human relations arise, the following emphasis is made to solve the problem: Less chemical use, suggestions that pollute the air and the environment less. However, the human element becomes more important in the production of safe food and the solution of ethical problems due to the ethical dilemmas of the producers, which are expressed as theory and practice, what should be and what is happening, ideal and reality versus value conflict. Ethical dilemmas arise when we have to choose between two or more negative options. The reasons that lead the farmers to dilemmas are the fact that the producers who produce by constantly borrowing from seed companies and dealers in greenhouse vegetable cultivation cannot be willing to gain fewer products for healthier products and that they aim to compensate their losses by panicking in cases where they cannot obtain efficient products. On the other hand, some problems show the human-centered dimensions of the problem. The main ones that come to mind are as follows: Although a certain time interval is required between (*pesticide*) spraying and harvesting, this period is not followed to gain more profit; the inability to abandon intensive fertilization, which pollutes water and soil resources, in the name of maximum profit; the fact that manufacturers do not put the question of whether to do the profitable thing or do the technically correct thing on their agenda and the inability to produce a policy for the level of religious sensitivity in greenhouse cultivation.<sup>6</sup>

Pesticides in greenhouse vegetable cultivation, seed improvement, the effect of religion in daily life, religious sensitivity towards ethical problems that arise within the framework of seeing the error made in production activities in this world and the hereafter are examined. It aims to determine the religious sensitivity and awareness levels of the producers' attitudes and behaviors related to these practices and production. In other words, this study is aimed both to discover the relationship established with God in a place where climatic conditions can be controlled and to analyze religious sensitivity in safe food production. The concept of religious sensitivity, which includes a cultural and daily life-centered perspective, has been used for attitudes with Islamic references. In greenhouse cultivation, the social constructivist perspective produced by the relationship between culture, religion and agriculture has been accepted. Sub-determining factors such as sectarian or anti-religious, which are the reflection of religious,

<sup>4</sup> Türk Gıda Kodeksi Pestisitlerin Maksimum Kalıntı Limitleri Yönetmeliği (TGKPLY), Resmî Gazete 31611 (Eylül 27, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford University Press: Polity Press, 1994), 95; Ruth A Wallace Alison Wolf, *Çağdaş Sosyoloji Kuramları*, çev. Leyla Elburuz - M. Rami Ayas (Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları 2012), 381-389; Necdet Subaşı, *Gündelik Hayat ve Dinsellik* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2004), 41-44; Fazlı Polat, *Gündelik Yaşam Tercihleri ve Din* (Ankara: Sage Yayınları 2013), 1-6; Mustafa Macit, "Din Kavramıyla İlgili Anlayış ve Tutumlar Üzerine Bir Çözümleme", *EKEV Akademi Dergisi* 4 (2009), 348-349; Mustafa Arslan, "Gündelik Hayatta Din", *Din Sosyolojisi El Kitabı*, ed. Niyazi Akyüz - İhsan Çapcıoğlu (Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları, 2012), 307-324.

<sup>6</sup> Burçin Çokuysal, "Sürdürülebilir Tarım ve Gıda Üretiminde Etik İnkilemleri Anlamanın ve Tartışmanın Önemi", *Türkiye Biyoetik Dergisi* 7/3 (2020), 114-123.

philosophical, or ethical discussions, are excluded from the scope of the subject.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, in the study; the relationships in the form of daily life and religious perception, genetics and nature, greenhouse vegetable production and the hereafter, pesticide spraying and health, non-compliance with the spraying time, and seeing the return in life, moral consistency and market conditions were analyzed. In this respect, the study can also be considered as a background reading of specific moral problems in the context of holistic religious sensitivity. It is expected that this study will contribute to the healthier execution of agricultural activities such as management-production-planning, bringing religious sensitivity to both farmers, and the solution of ethical problems by bringing religious sensitivity to the forefront in greenhouse vegetable cultivation.

## 1. Methods and Materials

### 1.1. Data Collection

The primary data for this study is necessary to analyze the multifaceted effects of the producers' religious sensitivities and related socio-demographic and producer characteristics on the ethical problems encountered in greenhouse vegetable cultivation practices at the level of agricultural enterprises engaged in greenhouse vegetable cultivation. For this reason, primary data were obtained from producers who are directly involved in greenhouse vegetable cultivation at the agricultural enterprise-level and are in a decision-making position in the province of Antalya, which is located in the Mediterranean Region of Turkey, where greenhouse vegetable cultivation is carried out intensively. For these data, a questionnaire was prepared that includes the religious attitudes of the producers about the greenhouse vegetable cultivation practices and the producer characteristics. For the survey, a stratified random sampling method was applied, taking into account the budget constraint, to reach more accurate and reliable data with less expense, assuming that the resources are scarce. In addition, the proportional distribution approach, which is based on distributing the sample proportionally to the strata volumes, was used. Considering the costs in proportional distribution, the sample size was calculated as 430. The data were obtained by completing a questionnaire conducted in the spring of 2019 by face-to-face interviews with greenhouse vegetable growers in the research region. For the reliability of the questionnaire, a pre-test (pilot) study was conducted with 50 producers before applying the questionnaire. The survey is based on a randomly selected sample of producers aged 18 and over.

Experts in the sociology of religion, agricultural economics, and scale development were used in the preparation of the questionnaire. For the survey, firstly, 10 judgment items including the religious attitudes of the producers to the ethical problems in greenhouse vegetable cultivation practices were prepared within the framework of expert opinions. Afterward, a pilot application was made for the questionnaire, and the scale's judgment-item compatibility and internal consistency were examined. In this framework, the number of scale judgment items was reduced to 9 (Table 6). Farmers wishing to comment on each of the ethical issues of greenhouse vegetable cultivation were asked to rank the relative importance of each religious judgment on a five-point Likert scale (Rm). These Likert scale ranks were then converted into weighted scores (Wq). Zero weight is given for judgments for which the producer does not express an opinion. Then, the overall VAI for each farmer is calculated by adding the weighted scores for

<sup>7</sup> Richard Baer, "Agricultural Ethics at State Universities: Why No Input from the Theologians?", *Agriculture and Human Values* 2/4 (1985), 41-46; Michael Eldridge, "Theology and Agricultural Ethics in the State University: A Reply to Richard Baer", *Agriculture and Human Values* 2 (1985), 47-53; Richard Baer, "Theology and Agricultural Ethics at State Universities: A Rejoinder", *Agriculture and Human Values* 6/3 (1989), 99-104.

each religious judgment and then dividing the total religious sensitivity by the number of judgments (Table 1). Thus, an index of religious sensitivity awareness of producers to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation is established (VAI).

Table 1. Religious Sensitivity Index for Greenhouse Vegetable Growing Ethical Problems<sup>8</sup>

Opinion on the jth impact	Disagree	Agree				
Impact value (Vj)	0	1				
The rank of the importance of jth impact on a five-point scale (Rm)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Rank interpretation	None	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Weights (Wq)	0	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.0
Aggregate Sensitivity Index of the ith of farmer (AAIi)	$\sum_{j=1}^n \sum_{m=0}^5 \sum_{q=0}^1 VRW_{jmq}, \quad \forall j; = 1, 2, \dots; m = 0, 1, \dots, 5; q = 0, 0.2, \dots, 1. (1)$					
Overall greenhouse vegetable growing ethico-religious sensitivity index of the ith of farmer (VAIi)	$\frac{AAI_i}{N}, \text{ where } N = 11 (\text{total number of impacts}). (2)$					

**1.2. Data Analysis Methods: The regression model**

A Multivariate linear regression model analysis was adopted to develop a model that identifies the current situation and determines religious sensitivity to the ethical issues of greenhouse vegetable cultivation. Because, when the dependent variable data in the model is continuous and does not contain 0 values, the linear regression model should be preferred.<sup>9</sup> The linear regression model is simply as follows;  $y_i = x'_i\beta + \varepsilon_i \quad (i = 1, 2, \dots, n) \quad (1)$

$y_i$  is a continuous variable that indicates the religious sensitivity of the producers to the ethical issues of greenhouse vegetable cultivation.  $x_i$  is an independent variable vector expressing the behavior, religious attitudes, and characteristics of farmers regarding greenhouse vegetable growing activity.  $\beta$  is the unknown parameter vector, and  $\varepsilon_i$  is an independent, assumed normal distribution term with constant variance  $\sigma$  and a mean of zero.

In the linear regression model, seven explanatory variables that are thought to affect the religious sensitivity to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation were included. Three of these explanatory variables reflect the individual characteristics of the producer. The other two characterize the religious attitudes of the producers, while the remaining two reflect the behaviors towards the greenhouse vegetable cultivation spraying application. The linear regression model is therefore specified as a function of individual, religious, and greenhouse vegetable crop spraying application variables:

$$VAI = \alpha_0 + \beta_1EDU + \beta_2EXP + \beta_3SEX + \beta_4FRID + \beta_5WORS + \beta_6PEST + \beta_7HARV + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

The dependent variable VAI is continuous, indicating the religious sensitivity of producers to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation. Only (EDU) and (EXP) variables included in the model are categorical, other variables are dummy variables.

<sup>8</sup> Sanzidur Rahman, "Environmental Impacts of Modern Agricultural Technology Diffusion in Bangladesh: An Analysis of Farmers' Perceptions And Their Determinants", *Journal of Environmental Management* 68 (2003), 183-191.

<sup>9</sup> Damador N. Gujarati, *Basic Econometrics* (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies 2004), 203.

With the (FRID) and (WORS) dummy variables, it was aimed to determine the effect of the behavioral types of the producers on religious sensitivity while performing greenhouse vegetable cultivation. On the other hand, (PEST) and (HARV) dummy variables were used to determine the effect of producers on religious sensitivity to pesticide usage behavior ethical problems in greenhouse vegetable cultivation. In addition, the dummy variable (SEX) was included in the model to see how much the gender of the agricultural business manager differentiates the religious sensitivity to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation. Variables (EDU), (EXP), (FRID), (WORS), and (HARV) are expected to increase religious sensitivity to greenhouse vegetable growing ethical issues, while (PEST) variable is expected to decrease (Table 2).

Table 2. Definition and a priori Expected Signs of Variables Used in the Model

<b>Dependent Variable</b>		
<b>VAI</b>	Religious sensitivity index for greenhouse vegetable cultivation ethical problems (Mean = 0.776, Std. Dev. = 0.087, Min. = 0.40, Max. = 0.96)	
<b>Explanatory variables</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Expected sign</b>
<b>EDU1*</b>	1 if the producer's education level is primary education, 0 otherwise.	-/+
<b>EDU2</b>	1 if the producer's education level is high school, 0 otherwise.	+
<b>EDU3</b>	1 if the producer's education level is the university, 0 otherwise.	+
<b>EXP1*</b>	1 if the producer has been growing greenhouse vegetables for 1-5 years, 0 otherwise.	+
<b>EXP2</b>	1 if the producer has been growing greenhouse vegetables for 6-10 years, 0 otherwise.	+
<b>EXP3</b>	1 if the producer has been growing greenhouse vegetables for 11-15 years, 0 otherwise.	+
<b>EXP4</b>	1 if the producer has been growing greenhouse vegetables for 16-+ years, 0 otherwise.	+
<b>SEX</b>	1 if the head of the household head is male and zero, otherwise	+/-
<b>FRID</b>	1 if the producer halts the greenhouse vegetable production business for Friday Prayer, 0 otherwise.	+
<b>WORS</b>	1 if the producer thinks that s/he is worshipping while doing greenhouse vegetable production works, 0 otherwise.	+
<b>PEST</b>	1 if the producer uses pesticides that harm human health to prevent loss of income, 0 otherwise.	-
<b>HARV</b>	1 if the producer pays attention to the harvest times while spraying the vegetable plants, 0 otherwise.	+

\* Referent group

## 2. Results and Discussion

### 2.1. Socio-demographic Characteristics

In Table 3, the variables of the participants' gender, age, education, annual income, year of agricultural activity, reciting *Bismaillah* at the beginning of work (in the name of God - throughout the article, God will be used instead of *Allah*) and behavior during the call to prayer in connection with agricultural activity are given. The numerical superiority of men over women in farming is remarkable. In this respect, the numerical scarcity of women can be explained by both the structural characteristics of farming and the tradition of society. According to the gender variable, 30.93% of the participants are women and 69.07% are men. In terms of giving the general characteristics of the farming profession regarding the age variable, the highest rate was 27.91% with the age range of 41-50, while the second rank was 51-60 years with 22.56%. As seen in Table 3, the point that draws attention from the age distribution is that each age group is engaged in the farming profession. In terms of the education variable, 52.56% of our sample

consists of primary school and secondary school graduates, 26.05% of high school graduates, and 21.40% of undergraduate graduates. In this sense, there is a balanced distribution in the education variable as in the age variable. The rate of those who earn 20,000 TL annually as their income from greenhouse cultivation is 30%; the ratio of those with an income of more than 61.000 TL was measured as 23.95%. In terms of reflecting the agricultural tradition, 61.40% of our participants declared that they have been doing this work for more than 16 years in the greenhouse activity year.

In the *Bismillah* (*in the name of God*) variable, which is applied in religious culture as the mention of God's name when starting a task with the intention of prayer, 66.98% of the participants answered always and 23.26% rarely. Starting a task with *Bismillah*, a discourse that emerges from the relationship of religion with culture has been measured as a 99.08% practiced behavior, albeit in different tones. 48.60% of the farmers during the call to prayer, which we addressed to the participants as an important parameter for religion-culture or religion-mentality analysis, answered that *they would take a break from work and listen*. This was followed by 23.49%, I would just say, "Dear God," and continue my work, with 12.33%, I would quit my job and pray, with 8.37%, I would sometimes sit and listen to the call to prayer and continue my work with 6.05%. All these behaviors exemplify the cultural forms of religious life in this society. Although there are differences in the formal practices of religion, religious symbols have a special place in the culture of the country. The most important of these symbols is the *adhan* (the call to prayer), which appears as an identity indicator.

Table 3. Basic Socio-Demographic and Religious Belief Information of Producers

Variable	Frequency (%)	Variable	Frequency (%)
<b>Sex (%)</b>			
Men			69.07
Women			30.93
<b>Age (%)</b>		<b>Experience (%)</b>	
18-30 years old	18.14	1-5 years	12.79
31-40 years old	21.16	6-10 years	13.95
41-50 years old	27.91	11-15 years	11.86
51-60 years old	22.56	> 16 years	61.40
60 years and older	10.23	<b>Say Bismillah (%)</b>	
<b>Educational level (%)</b>		Never	0.93
Elementary	52.56	Rarely	8.84
High school	26.05	Often	23.26
Higher education	21.40	Always	66.98
<b>Household annual income (%)</b>		<b>During the call of adhan (%)</b>	
< 20 000 TRY	30.00	Continue my work	6.05
21 000-40 000 TRY	28.60	Take a break from work and listen	48.60
41 000-60 000 TRY	17.44	Quit my job and pray	12.33
>61 000 TRY	23.95	Say "Dear God," and continue my work	23.49
		Sometimes sit and listen	8.37
		Other	1.16

## 2.2. Religious Sensitivity to Ethical Problems in Vegetable Growing

The scale for identifying ethical problems consists of three sub-categories. The scale analyzes religious sensitivity regarding ethical problems through sub-categories such as the perception of daily life and religion, the religious background of the relationship between pesticides and health, and the relationship between genetics and nature.

Religious sensitivity in the relationship between daily life and religion perception: To measure the background of the participants' religious sensitivity regarding ethical problems, religious sensitivity judgments regarding the relationship between daily life and religion were included. In this sense, religious sensitivity was determined at a rate of 0.873 for the judgment that "religion covers the whole of life, including greenhouse-vegetable production", for the religious background of the religious sensitivity scale for ethical problems and the general religious sensitivity of the sample (Table 4). This perception of religion in daily life seems to be decisive for all cultivation practices such as using pesticides, complying with the (pesticide) spraying time, being honest despite adverse market conditions, believing that the greenhouse vegetable cultivation practices will be rewarded in the world and the hereafter, and whether or not to gain moral sensitivity towards the improvement of seeds and genetic modification.

It is observed that two points come to the fore in the relationship of religions with agricultural activities based on this daily life: The deep relationship established by ancient traditional religions with culture, such as chanting mawlid, praying for rain, praying while planting saplings in maintaining agricultural activity; the use of new technologies, seed breeding, and innovations such as agricultural insurance is encouraged through religious legitimacy.<sup>10</sup> The culture to which the farmers are attached is analyzed from the perspective of daily life and religion, which legitimizes traditional agricultural practices and new technological changes.<sup>11</sup> In the perspective of everyday life, each religion, on the one hand, undertakes some roles in maintaining the established order in society and on the other hand, demands to change this order in the universe of higher consciousness and belief. This shows that religions play essential roles in conditions favorable to both change and stagnation. For this reason, the influence of religion on the social life of humanity, the harmony of groups, and its determinants in the differentiation of attitudes and social structure cannot be ignored.<sup>12</sup> Worships (mawlid, prayer, etc.) are practiced both individually and socially, and the emphasis on exemplary practice is strengthened. Religiously based beliefs and rituals provide security for their daily life experiences and interests. From the point of view of daily life, religions provide the moral and behavioral patterns of personal and social life in the context of the symbol of the created security environment by assuming intense security roles.<sup>13</sup> It can be said that this high level of religious sensitivity, which covers the whole life of religion, including greenhouse vegetable cultivation, refers to the deep relationship expressed as agriculture-culture-tradition, and also creates legitimacy for the technological innovation applied in greenhouse vegetable cultivation.

The highest religious sensitivity towards ethical problems in vegetable growing was found to be 0.895, in the judgment that "people will be taken into account not only for their worships but also for the correctness of their vegetable production tasks" (Table 4). The belief in the hereafter, which expresses life after death in religious literature, organizes daily life with reward and punishment. In the Islamic belief system, the belief in the Hereafter states that the good and evil done in this world will be rewarded even if it is an atom's size (al-Qur'an 99/7-8)<sup>14</sup>. In other

<sup>10</sup> Alhamidi et al., "A Study of the Traditional Farming System in the Ghouta, Oasis of Damascus, Syria", 231–240.

<sup>11</sup> For the Relationship between Culture and Agriculture, See Van Mansvelt - Jan Diek Van Mansvelt, "Basic Concepts of Alternative Agriculture", *The Proceedings of the Sixth International Scientific Conference of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) on Global Perspectives on Agroecology and Sustainable Agricultural Systems*, ed. P. Allen - D. V. Dusen (Santa Cruz: Agroecology Program, University of California, 1988), 1–14.

<sup>12</sup> Joachim Wach, *Sociology of Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 1947), 67.

<sup>13</sup> Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 95; Wallace - Wolf, *Çağdaş Sosyoloji Kuramları*, 381-389; Subaşı, *Gündelik Hayat ve Dinsellik*, 41-44; Polat, *Gündelik Yaşam Tercihleri ve Din*; Arslan, "Gündelik Hayatta Din". 1-6

<sup>14</sup> Sūrat al-Zilzāl 99/7-8.



words, it is believed that not only the basic orders of religion such as prayer and fasting but also the whole of daily life will be taken into account. This high religious sensitivity measurement, which indicates that good or bad practice in greenhouse vegetable cultivation will have a reward in the hereafter, shows the importance of religious emphasis and spiritual sanction in solving ethical problems.

In the world of belief to which the participants belong, religion comes to the forefront with its aspect that produces meanings based on daily life. The judgment "whoever harms a person through an unhealthy product will be recompensed in this world" was measured with religious sensitivity at a rate of 0.864 (Table 4). In other words, the farmers engaged in greenhouse vegetable cultivation accept that the results of agricultural practices will not be seen only in the hereafter and that they will be rewarded during their own lives. It is a common belief in Turkish culture that evil and good deeds can return to the person before they die. On the other hand, the idea that a good or wrong has done will be rewarded not only in the hereafter but also in this world is also used as a means of making sense of positive or negative extraordinary situations. Berger<sup>15</sup> defines religion as legitimacy that brings the moment to a reasonable level by giving a feeling of deep regret and a wrong behavior done in the past, especially when faced with a negative situation. The religious sensitivity that a mistake made in greenhouse cultivation will have consequences both here in the world before death and in the hereafter shows that the farmers have a moral awareness.

Although greenhouse vegetable growing is based on modern practices, there are humans in its center. People interpret the disasters that have happened to them as compensation for their mistakes or take them to a reasonable level through traditional religious discourses. In the literature, this issue is discussed under the subheading of religious legitimation. In this sense, religious sensitivity that a mistake made in greenhouse vegetable growing will be seen in the hereafter or this world can be considered as an important measurement. Since the products in classical agriculture are directly affected by the natural conditions, we can call the religious emphasis and divine meanings in the discourses of the farmers' traditional agricultural discourses. Traditional agricultural discourses such as nasip (grant), destiny, and tawakkul (resignation) function as religious legitimation discourses on the problems encountered. In other words, the concepts of nasip and tawakkul based on the perception of destiny appear as a concept used both for situations that exceed their conditions and when the targeted result is achieved. Concepts such as nasip and tawakkul, which are indicators in terms of religious mentality in the relationship between agriculture, culture, and religion, can also be interpreted with the phenomenological interpretation of Weber and Berger<sup>16</sup> as religion's ability to produce solutions against theodicy problems. Although it is based on controllability, greenhouse cultivation is based on agricultural practices and discourses produced by the relationship between traditional agriculture and culture. In other words, traditional discourses used as a projection of the relationship between agriculture and tradition, farming and culture, agricultural activity, and religion in traditional agricultural activities are also used in greenhouse cultivation. It has been observed that the traditional religious discourse helps the farmers cope

<sup>15</sup> Peter Ludwig Berger - Brigitte Berger, *Sociology: A Biographical Approach* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), 354-360; Peter Ludwig Berger, *Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Open Road Media Press, 2011), 66-67.

<sup>16</sup> Max Weber, *From Max Weber*, Translated, Edited, and with an Introduction By Hans H. Gerth – Charles Wright Mills, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 267-270; Berger - Berger, *Sociology: A Biographical Approach*, 66-67; Berger, *Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, 354-360.

with the problems encountered in the face of natural events such as floods and tornadoes that affect the greenhouse areas, and disasters such as viruses and insects that damage the crops. It can be said that the religious sensitivity that a return for the mistake made will be seen not only in the hereafter but also in this world, has the potential to raise the threshold of enduring problems and to cope with them. The high level of perception of the world and the hereafter measured in greenhouse vegetable cultivation and similar discourses encountered in greenhouses in the field point to the level of influence of religions in daily life and to raise the psychological and sociological threshold in coping with problems. In this sense, analyzes based on the projections of culture and religion in traditional farming<sup>17</sup> and these high religious sensitivities encountered in modern technological farming such as greenhouse vegetable cultivation show the role and influence level of religion in daily reality.

Religious sensitivity in the relationship between pesticides and health: Greenhouse cultivation can be defined as the agricultural area where the maximum product can be obtained in limited areas where nature and geographical conditions are controlled. In this sense, greenhouse vegetable growing is an industrial line of business. Greenhouse vegetable growing is directly related to technological development and creates an intersecting cluster of industrial production and profit relationship. All this technological and controlled production process could not solve the food safety problem. Negative market conditions, technological ignorance, greed for profit, excessive use of pesticides with panic, etc. reasons, further deepen the food safety problem.

The first thing that draws attention under the title of ethical issues is the spraying of pesticides in greenhouse vegetables. The subject of spraying pesticides in greenhouse cultivation opens the door to the pharmaceutical industry on the one hand, and greenhouse activities based on certain procedural practices, on the other. There is an intensive practice of using pesticides in greenhouse vegetable cultivation due to the growth of the synthetic pharmaceutical industry and with this growth rate, the development of sales policies such as payments in installments and in time of harvesting, the (pesticide) spraying experience of neighboring farmers, and the inability to obtain efficient products without (pesticide) spraying. However, there is a very high level of awareness about the harm these pesticides cause to nature and people. There are many reasons for irregular and careless pesticide use. Chief among these is that the farmer, who borrows money from seed and synthetic pharmaceutical companies, cannot be willing to produce less and has a desire to make high profits.<sup>18</sup> In the study, religious sensitivity views on the relationship between pesticides and health were received from the farmers. At the very top of this, a general judgment such as "everything harmful to health is haram" was included and it was measured that the participants had a high level of religious sensitivity of 0.879 (Table 4). In the literature of Islamic law, the word haram, with its different derivatives, is used in eighty-three places in the Holy Qur'an and means an action that is prohibited by religion.<sup>19</sup> Rather than counting the forbidden ones one by one, in general, things that harm health are considered haram, and a rule for any action is derived from it. In the meantime, it should be noted that the expression haram in the judgment directed at farmers is not a legal definition, but a definition for religious sensitivity.

<sup>17</sup> Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America* (Berkeley: Counterpoint Press, 2015), 19.

<sup>18</sup> Çokuysal, "Sürdürülebilir Tarım ve Gıda Üretiminde Etik İnkilemleri Anlamanın ve Tartışmanın Önemi", 114-123.

<sup>19</sup> Muhammad Fu'ad Abdalbaqi, *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li-Alfaz al-Qur'an al-Karim* (Cairo: Dâr al-Kutub, 1364/1945). 179-199.

After this general religious sensitivity in greenhouse vegetable cultivation, two points come to the fore in pesticide spraying and health. The first of these is the harm caused by the person not using a mask during pesticide spraying, while the second is the harm given to the consumers through the wrong pesticide spraying of the products or the excessive use of pesticides. Since greenhouse vegetable growing is an activity done in closed areas, farmers need to protect their health with equipment such as masks during the pesticide spraying. Ultimately, this practice also points to the religious background of caring for the consumers in the pesticides and health equation. A high level of religious sensitivity was measured, with an average of 0.821, to the judgment directed to the participants that "not using a mask while spraying pesticides is to act contrary to the trust given by God"(Table 4). The concept of trust includes religious and cultural references to explore religious sensitivity in the relationship between pesticides and health. Based on the Qur'an, the soul/nafs have been entrusted to men in the tradition of Islamic thought. The five basic principles that must be preserved in the Islamic fiqh tradition are life, mind, religion, generation, and property.<sup>20</sup> The protection of people from harm that may occur against their own lives during pesticide spraying can be considered as the projection of protecting this trust given by God as well as the perception of health. This rate of religious sensitivity also shows the strength of the relationship between wearing a mask and protecting the Divine trust in the safe food production/safe business process.

Greenhouse vegetable growing, in which climatic conditions are controlled, is an industrial line of business that provides the opportunity to produce maximum profit as well as produce safe food. The use of pesticides whose safety has been tested and the inspection of the pesticides used by the authorized committees seem to be decisive in reaching the goal of safe food. However, conditions such as the sales and information policy of the synthetic pharmaceutical industry, the farmer's greed for profit, and the excessive use of pesticides in panic in cases where the efficient product cannot be obtained can cause irregularities. Religious sensitivities may come into play at the point of overcoming these dilemmas experienced by farmers. The concern and awareness that the produced food will reach a consumer is the intersection point of the healthy food and pesticide relationship in the greenhouse production process. In this sense, it has been observed that greenhouse vegetable producers have a high religious sensitivity of 0.883 to the judgment that "religion also recommends that people's health come to mind when spraying pesticides in greenhouse vegetable products" (Table 4). Considering the health of both the producer and the consumer during spraying pesticides and the discovery of religious sensitivity against the wrong to be done at this point can also be considered as a preventive element.

A decisive application in the relationship between safe food and pesticide spraying is the harmony of spraying pesticides and harvesting timing. The judgment of "not complying with the timing in pesticide spraying and collecting greenhouse vegetable products is against religion", which was directed to the participants, resulting in religious sensitivity at a rate of 0.770, which is very close to high. Pesticide spraying and observing the harvest time have a direct economic relationship (Table 4). Today, organic pesticides developed by both the products and the balance of nature are recommended, and if a farmer goes out of standard, s/he is aware that s/he may suffer economically because s/he does not comply with market conditions or export

<sup>20</sup> Abu Isḥaq Shatibi, *al-Muwafaqat* (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risala, 2017), 2/337.

rules. On the other hand, the importance of religious sensitivity towards greenhouse vegetable growing with a religious sensitivity was also measured by the study.

Entrusting human bodies or causing harm by not following the timing; again, bringing bodies to mind during pesticide spraying is associated not only with religious texts but also with agricultural activities, and with soil and body in ancient culture. Berry<sup>21</sup> analyzed the relationship of respect for the body, responsibility between the body and the world with the conceptual set of agriculture-land-culture and religion: "Our bodies are a part of creation and involve us in all mystery matters. Our bodies are also agricultural. Because no matter how urban our lives are, our bodies live by farming; come from the land and return to it, and therefore we live in agriculture as we live in meat. While we live, our bodies are the moving particles of the earth, inextricably linked to both."<sup>22</sup> This relationship of man with the land on an ontological basis is present in all ancient religions. In this sense, the relationship of the human body with the environment directly affects attitudes and behaviors in farming.

Table 4. Scale Item Religious Sensitivities

		mean	Std. Dev.	min	max
1	<b>Religion also recommends that people's health come to mind when spraying greenhouse vegetable products.</b>	0.883	0.158	0.2	1
2	<b>Religion encompasses all of life, including greenhouse vegetable production.</b>	0.873	0.169	0.2	1
3	<b>Everything that harms health is haram.</b>	0.879	0.155	0.2	1
4	<b>It is against religion not to comply with the timing in spraying and collecting greenhouse vegetable products.</b>	0.770	0.219	0.4	1
5	<b>Whoever harms a person through an unhealthy product will be recompensed in this world.</b>	0.864	0.164	0.4	1
6	<b>Changing the genetics of seeds spoils nature created by God.</b>	0.614	0.257	0.2	1
7	<b>In the Hereafter, a person will be taken into account not only for his/her worships but also for the correctness of his vegetable production tasks.</b>	0.895	0.151	0.2	1
8	<b>Negative market conditions are at the root of the moral problems of producers in greenhouse vegetable production today.</b>	0.803	0.225	0.2	1
9	<b>Not using a mask while spraying products is to act against God's trust.</b>	0.821	0.211	0.2	1

*Religious sensitivity in the relationship between genetics and nature:* Another issue where ethical debates are most intense in greenhouse vegetable cultivation is the genetic modification of seeds. Mankind has sought ways to improve the quality and standards of life and has succeeded in realizing some of them with new advances in biotechnological fields.<sup>23</sup> With the methods developed in the early 1970s, in the genetic structure of living things; changes were made that could not be achieved with traditional healing technology and natural reproduction processes.<sup>24</sup> Using improved seed is important for food security as well as an important practice for high yields. Therefore, the judgment that we directed to greenhouse vegetable producers that

<sup>21</sup> Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 7.

<sup>23</sup> Erkan Arı- Veyse Yılmaz, "Genetiği Değiştirilmiş Ürünlere Yönelik Tutum ve Davranışların Araştırılması: Eskişehir ve Bursa Örneği", *Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi* 22/2 (2020), 381-402; Abdullah Tahir Bayraç - Gülsüm Kalemtaş, *Genetiği Değiştirilmiş Organizmalar* (Ankara: ODTÜ Bilim ve Toplum Kitapları, 2011), 5-7.

<sup>24</sup> Ercan Kaya et al., "Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Genetiği Değiştirilmiş Gıda Ürünlerine Bakışı", *Iğdır Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi* 2/3 (2012), 55-60.

"*changing the genetics of seeds spoils the nature created by God*" was accepted at a moderate level of 0.614, and its religious sensitivity was not measured as high as other judgments (Table 4). In other words, although the farmers accept that the genetic modification of seeds spoils the nature created by God, they hold the idea that this is necessary for production. On the other hand, there are ethical concerns among greenhouse vegetable growers regarding certain practices such as genetically modified organisms (GMOs). There is an ongoing debate as to whether it is necessary to use GMOs to improve quality of life or to avoid any associated risks. Such questions are explained by the concepts of *maslahat* (benefit) and *mafsadat* (harm) in Islam. There is no specific GMO that has been declared illegal by Muslim scholars in this regard. However, in general, they state that any GMO containing an illegal substance is prohibited in Islam. Such a statement is understandable as Islam gives the highest priority to preserving sharia (Islamic law) which enjoins *halal* and *haram* in human life. Protecting human health and the environment has also been given priority, so any GMO that could harm either is also considered illegal.<sup>25</sup> It can be said that the commercial concerns of the farmers in greenhouse vegetable marketing precede the attitudes and behaviors of religion. Since the advantage of genetically modified products in terms of productivity increases their social life quality, it causes a change in their religious attitudes.

The conclusion that we tried to measure the farmers' tendency to ethical dilemmas and practices resulted in a high level of religious sensitivity at a rate of 0.803, to the judgment that "*the moral problems of producers in greenhouse vegetable production are based on negative market conditions*" (Table 4). Negative market conditions, such as the instability of input costs in greenhouse vegetable growing and the continuity of low prices in marketing the products, are among the reasons that lead farmers to ethical problems. Again, it is observed that many market conditions such as production by borrowing in farming, sales strategies of pharmaceutical companies, triggering opportunism in some price instability times, the quality of the products grown, expressing that the periodical processes are followed even though they are not followed during the cultivation, and the greed for excessive profits affect the ethical dimension of agricultural activities. However, farmers, especially greenhouse vegetable growers, have to produce to continue their lives despite the adverse market conditions. It should not be forgotten that, in addition to the effects of the reasons we have just mentioned, the fact that the farmers have the opportunity to reflect some of their negative behaviors on a psychological basis also contributed to this rate.

There are several warnings of the Prophet and the prohibitive provisions of the Islamic Fiqh tradition to which the farmers belong about matters such as black market, which disrupts the market,<sup>26</sup> inflaming the market, buying the product before it enters the market, the sale of the goods of the producer by intermediaries, sale upon sale, monopolization and destructive price practice, the intervention of the state to disrupt the market balances and preventing those who want to bring their product to the market.<sup>27</sup> When he was asked to write a book about asceticism, Muhammad al-Shaybani's reply, "Isn't that enough we wrote the book of shopping

<sup>25</sup> Noor Munirah Isa - Saadan Man, "First Things First: Application of Islamic Principles of Priority in the Ethical Assessment of Genetically Modified Foods", *Journal Agricultural Environmental Ethics*, 27(2014), 857-70.

<sup>26</sup> Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal*, ed. Ahmad Muhammad Shakir (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith, 1416/1995), 271, 353, 362.

<sup>27</sup> Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal*, 5/14, 271, 353, 362; Abu Abdillah Muhammad b. Isma'i'l b. Ibrahim al-Ju'fi Al Bukhari, 1422. *Sahih al-Bukhari* 1st ed., ed. Muhammad Zuhayr b. Nasir, Dar Takwin al-Najat, Century; Meir Jacob Kister, "The Prophet's Market", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 8/3 (1965), 272-276; M. Fatih Turan, "Islam Hukuku Açısından Yıkıcı Fiyat Uygulaması", *Atatürk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 43 (2015), 78-103.

(buyu')?" is rather meaningful.<sup>28</sup> In the discussions of free market and ethics, the social aspect of a purely market economy and a market economy without a policy regulated by the state is interpreted as a disadvantage that cannot be justified ethically.<sup>29</sup> In this sense, in the tradition of Islamic thought, economics evokes balanced behavior and has been seen as the most obvious determinant of being pious. This judgment has played an important role in linking the market with religion in the sense of creating awareness, and in discovering space for the participants to reflect on their problems outside of themselves.

### 2.3. Linear Regression Model Analysis

Factors presumed to affect religious sensitivity to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation were divided into two categories: Characteristics and attitudes of producers. The characteristics of the producers were determined as education, experience and gender. The following behaviors in greenhouse vegetable cultivation are thought to affect the religious sensitivity of producers to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation: The use of pesticides that harm human health and their sensitivity to harvest time, a short break in greenhouse vegetable production due to Friday prayer, and believing that one is praying while doing greenhouse vegetable production.

Various studies have shown that better educated people are more sensitive to ethical issues posed by new technologies in agriculture because they have a broader horizon. In this study, the education variable was divided into three categories according to the education classification in Turkey. The first category (primary education) includes only participants with compulsory basic education (comprehensive school) or less. The second category includes respondents with a vocational or high school diploma. The third category (bachelor's degree) includes participants with a diploma or bachelor's degree from universities. In the linear regression model, primary education level was taken as the reference category. According to primary education level, the coefficient of the explanatory variables of high school (EDU2) and undergraduate (EDU3) education level is positive and statistically significant at 1% significance level (Table 5). Training enhances producers' ability to access, process, and use information from a variety of sources. The differences in the education level of the producers also differentiated their religious sensitivities to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation. It can be said that the producers with high school and undergraduate education levels have higher religious sensitivity to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation compared to the producers with primary education levels.

The specific experience of producers with greenhouse vegetable cultivation may be linked to their general religious attitudes. The producer's experience is measured by the number of years assumed to be positively associated with religious sensitivity to greenhouse vegetable growing ethical issues. The number of greenhouse years was included in the model as a categorical independent variable (EXP). In this study, the experience variable was divided into four categories (Appendix). In the linear regression model, the reference category is 1-5 years. According to the reference year, the coefficient of the experience variable of 16 years or more is positive and statistically significant at the 1% significance level (Table 5). Greenhouse vegetable growers are less likely to switch from traditional practices than those who have been

<sup>28</sup> Ahmed Duran, "İmam Muhammed es-Şeybanî'nin Hayatı ve Hanefî Fıkhnın Tedvinindeki Yeri", *İslam Hukuku Araştırmaları Dergisi* 9 (2007), 171-198.

<sup>29</sup> Gerhard Kruip, "Sosyal Piyasa Ekonomisinin Ana Hatları ve Bunların Hıristiyan Sosyal Ahlakıyla Bağlantısı", *Sosyal Piyasa Ekonomisi ve İslam'daki Algılanışı* (Ankara: Ofset Fotomat, 2011), 9-34.

growing greenhouses for a short time. In this respect, it can be said that the producers who have been working in greenhouses for a long time have a religious sensitivity to ethical problems compared to the less experienced ones.

Previous research has identified significant gender differences in people's religious attitudes. Although the size of the gender gap varies widely, on average, women display higher levels of religious behavior and attitudes than men in most areas of greenhouse vegetable growing ethical issues. As a matter of fact, according to the linear regression model, it was determined that men were not religiously sensitive to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetables compared to women. In the linear regression model, the coefficient of the SEX dummy variable is negative and statistically significant at the 1% significance level (Table 5). Women have certain experiences in their social positions that have fostered concerns about the ethical issues of greenhouse vegetable cultivation. Women still tend to be primary family builders, making them more likely to take on decision-making roles in greenhouse vegetable growing outside of their immediate family. Moreover, women still have a central role in obtaining and cooking food in the household, which may reinforce their interest in the source of food.

The obligation of Friday Prayer requires postponing the greenhouse vegetable production tasks for a short time (one hour) in terms of general social life. However, the religious behavior of the producers may differ depending on their level of belief. Therefore, the FRID dummy variable was included in the model to determine the effect of the religious behavior observed in Friday Prayer on religious sensitivity to greenhouse vegetable ethical problems. The coefficient of the FRID explanatory variable is positive and statistically significant at the 1% significance level (Table 5). Producers who break their job due to Friday Prayer while doing greenhouse vegetable growing activities are more religiously sensitive to ethical problems than other producers. In this respect, the strategies to be followed to overcome the ethical problems in greenhouse vegetable cultivation should be considered within the religious framework.

Agriculture is seen as worship in social life, from past to present, because it is the profession of a prophet. WORS dummy variable was included in the model to determine the reflections of this belief on greenhouse vegetable growing. According to the linear regression model estimation, the coefficient of the WORS explanatory variable was found to be positive and statistically significant at the 1% significance level (Table 5). Producers who think that they are praying while doing greenhouse vegetable production tasks are more religiously sensitive to ethical problems than others.

In the greenhouse vegetable production process, the initial costs in terms of soil preparation and input use are quite high. To prevent the loss of income as a result of the deterioration of fruit quality by the pests of the vegetables planted in the greenhouse, although it is prohibited, it may be that the producers have to use pesticides that harm human health. Therefore, behavioral patterns that create ethical problems in terms of human health are realized in greenhouse vegetable cultivation. With the model estimation, the coefficient of the PEST explanatory variable was found to be negative and statistically significant at the 1% significance level (Table 5). Producers, who have to use pesticides that harm human health to prevent income loss in greenhouse vegetable cultivation, do not have religious sensitivity to ethical problems compared to other producers.

In terms of consumers, vegetables produced using inputs that do not harm the environment and human health are considered safe food products. Since the chemical control against diseases

and pests in greenhouse vegetable cultivation, there may be a problem of pesticide residues at an unsuitable level for human health; considering the harvesting frequency of the products, pesticides should be used with the appropriate "last spraying - harvest" period. In this respect, the HARV dummy variable was included in the model as an explanatory variable to determine the adaptation of the producers to the pesticide control harvest time. The coefficient of the HARV explanatory variable is positive and statistically significant at the 1% significance level (Table 5). It has been determined that the producers, who pay attention to the harvest times when spraying greenhouse vegetables, are more religiously sensitive to ethical problems than other producers. Recently, it was observed that the sensitivity of the producers has increased due to the inspections carried out by agricultural experts by taking fruit samples during the greenhouse vegetable harvesting periods.

Multicollinearity is a data problem that complicates model prediction. In a model with more than one independent variable, some of the variables may be related as a result of larger variances. Thus, it causes multicollinearity. The least Squares Method assumptions become invalid when there are multiple linear connections. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is used to test the multicollinearity problem. In the regression model, since the mean VIF value and the VIF values of the independent variables are less than 5, there is no multicollinearity problem.<sup>30</sup>

Since the cross-sectional data is prone to varying variance, the presence of heteroscedastic error terms in the regression model was tested. For this, the general variable variance test proposed by Breusch-Pagan was applied. The result was F-statistic=31.12 ( $p=0.00$ );  $H_0$  means that the constant variance hypothesis should be rejected. In other words, there is a problem of varying variance in the model. Therefore, Robust prediction results are given. The coefficient of determination  $R^2=0.45$  shows that the data with the specific model reveal relatively good goodness of fit. At the same time, this value shows that 45% of the price changes are explained by the variables included in the linear regression model.

Table 5. Regression Model for Religious Sensitivity Index to Greenhouse Vegetable Farming Ethical Problems

Explanatory variables	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	T	p>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]	
<b>Constant</b>	0.643	0.019	34.73	0.000***	0.607	0.680	
<b>EDUCATION</b>							
<b>EDU2</b>	0.035	0.008	4.42	0.000***	0.019	0.051	
<b>EDU3</b>	0.101	0.008	12.02	0.000***	0.084	0.117	
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>							
<b>EXP2</b>	0.020	0.013	1.57	0.118	-0.005	0.045	
<b>EXP3</b>	0.015	0.013	1.15	0.250	-0.010	0.039	
<b>EXP4</b>	0.046	0.010	4.65	0.000***	0.028	0.065	
<b>SEX</b>	-0.026	0.008	-3.45	0.001***	-0.041	-0.011	
<b>FRID</b>	0.046	0.009	4.90	0.000***	0.030	0.062	
<b>WORS</b>	0.018	0.009	1.94	0.052**	0.000	0.036	
<b>PEST</b>	-0.023	0.008	-2.84	0.005***	-0.039	-0.007	
<b>HARV</b>	0.051	0.019	3.98	0.000***	0.026	0.076	
<b>Diagnostics Tests</b>							
<b>VIF</b>						1.40	
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>						0.45	
<b>F (10,419)</b>						31.12	
<b>Prob &gt; F</b>						0.000	

<sup>30</sup> A. H. Studenmund, *Using Econometrics: A Practical Guide* (New York: Pearson Publishers, 2011), 56-58.



<b>Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test</b>	chi2	12.41	Prob> chi2	0.000
***, ** and * represent level of significance at 1%, 5% and 10%, respectively.				
<b>Number of observations: 430</b>				

### Conclusion

In this study, religious sensitivity to ethical problems in greenhouse vegetable cultivation is analyzed through sub-categories such as the perception of daily life and religion, the religious infrastructure of the relationship between pesticide usage and health, and the relationship between genetics and nature. In this study, in which we focused on the human factor, unlike the studies on the ethical problem of greenhouse vegetable cultivation, the participants stated that their understanding of religion covers their whole life and they accept religious sanction. Based on the fact that religious sensitivity covers daily life, it is believed that mistakes made in greenhouse vegetable production will be recompensed both in this world and in the hereafter. The religious behavior of the producers may differ with the level of belief. Producers who think that they are praying while doing greenhouse vegetable production tasks and halt the job because of Friday Prayer are more religiously sensitive to ethical issues than other producers. This situation shows that the strategies to be followed to overcome the ethical problems in greenhouse vegetable cultivation should be considered within the religious framework.

The characteristics of the producers, their attitudes, and behaviors in the production process are known as the factors that affect the religious sensitivity towards the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation. These factors were tested with a multiple linear regression model. In the linear regression model, it can be said that the producers with high school and undergraduate education levels have higher religious sensitivity to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation compared to the producers with primary education levels. The differences in the education levels of the producers also differentiated their religious sensitivities to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable cultivation. On the other hand, the gender variable was included in the model to determine the importance of gender differences in terms of religious behavior and attitude. According to the gender variable, it was determined that men were not religiously sensitive to the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetables compared to women. Certain experiences of greenhouse vegetable growers may be linked to their general religious attitudes. In this respect, it can be said that the producers who have been working in greenhouses for a long time have a religious sensitivity to ethical problems compared to the less experienced ones.

It can be stated that the most problematic area in greenhouse vegetable production is pesticide usage. In addition to harming their health during spraying, it is known that consumers may be harmed due to excessive and uncontrolled use of pesticides. Producers, who have to use pesticides that harm human health to prevent loss of income, do not have religious sensitivity to ethical problems compared to other producers. It has been determined that the producers who spray according to the harvest time, which is important for the consumption of greenhouse vegetables, are more religiously sensitive to ethical problems than other producers. While the participants express the lack of attention to their health with religious sensitivity as not taking care of the trust given by God, they also think that the harm they have caused to others will be accounted for in the hereafter.

Another issue on which the ethical problems of greenhouse vegetable growing are focused is that the genetic modification of seeds spoils nature created by God. It was observed that there was an awareness of seed breeding and genetic modification of the seed among the

participants, and there was moderate religious sensitivity that genetic modification of the seed spoils the nature created by God. The importance of the human factor in solving ethical problems in greenhouse vegetable growing has been determined and it has been observed that strengthening religious sensitivity will contribute to the solution of these problems. It has been realized that religion produces a mentality for the whole of life, including agriculture, and this mentality will play an important role in dealing with ethical problems.

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## Religiosity, Dogmatism, Education and COVID-19 Awareness as Predictors of COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy: A Quantitative Study on Turkish Muslims

Covid-19 Aşı Reddinin Yordayıcıları Olarak Dindarlık, Dogmatizm, Eğitim Düzeyi ve Covid-19 Farkındalığı:  
Türk Müslümanlar Üzerine Nicel Bir Araştırma

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## **Religiosity, Dogmatism, Education and COVID-19 Awareness as Predictors of COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy: A Quantitative Study on Turkish Muslims**

### **Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic, which started in 2019, affected social, economic and political structures all over the world and pushed states to take quick and dramatic measures. Vaccine development studies, which are seen as the most effective way of combating such pandemics, started rapidly and mass vaccinations were started in a short time. However, the opposition to vaccines, which has been going on since the first days of the use of vaccines in the world, has come to the fore again against COVID-19 vaccine programs. Anti-vaccine rhetoric has slowed the pace of the fight against the pandemic. Field studies have shown that more than 50% of people experience hesitations about vaccination. The World Health Organization defines vaccine refusal or vaccine hesitancy as a global threat. Identifying the reasons for vaccine hesitancy is very important in terms of maintaining general public health. For this reason, social scientists are working on the causes of vaccine hesitancy. In the literature, religiosity and low level of education are shown among the reasons for vaccine hesitancy. However, when studies are examined, there are clues that a certain type of religiosity rather than religiosity is related to anti-vaccination. The main problem of this research is whether religiosity and education level predict COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. In this study, the relationship between religiosity, dogmatic religiosity, education level, socio-economic level and COVID-19 awareness with vaccine hesitancy and their predictive levels are examined. The research is in correlational model and cross-sectional design. The relationship of five variables (religiosity, dogmatic religiosity, education level, socio-economic level, COVID-19 awareness) with vaccine hesitancy and their predictive levels were examined. The sample of the research consists of Muslim Turks over the age of 18. Participants were recruited using the convenience sampling method. The prepared online survey form was shared on social media platforms and the participants were reached. 322 Muslims between the ages of 18-70 (mean 30, SD=10.62) participated in the study. 65% of the participants are women and 55% are single. Ok Religious Attitude Scale, Dogmatic Religiosity Scale, Personal Information Form, COVID-19 Awareness Scale and Vaccine Hesitancy Scale were used as measures. Research findings showed that one-fifth of the participants did not receive the COVID-19 vaccine, half of them had 2 doses and the rest had different doses. Among the unvaccinated, the proportion of women and married people is higher. A negative correlation was found between age and vaccine hesitancy. While no relation could be found between education level and vaccination hesitancy, socio-economic level and vaccination hesitancy showed a negative correlation. When looking at other variables, it was found that there was no relationship between religiosity and vaccine hesitancy, but a negative relationship between COVID-19 awareness and vaccine hesitancy, and a positive relationship between religious dogmatism and vaccine hesitancy. Multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive levels. In the multiple regression analysis, dogmatic religiosity, COVID-19 awareness and socio-economic level were added as a predictor, and vaccine hesitancy as an output variable. In the first step, only religious dogmatism was included in the model as a predictor. In step 3, three predictors were entered simultaneously. The findings showed that dogmatic religiosity, socio-economic status, and awareness of COVID-19 were significant predictors of vaccine hesitancy. In the first step, dogmatic religiosity alone accounts for about 3% of the variance in vaccine hesitancy. In the second step, dogmatic religiosity and socio-economic status together accounted for about 5% of the variance in vaccine hesitancy. And finally, in the third step, dogmatic religiosity, socio-economic level and awareness of COVID-19 together account for 7% of the variance in vaccine hesitancy. Considering the beta coefficients, it was seen that there was a positive correlation between dogmatic religiosity and vaccine hesitancy, and a negative correlation was found between vaccine hesitancy and socio-economic level and COVID-19 awareness. Considering the standardized regression coefficients, it is seen that the most important variable predicting vaccine hesitancy is dogmatic religiosity.

**Keywords:** Psychology of Religion, Turkish, Muslim, COVID-19, Vaccine, Religiosity, Dogmatism.

### **Covid-19 Aşı Reddinin Yordayıcıları Olarak Dindarlık, Dogmatizm, Eğitim Düzeyi ve Covid-19 Farkındalığı: Türk Müslümanlar Üzerine Nicel Bir Araştırma**

#### **Öz**

2019 yılında başlayan Covid-19 pandemisi, tüm dünyada sosyal, ekonomik ve politik yapıları etkilemiş ve devletleri hızlı ve dramatik tedbirler almaya itmiştir. Bu tür pandemilerin en etkili mücadele yolu olarak görülen aşı geliştirme çalışmalarına hızla başlanmış ve kısa sürede kitlesel aşılamalara geçilmiştir. Ancak dünyada aşılardan kullanılmaya başlandığı ilk günlerden beri süregelen aşı karşıtlığı, Covid-19 aşı programlarına karşı tekrar gün yüzüne çıkmıştır. Aşı karşıtı söylemler pandemi ile mücadelenin hızını azaltmıştır. Saha araştırmaları insanların %50'den fazlasının aşı tereddüdü yaşadığını göstermiştir. Dünya Sağlık Örgütü, aşı reddini veya aşı tereddüdünü küresel bir tehdit olarak tanımlamaktadır. Aşı tereddüdünün sebeplerini tespit etmek genel halk sağlığını muhafaza etmek açısından oldukça önemlidir. Bu nedenle sosyal bilimciler aşı tereddüdünün nedenleri üzerine çalışmalar yapmaktadır. Literatürde aşı tereddüdünün nedenleri arasında dindarlık ve eğitim seviyesinin düşük olması gösterilmektedir. Ancak çalışmalar incelendiğinde dindarlıktan ziyade belli bir tip dindarlığın aşı karşıtlığıyla ilişkili olduğuna dair ipuçları mevcuttur. Bu araştırmanın temel problemi, dindarlığın ve eğitim

düzeinin Covid-19 aşısı tereddüdünü yordayıp yordamadığıdır. Bu çalışmada dindarlık, dogmatik dindarlık, eğitim düzeyi, sosyo-ekonomik düzey ve Covid-19 farkındalığının, aşısı tereddüdü ile ilişkisi ve onu yordama düzeyleri ele alınmıştır. Araştırma ilişkisel tarama modelinde ve kesitsel desenlidir. Beş değişkenin (dindarlık, dogmatik dindarlık, eğitim düzeyi, sosyo-ekonomik düzey, Covid-19 farkındalığı) aşısı tereddüdüyle ilişkisi ve onu yordama düzeyleri ele incelenmiştir. Araştırma örneklemini 18 yaş üstü Müslüman Türkler oluşturmaktadır. Kolay örnekleme yöntemi ile katılımcılar temin edilmiştir. Hazırlanan çevrimiçi anket formu sosyal medya platformlarında paylaşarak katılımcılara ulaştırılmıştır. Araştırmaya, 18-70 yaş aralığında (ort. 30, SD=10,62) 322 Müslüman katılmıştır. Katılımcıların %65'i kadın ve %55'i bekar'dır. Veri toplama aracı olarak Ok Dini Tutum Ölçeği, Dogmatik Dindarlık Ölçeği, Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Covid-19 Farkındalık Ölçeği ve Aşısı Tereddüdü Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma bulguları, katılımcıların beşte birinin Covid-19 aşısı yaptırmadığını, yarısının ise 2 doz, kalanlarının ise farklı dozlarda aşısı yaptırdığını göstermiştir. Aşısı yaptırmayanlar arasında kadınların ve evlilerin oranı daha yüksektir. Yaş ile aşısı tereddüdü arasında negatif bir korelasyon tespit edilmiştir. Eğitim düzeyi ile aşısı tereddüdü arasında bir ilişki tespit edilememişken, sosyo-ekonomik düzey ile aşısı tereddüdü negatif korelasyon göstermiştir. Diğer değişkenlere bakıldığında, dindarlık ile aşısı tereddüdü arasında bir ilişki olmadığı, ancak Covid-19 farkındalığı ile aşısı tereddüdü arasında negatif ( $r = -.147$   $p < .05$ ), dini dogmatizm ile aşısı tereddüdü arasında pozitif ilişki olduğu bulunmuştur ( $r = .160$   $p < .05$ ). Yordama düzeylerini tespit etmek üzere, çoklu regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Çoklu regresyon analizine yordayıcı olarak dogmatik dindarlık, Covid-19 farkındalığı ve sosyo-ekonomik düzey, çıktı değişken olarak da aşısı tereddüdü katılmıştır. Birinci adımda yordayıcı olarak sadece dinsel dogmatizm modele girilmiştir. 3. adımda, üç yordayıcı aynı anda girilmiştir. Bulgular dogmatik dindarlığın, sosyo-ekonomik düzeyin ve Covid-19 farkındalığının aşısı tereddüdünün anlamlı yordayıcıları olduğunu göstermiştir. Birinci adımda dogmatik dindarlık tek başına aşısı tereddüdündeki varyansın yaklaşık %3'ünü oluşturmaktadır. İkinci adımda, dogmatik dindarlık ve sosyo-ekonomik düzey birlikte aşısı tereddüdündeki varyansın yaklaşık %5'ini oluşturmaktadır. Ve son olarak, üçüncü adımda dogmatik dindarlık, sosyo-ekonomik düzey ve covid-19 farkındalığı birlikte aşısı tereddüdündeki varyansın %7'sini oluşturmaktadır. Beta katsayıları dikkate alındığında dogmatik dindarlık ile aşısı tereddüdü arasında pozitif korelasyon olduğu görülmüş, aşısı tereddüdü ile sosyo-ekonomik düzey ve Covid-19 farkındalığı arasında negatif korelasyon bulunmuştur. Standardize regresyon katsayılarına bakıldığında aşısı tereddüdünü yordayan en önemli değişkenin dogmatik dindarlık olduğu görülmektedir.

**Ahahtar Kelimeler:** Din Psikolojisi, Türk, Müslüman, COVID-19, Aşısı, Dindarlık, Dogmatizm.

## Introduction

Throughout history, human beings have struggled with various diseases, developed various treatment methods to regain their health and survive, and have brought them together with technology, especially with the development of modern medicine. With the first vaccine developed against smallpox in the 18th century (Spier, 2001, 78), vaccines were accepted as one of the most influential methods to preserve the health of the society, modern people started to use vaccines not only in the treatment of the disease, but also in the prevention of the disease, and in this way, vaccines became an important branch of preventive health services (Demir, 2021, 276).

It is widely accepted by scientists that vaccines are the most influential protection method in combating infectious diseases. As a matter of fact, thanks to vaccines, many health-related problems disappear as a result of vaccination, as stated in the reports published at various times by World Health Organization. At least in developed countries, a number of infectious diseases have either been completely eradicated or the incidence of the disease has decreased significantly over time, thanks to vaccines. For example, smallpox was eradicated from the world; some diseases such as polio, rubella and diphtheria have disappeared in certain geographies such as the European continent through vaccination. Therefore, vaccination is considered as one of the most significant developments in the field of public health from past to present. If we take into account that 2.5 million children are saved from death every year thanks to vaccination programs, it will be understood that vaccines are important technologies that control many diseases in the world (Badur, 2011; Dubé, 2017; Tekinel, 2020). However, despite the claim that it is so beneficial and necessary for public health, vaccine hesitancy has emerged due to various reasons such as sometimes personal concerns and sometimes distrust of political authority. Today, vaccine hesitancy is on a substantial level and has reached a level

that can affect all societies. The fact that vaccine hesitancy has become so widespread indicates that it may have negative reflections on the whole society as a global threat by WHO (Demir, 2021). As a matter of fact, individual vaccine hesitancy does not only affect the person who does not want to be vaccinated, but can affect the whole society (Kibongani Volet et al., 2022). Arbak (2022) names this situation as “abuse of autonomy” and states that individual medical preferences sometimes delay treatments. A similar opposition was observed for vaccines developed against diseases such as polio and rubella, which later became widespread. Then, there were some sanctions of the states against vaccine refusal, and this situation magnified the reaction of those who are against the vaccines. The reasons for this opposition have begun to be investigated, as vaccine hesitancy has now spread to wider masses (Demir, 2021, 279).

The causes for vaccine hesitancy have manifested in different ways from past to present. According to the studies, the reasons for vaccine hesitancy are grouped under three main headings: “contextual factors”, “individual and group factors” and “factors related with vaccination”. (1) Contextual factors include environmental, cultural, historical, social, health system-related political and economic factors. For example, the period when vaccine hesitancy rose the most was in the 19th century, when the working class saw vaccines as a part of the struggle against oppression and force. In addition, differences in the administration of the vaccine to people from the lower class in unhygienic environments and differences in the injection methods of the vaccine have also attracted reactions. (2) Individual and group factors include groups and individuals’ perceptions of the vaccine and its effects. Conspiracy theories occupy an important place among them. The most common conspiracy theories are that the vaccine is a product of the interests of pharmaceutical companies, that diseases are deliberately produced in the laboratory, that global powers use it as a tool to rule the world, and so on. (3) Factors directly related to the vaccine or its effects constitute the last heading. For example, the thought that the substances in the vaccine have many side effects, and the claims that the vaccine causes death or infertility are among these (Argut et al., 2016, 17-18; Weber, 2010, 65; Demir, 2021, 286; Yavuz, 2018, 187; Ataman et al., 2021). Some of the reasons for vaccine hesitancy are based on religious beliefs (Kibongani Volet et al., 2022). Religious vaccine hesitancy has occurred with claims that the vaccine prevents the will of God or that the vaccine is produced by non-halal/non-kosher methods (Demir, 2021, 286). In addition, religious discourses that “the body is a temple that should not be contaminated” can be effective in vaccine hesitancy (Grabenstein, 2013, 2011). For example, in a study conducted on parents who did not want to have their children vaccinated, while vaccine hesitancy was not found to be associated with education level, parents suggested that it is “religiously objectionable” (64%) as an important reason for not wanting to have their children vaccinated (Aygun - Tortop, 2020). Kibongani Volet et al (2022) cited the non-halal content of vaccines, the coinciding of the vaccine with Ramadan and fasting, and the belief in fate as reasons for vaccine hesitancy among Muslims.

Vaccines, global epidemics and vaccine hesitancy have come to the agenda of the world again with the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19, which was declared a pandemic in March 2020, caused the death of millions of people and affected people’s lives (political, social, economic) on a global scale for more than two years. As in all epidemics, vaccine development studies were started in this epidemic and a vaccine was developed in a short time (Yildiz et al., 2021, 200-201). Although the authorities point out the importance of being vaccinated as a condition for returning to the pre-COVID-19 routine, masses have emerged in many countries who are



indecisive about the vaccine or considering not to be vaccinated at all. For example, a study on vaccine hesitancy was conducted in Ireland and the United Kingdom, and as a result of this study, the rate of vaccine instability was found to be 26-25% in this region, and the rate of anti-vaccination was reported to be at the level of 9%-6% (Yumru - Demirkaya, 2021). In the USA, as of September 2020, 25% of the public stated that they "probably" would not have the COVID-19 vaccine and 24% stated that they would not "definitely" have it, which shows that half of the people do not view it positively (Pew, 2021). In the study conducted in Turkey with the participation of 1293 people, 37.9% of the participants stated that they were undecided about getting vaccinated (Yilmaz et al., 2021). Health authorities stated that if these unstable groups do not disappear, there will be no acceleration in the COVID-19 outbreak. As COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy slows down the pace of combating the pandemic, the reasons for this have quickly come to the agenda of social scientists. In various studies, personality traits (Yumru - Demirkaya, 2021, 276-277; Salerno et al., 2021, 927), sociodemographic characteristics (Pew, 2021; Argut et al., 2016, 18), belief in conspiracy theories (Salali - Uysal, 2020, 1; Landa Blanco et al., 2021) and religiosity (Hassen et al., 2022; Yumru - Demirkaya, 2021, 276-277; Murphy et al., 2021, 29; Garcia - Yap, 2021) has been found to be associated with COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. Looking at the studies on the relationship between COVID-19 vaccination and religiosity, it was seen that the group with the highest vaccination rate in the USA was atheists (90%), followed by agnostics (80%), Catholics (77%), and Evangelicals (54%). White Evangelical Protestants constitute the group with the highest rate of those who say they will not be vaccinated (Pew, 2021). Haredi Jews, an ultra-orthodox religious group in Israel, are known to reject COVID-19 restrictions and oppose vaccination (Anadolu Agency, 2021). Likewise, some clergy in Greece have declared that they will not bless those who have been vaccinated, saying that the COVID-19 vaccines are the sign of the Antichrist (Independent, 2022). In a study conducted by Bozkurt (2021), with the participation of 4079 people from different provinces of Turkey on April 9-15, 2021, 19.3% of the participants reported that they had not yet been vaccinated because they had hesitations about the COVID-19 vaccine, and 9.8% reported that they had never thought of getting vaccinated. When we look at the findings regarding the reasons for this, it is seen that as the education level increases, the rejection of the vaccine decreases and the positive attitudes of the secular people towards the vaccine are higher than the religious people. Hassen et al. (2022), who tried to identify the reasons for COVID-19 vaccine rejection, highlighted the following among the reasons: education level, socio-economic level, and religiosity. When the results of previous studies are evaluated together, it is seen that religiosity and education level may be important variables that will affect attitudes towards vaccination. Although all these suggest that religiosity affects attitudes towards vaccination, the question of whether religiosity or a certain type of religiosity is associated with vaccine hesitancy is not clear. As a matter of fact, although few studies have found a relationship between religiosity and COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, attention has been drawn to the type of religiosity (denominations, orthodoxy, etc.) as another factor in this relationship (Lahav et al., 2022; Hassen et al., 2022). Although there are theoretical studies dealing with the relationship between attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine and religious attitudes in Turkey (Demir, 2021), no research has yet been identified that directly addresses the relationship between religiosity level and type of religiosity and COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy.

WHO sees vaccine rejection as a global threat, and a significant number of scientists state that concerns about vaccination should be taken seriously (Yavuz, 2018). Considering the dramatic increase in vaccine hesitancy since 2013 in Turkey (Bozkurt, 2018), determining the reasons for

vaccine hesitancy will be an important instrument in developing policies in this direction. The general reasons for vaccine hesitancy, which have been encountered since the early stages of vaccine development, are also among the reasons for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. However, public opinion studies in the USA show that the effect of general vaccine hesitancy is only 36% among the reasons for people not wanting to have the COVID-19 vaccine. In other words, not getting the COVID-19 vaccine due to general vaccine hesitancy is not a major reason. There is a situation of opposition to the COVID-19 vaccine, which emerged during the COVID-19 period, which is not against other vaccines. In addition, since there has not been a pandemic that has lasted for such a long time, and vaccination and vaccine hesitancy has not become an important agenda before, it is an important opportunity for social scientists to examine the reasons for vaccine hesitancy specifically over COVID-19.

In this study, the relationship between COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and religiosity, religious dogmatism, COVID-19 awareness and education level will be examined. The two main aims of the study were (1) to describe the demographic characteristics of those who had and did not get vaccinated, and (2) to determine the predictive levels of various variables thought to be correlated with vaccination rejection. The main problem of the study is whether the level of dogmatic religiosity predicts vaccine hesitancy. Sub-problems are whether the level of religiosity, awareness of COVID-19, and education level are correlated with vaccine hesitancy. In this study, it is claimed that the level of religiosity and vaccine hesitancy are not related, whereas the level of dogmatic religiosity, education level and awareness of COVID-19 are correlated with vaccine hesitancy.

H<sub>1</sub>: Religiosity and vaccine hesitancy are not related

H<sub>2</sub>: Dogmatic religiosity predicts vaccine hesitancy

H<sub>3</sub>: Education level is negatively correlated with vaccine hesitancy

H<sub>4</sub>: COVID-19 awareness is negatively correlated with vaccine hesitancy

## **Method**

This research was carried out with correlational method and cross-sectional design, which is one of the quantitative methods. The variables whose relationships were examined in the research are vaccine hesitancy, COVID-19 awareness, religiosity, religious dogmatism and education level. In line with the findings obtained as a result of the analysis of the data, other demographic variables were also included in the analysis.

## **Participants**

Muslim Turks over the age of 18 participated in this research. Convenience sampling method was used for recruitment of participants. Participants were gathered by sharing the online questionnaire form on social media platforms. 322 people aged between 18 and 73 (mean=30, SD=10.62) participated in the study. Looking at the participant profile, it is seen that 65% are women and the majority (69%) have received education between 13-17 years. Accordingly, it can be said that most of the participants had a university education. When the average of education years is taken, it is seen that it is 15 years.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants.

		n	%	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	113	35.1	35.1	35.1
	<b>Female</b>	209	64.9	64.9	100
<b>Age</b>	<b>18-24</b>	142	44.1	44.1	44.1
	<b>25-34</b>	88	27.3	27.3	71.4
	<b>35-44</b>	53	16.5	16.5	87.9
	<b>45-54</b>	24	7.5	7.5	95.3
	<b>55+</b>	15	4.7	4.7	100
<b>Education in years</b>	<b>0 - 8 years</b>	8	2.5	2.5	2.5
	<b>9 - 12 years</b>	29	9	9	11.5
	<b>13 - 17 years</b>	223	69.3	69.3	80.7
	<b>18 and more</b>	62	19.3	19.3	100
<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Married</b>	141	43.8	43.8	43.8
	<b>Single</b>	175	54.3	54.3	98.1
	<b>Divorced</b>	5	1.6	1.6	99.7
	<b>Widow</b>	1	.3	.3	100
<b>Living place</b>	<b>Village</b>	40	12.4	12.4	12.4
	<b>Town</b>	1	.3	.3	12.7
	<b>District</b>	62	19.3	19.3	32
	<b>City</b>	90	28	28.0	59.9
	<b>Big City</b>	129	40.1	40.1	100
<b>Socio-economic level</b>	<b>1</b>	6	1.9	1.9	1.9
	<b>2</b>	39	12.1	12.1	14
	<b>3</b>	208	64.6	64.6	78.6
	<b>4</b>	62	19.3	19.3	97.8
	<b>5</b>	7	2.2	2.2	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

### Measures

**Personal Information Form:** In this form, there are questions to determine the demographics of the participants. In addition to variables such as gender, age, education level, socio-economic level and marital status, participants were asked whether they had the COVID-19 vaccine and how many doses they had. Since the level of education is one of the main variables of the research, in order to be a continuous variable instead of a categorical variable, the participants were asked to indicate the total number of years they had studied from primary education to higher education, excluding grade repetitions.

**Vaccine Hesitancy Scale:** The scale was developed by Kılınçarslan et al. (2020) by collecting data from the hospital and its surroundings with purposeful sampling method, in two different cross-sectional studies. 315 participants for the long form and 214 participants for the short form were reached. As a result of the analysis, the internal consistency coefficient of the long form was calculated as .90 and .85 for the short form. The short form was used in this study. The short form consisted of 12 items and three sub-dimensions as "the benefit and protective value of the vaccine", "repugnance" and "non-vaccine solutions". The scales are in 5-point Likert type. While scoring, the "benefit and protective value of the vaccine" sub-dimension should be reverse coded in both the long and short forms. Scores that can be obtained from the short form range from 12 to 60. It is interpreted that as the scores obtained increase, the level of vaccine hesitation also increases (Kılınçarslan et al., 2020).

**Religiosity Scale:** Data were collected from two samples consisting of 930 and 388 participants, respectively, for the scale developed by Ok (2011) to measure religiosity in an Islamic culture.

The entire sample consists of university students. When the obtained data were analyzed, the internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .81 and .91, respectively. The scale, which is valid and reliable, consists of eight items and is of 5-point Likert type. The scale has four sub-dimensions: "Cognitive", "Emotional", "Behavioral" and "Relational". As the scores obtained from the scale increase, it is interpreted as an individual's level of religiosity increase (Ok, 2011).

**COVID-19 Awareness Scale:** The scale developed by Büyükbeşe and Dikbaş (2021) measures the awareness of using mask, social distance and hygiene rules in the COVID-19 pandemic. The scale consists of 21 items and three sub-dimensions: "hygiene", "distance" and "mask". Data were obtained from 1000 university students from different universities in Turkey with a questionnaire prepared via Google form. In line with these data obtained, the content and construct validity of the scale was tested using SPSS and SPSS Amos programs. The scale with an internal consistency coefficient of .90 is valid and reliable. The scale is of a 5-point Likert type and is interpreted as increasing awareness of COVID-19 as the score from the scale increases (Büyükbeşe - Dikbaş, 2021).

**Religious Dogmatism Scale:** The scale developed by Yapıcı (2002) to determine the level of dogmatic religiosity is a one-dimensional scale consisting of 16 items. During the development of the scale, data were obtained from 593 students aged 17-32 studying at faculties and vocational schools of Çukurova University. The obtained data were analyzed and evaluated as valid according to the Post Hoc (Scheffe) analysis results. In the reliability analysis, the internal consistency coefficient was found to be .91. Yapıcı (2002) then looked at the correlation of the two halves of the scale with each other using the halving technique. It was observed that there was a significant relationship ( $p < .001$ ) between the first and second parts of the scale. The scale, which is valid and reliable, is a 4-point Likert type, with the lowest possible score being 16 and the highest score being 64. The average score is 39.30. Scores obtained above the average score are interpreted as religiosity has a dogmatic appearance (Yapıcı, 2002).

## **Procedure**

The questionnaire form, which was prepared in Turkish, was brought online using Google forms. The link of the questionnaire form was shared on social networks and delivered to the participants. An information note about the research was added to the beginning of the questionnaire and it was shared that the research was conducted for those over the age of 18. Data were collected from February 2022 to May 2022. The collected data was first converted into an MS Excel spreadsheet. Afterwards, it was transferred to the SPSS program and analyzed. First, descriptive analyzes were performed, then t-test, ANOVA to compare the means, and then correlation and regression analyzes to examine the relationship between the variables.

This research is cross-sectional. Data were collected within a certain date range. Therefore, the attitudes of the participants may change over time. Because the participants were recruited online, people who did not have internet access or did not use social networks were not able to participate in the study. For these reasons, care should be taken in generalizing the results. The research was approved by the Scientific Research Ethics Committee of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, with the decision dated 28.07.2022 and numbered 14/03.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Relation of Vaccine Hesitancy with Demographics**

In our research, the answer to the question "who had the vaccine" was sought first. What are the demographic characteristics of those who have been vaccinated? Is there a relationship

between age, education level, socio-economic level, religiosity, religious dogmatism and COVID-19 awareness with vaccination? Participants in the study were asked whether they had received the COVID-19 vaccine. More than half of the participants (53.4%) stated that they had 2 doses of vaccine. A quarter of the sample (24.5%) had 3 or more doses of vaccine, and 3.4% had 1 dose of vaccine. The rate of those who have never been vaccinated is only 18.3%. That is, four out of every five participants had vaccinated.

Table 2. Vaccination Rates

		N	%
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Nope</b>	59	18.3
	<b>1 dose</b>	11	3.4
	<b>2 doses</b>	172	53.4
	<b>3 or more doses</b>	79	24.5
	<b>Total</b>	321	99.7
<b>Missing</b>	<b>99</b>	1	.3
<b>Total</b>		322	100

Considering the characteristics of those who did not get vaccinated (Table 3), it was seen that the rate of those who did not get vaccinated (23%) among women was higher than the rate of those who did not get vaccinated among men (9.7%), and this relationship between gender and vaccination was significant ( $\chi^2=8.921$   $p<.05$ ). In addition, the level of vaccine hesitancy in women ( $M=35.47$ ) was found to be higher than in men ( $M=32.33$ ) ( $t=2.644$   $p=.009$ ). This result is consistent with the findings of previous studies. For example, in the study conducted by Yilmaz et al. (2021), examining attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine, the rate of those who answered yes to the question "would you get vaccinated" was 50.6% among men, while this rate was 36.4% among women. When these people were asked about the reason, at first (75.9%), the reason was given that the side effects were not known because it was a new vaccine. In addition, the rate of those who think that COVID-19 is a biological weapon was found to be higher among women (49.5%). Similar findings emerge in a study conducted in 27 European countries in 2021 examining attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine across genders (Toshkov, 2023). This research has shown that women are more likely to be suspicious of the COVID-19 vaccine. The most important reason for this is risk perception. Women think that this vaccine carries more risks than benefits. Many studies have shown that insecurity is the main reason women hesitate. They do not think the vaccine is safe (Cordina et al., 2021).

Table 3. Vaccination Rates by Gender and Marital Status

Vaccinated?		Gender*			Marital Status**		
		Female	Male	Total	Married	Single	Total
<b>Nope</b>	N	48	11	59	36	23	59
	%	23.1%	9.7%	18.4%	25.5%	13.2%	18.4%
<b>1 dose</b>	N	6	5	11	4	7	11
	%	2.9%	4.4%	3.4%	2.8%	4%	3.4%
<b>2 doses</b>	N	106	66	172	57	114	172
	%	51%	58.4%	53.6%	40.4%	65.5%	53.6%
<b>3 or more doses</b>	N	48	31	79	44	30	79
	%	23.1%	27.4%	24.6%	31.2%	17.2%	24.6%
<b>Total</b>	N	208	113	321	141	174	321
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

\* $\chi^2=8.921$ ,  $p<.05$  \*\*  $\chi^2=33.721$ ,  $p<.001$

Considering the vaccination status by marital status (Table 3), it was seen that the rate of those who did not get vaccinated among married people (25.5%) was higher than that of singles (13.2%) ( $\chi^2=33.721$ ,  $p<.001$ ). It is a result encountered in the literature that the hesitation about vaccination is higher among married people than singles (Yilmaz et al., 2021). Just as women are hesitant because they see the vaccine as risky, the risks of the vaccine among married people bring about a more hesitant approach. It is understandable that married people take less risk, given their family responsibilities. When the relationship between vaccination behavior and other demographic variables was examined, it was seen that there was no relationship of vaccination with the place of residence (rural/urban), education level, age and socio-economic level. However, a negative significant correlation was found between age and vaccine hesitancy ( $r = -.175$ ,  $p=.002$ ). Vaccine hesitancy decreases with age. This means that vaccine hesitancy is higher among young people. It has been shown in many studies that the desire to be vaccinated against COVID-19 increases with age (Cordina et al., 2021; Yilmaz et al., 2021). The most important reason for this is that the risk of being lethal for COVID-19 disease increases with age. In our study, no relationship was found between vaccine hesitancy and education level, while a negative significant correlation was found between socio-economic level and vaccine hesitancy ( $r = -.116$ ,  $p=.038$ ). In previous studies, it was found that as the level of education increased, the rate of getting the COVID-19 vaccine increased (Yilmaz et al., 2021) and the COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy decreased (Wu et al., 2021). In this study, the fact that the participants did not show a normal distribution in terms of education level may be one of the reasons why education level was not found to be associated with vaccine hesitancy. As for the relationship between socio-economic level and vaccine hesitancy, the higher the socio-economic level, the lower the vaccine hesitancy ( $r = -.116$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Hassen et al. (2022), in their research on understanding the determinants of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, showed that the rates of vaccine hesitancy are higher among middle-income than low-income people. On the other hand, Lee and Huang (2022), who extensively discussed the relationship between COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and socio-economic factors in the USA, showed that the rate of not getting vaccinated due to distrust in the government among groups with lower socio-economic status and emphasized the distrust in authorities as the most important reason for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy.

When we evaluate the relationship between demographic variables and vaccine hesitancy together, we have a strong opinion that the feeling of trust is the determinant in general. As a matter of fact, Tuzcu and Sahin (2022) showed in their study that believing in conspiracy theories increases the perception of risk, which in turn leads to distrust and to develop an attitude towards the vaccine. The rate of vaccine hesitancy will also be higher in those who see themselves at higher risk and have a high sense of insecurity.

### **Other Variables Related with Vaccine Hesitancy**

In this study, the relationship between COVID-19 awareness, education level, religiosity and religious dogmatism with vaccine hesitancy and their predictive levels are discussed. In the above title, it has been shown that there is no correlation between education level and vaccine hesitancy. As for other variables, as seen in Table 4, the COVID-19 awareness, religiosity and religious dogmatism levels of those who had the vaccine before and those who did not have it were compared.

Table 4. Comparison of Vaccine Hesitancy, COVID-19 Awareness, Religious Dogmatism and Religiosity Levels of Vaccinated and Non-Vaccinated People.

	Vaccinated?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
<b>Vaccine hesitancy</b>	No	59	42.7797	10.88667	6.745	.001
	Yes	263	32.4905	9.14425		
<b>COVID-19 awareness</b>	No	59	3.6287	.91605	-.975	.330
	Yes	263	3.7630	.96465		
<b>Religious dogmatism</b>	No	59	2.9428	.55287	2.997	.003
	Yes	263	2.6908	.70461		
<b>Religiosity</b>	No	59	47.0847	8.84598	1.860	.064
	Yes	263	43.0532	11.27370		

As seen in the Table 4, it is seen that the COVID-19 awareness and religiosity levels of those who have had and those who have not been vaccinated do not differ significantly, but there is a difference between the vaccine hesitancy and religious dogmatism levels of these two groups. Accordingly, the vaccine hesitancy level of those who did not get vaccinated (M=42.77) was significantly higher than the level of those who had vaccinated (32.49) ( $p < 0.001$ ). It is an expected result that the rate of vaccine hesitancy is high among those who have not been vaccinated. The difference in the level of religiosity between those who have vaccinated and those who have not, overshadows the claim that there is a relationship between religiosity and rejection of vaccination. However, the level of religious dogmatism of those who did not get vaccinated (M=47.08) was significantly higher than those who did (M=43.05) ( $p < .05$ ). This gives us an idea that the type of religiosity, rather than religiosity, may affect attitudes towards vaccination. In the study by Kaplan et al. (2020), in which they discussed perceptions and attitudes towards the COVID-19 pandemic, it was seen that religious attributions for the pandemic differed among religious people, and more educated religious people made different attributions than less educated religious people. From this point of view, we can think that dogmatic religiosity will predict vaccine hesitancy at a higher level than general religiosity.

Table 5. Relationship between Vaccine Hesitancy, COVID-19 Awareness, Religiosity and Religious Dogmatism.

		1	2	3
<b>Vaccine Hesitancy</b>	r	-.147**	.160**	.080
	p	.008	.004	.154
	N	322	322	322
<b>COVID-19 Awareness</b>	r		.124*	.312**
	p		.026	.000
	N		322	322
<b>Religious Dogmatism</b>	r			.529**
	p			.000
	N			322

Considering the relationship between vaccine hesitancy, COVID-19 awareness, religiosity, and religious dogmatism (Table 5), it was found that there was a significant negative correlation between vaccine hesitancy and COVID-19 awareness ( $r = -.147$ ,  $p < .05$ ), there was no significant correlation with religiosity, and there was a positive correlation with religious dogmatism ( $r = .160$ ,  $p < .05$ ). It is an important finding that there is no relationship between religiosity and vaccination hesitancy. It is also an expected result that as the awareness of COVID-19 increases, the vaccine hesitancy decreases. Vaccination hesitancy and religious dogmatism were also positively correlated, as was the significant difference in the level of religious dogmatism between vaccinated and non-vaccinated.

Taken together, the results show that there is no correlation between vaccine hesitancy and religiosity and educational level, but that dogmatic religiosity, socio-economic level and COVID-19 awareness are related. Multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive levels of vaccine hesitancy of these three variables. Hierarchical regression method was used in ordering the predictors.

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analysis

	<b>b</b>	<b>SE B</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Step 1</b>				
<b>Constant</b>	27.800 (23.21, 32.4)	2.333		.001
<b>Religious Dogmatism</b>	.150 (.048, .252)	.052	.160	.004
<b>Step 2</b>				
<b>Constant</b>	33.479 (27.159, 39.8)	3.213		.000
<b>Religious Dogmatism</b>	.169 (.067, .27)	.052	.80	.001
<b>Socio-Economic Level</b>	-2.108 (-3.736, -.48)	.828	-.141	.011
<b>Step 3</b>				
<b>Constant</b>	38.059 (31.02, 45.1)	3.576		.000
<b>Religious Dogmatism</b>	.184 (.083, .28)	.052	.196	.000
<b>Socio-Economic Level</b>	-1.803 -3.429, -.178)	.826	-.120	.030
<b>COVID-19 Awareness</b>	-1.654 (-2.81, -.5)	.592	-.154	.005

$R^2 = .026$  for Step 1;  $\Delta R^2 = .039$  for Step 2;  $\Delta R^2 = .059$  for Step 3 ( $p < .05$ ).

Predictors: Religious Dogmatism, Socio-economic Level, COVID-19 Awareness

Outcome: Vaccine Hesitancy

In order to evaluate the effects of dogmatic religiosity, socio-economic level and COVID-19 awareness on vaccine hesitancy, multiple regression analysis was implemented. All of three independent variable was included within the designed model in three steps. As can be seen in the multiple regression analysis presented in Table 6, the predictor religious dogmatism is entered into the model only. In step 3, three predictors entered simultaneously. Findings indicated that dogmatic religiosity, socio-economic level and COVID-19 awareness were significant predictors of the vaccine hesitancy. Dogmatic religiosity, in step 1, alone accounts for around 3% of the variance in vaccine hesitancy ( $R^2 = .026$ ,  $F = 8.441$ ,  $p = .004$ ). In the Step 2, dogmatic religiosity and socio-economic level together account for around 5% of the variance in vaccine hesitancy ( $R^2 = .045$ ,  $F = 7.537$ ,  $p = .001$ ). And finally, in the Step 3, dogmatic religiosity, socio-economic level and COVID-19 awareness together account for 7% of the variance in vaccine hesitancy ( $R^2 = .068$ ,  $F = 7.739$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Regarding Beta coefficients, positive correlations were found between dogmatic religiosity and vaccine hesitancy (see Step 3:  $\beta = .196$ ,  $t = 3.570$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and negative correlation was found between vaccine hesitancy and socio-economic level and COVID-19 awareness ( $\beta = -.120$ ,  $t = -2.183$ ,  $p = .030$  for socio-economic level;  $\beta = -.154$ ,  $t = -2.797$ ,  $p = .005$  for COVID-19 awareness). These findings show us that as the level of religious dogmatism increases, vaccine hesitancy increases, and as socio-economic level and COVID-19 awareness increase, vaccine hesitancy decreases. Beta coefficients show us that dogmatic religiosity predicts vaccine hesitancy more importantly.



Dogmatism is seen as a personality trait associated with closed-mindedness, rigidity, bigotry and prejudice (Hood et al., 2018; Gurses, 2002). Dogmatic individuals exhibit the behavior of accepting the information coming from the authority they are attached to as true without criticizing it. These individuals do not regard even very strong evidence to the contrary as credible and do not change their minds. On the other hand, they do not find information from a different source convincing. From the earliest days of the psychology of religion, it has been shown that there is a dogmatic version of religiosity. Although dogmatic religiosity is sometimes called fundamental religiosity and sometimes orthodoxy, it can be said that it only constituted one dimension of them. In other words, it is known that some fundamental or orthodox religious people show rigid dogmatism features. We can define dogmatic religiosity as religiosity with a high level of dogmatism and classify it as a separate type of religiosity (Yapıcı, 2002). This type of religiosity is a religiosity with an underdeveloped maturity level corresponding to the second and third stages in Fowler's (1981) Faith Development Theory. The characteristics of this type of religiosity include literalism, reaction to modernism, and skepticism towards modern medical practices and modern science. The most important reason for this is the cognitive representation of dogmatism, as stated by Rokeach (1954). In these people, objective reality is represented by beliefs that are accepted as true. Rokeach states that as the degree of dogmatism increases, the level of denial of events that one thinks contradicts with his/her belief system also increases. Dogmatists, who are intolerant of ambiguity, feature defensive cognitive closure and rigid certainty. Yapıcı (2002) classifies the types of religiosity by considering the socio-cognitive aspect of the religious attitude, he named the religiosity level with a high level of dogmatism as dogmatic religiosity. Yapıcı listed the characteristics of this type as follows: religious attitudes are important in determining daily behavior, religion determines central attitudes, they view religious issues with dichotomous distinctions, they are closed to new ideas, they are against modernization, and they are conservative. Considering all these characteristics, it is significant that the rate of vaccine hesitancy is high among those with a high level of dogmatic religiosity. It should be taken into account that religious people are not a monolithic group when investigating the relationship between religiosity and attitudes in future studies. Not all individuals with high levels of religiosity have the same attitudes. Here we see that dogmatic religious and non-dogmatic have different attitudes.

### **Conclusion**

In our study, it was found that religiosity is not associated with vaccine hesitancy, but dogmatic religiosity, which can be considered as a type of religiosity, is associated with vaccine hesitancy. It can be assumed that vaccine hesitancy rates are higher not only among Muslim religious believers, but also among dogmatic religious people worldwide. This result shows that it cannot be directly said that all religious people are reactive to science, modern medicine and one of its most important instruments, the vaccine, and that the attitudes and reactions of different types of religiosity to events may change. If we see dogmatism as a cognitive condition, we can predict that vaccine hesitancy will be high among these people, regardless of their beliefs, even non-believers.

When the reasons for vaccine hesitancy are examined, both the findings of this study and other studies in the literature show that the lack of confidence is an important reason for vaccine hesitancy. The reasons for this distrust can be revealed by examining the relationship between various variables, especially religious dogmatism, and trust in science and state authority in future research. Demonstrating a negative relationship between religious dogmatism and trust

in science and state authority will illuminate an important point in explaining the relationship between religious dogmatism and vaccine hesitancy.

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### An Assessment of the Effect of Generation Y and Z Executives' Perceptions of Religion on Narcissistic Personality Traits and Reflections Thereof on Business Life

Y ve Z Kuşağı Yöneticilerin Din Algılarının Narsist Kişilik Özelliklerine Etkisi ve İş Hayatına Yansımalarının Değerlendirilmesi

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## **An Assessment of the Effect of Generation Y And Z Executives' Perceptions of Religion on Narcissistic Personality Traits and Reflections Thereof on Business Life**

### **Abstract**

Management, defined as doing business through others, plays the most important role among the functions in a metaphorical analogy as the heart of the business. The importance of the decisions taken within management and the vision, experience, personality traits and behaviors of managers in the realization of the main and subsidiary objectives of the business is self-evident. Thus, the personality structure of individuals at management levels affects their styles and the decisions they make in management processes. Religion is a socio-cultural value that regulates the individual's life with others in society by conveying the rules, regulations, orders, and prohibitions regarding the life of human are in the social order, including the orders and prohibitions of Allah. Religion, as an element of culture, contains values that vary for everyone. It is associated with belief as a concept. The beliefs that occupy an important place in religion have deeply affected individuals in giving meaning to the world, existence, and life. An individual's religious perceptions permeate every aspect of their life. Religious perceptions transform into virtuous behaviors in the individual with faith in Allah or should do so. Hence, it is a necessity for a person with high religious perceptions to strive to establish a lifestyle per the commandments of Allah. Religion is the values that lead people to good, truth, beauty, virtuous behavior, selflessness, to help, to empathize, namely, to be a good servant and human being. Thus, we can say that religious orientations, which make the individual a good person who is beneficial to society, play a crucial role in the formation of personality traits and their development for the better. Since personality is a encompasses an individual's entire lifestyle, narcissistic personality traits encompass all the behaviors that affect a person's life. Narcissistic personality structure has a state where the person sees themselves as better and superior. In terms of religious perceptions, the formation of narcissistic personality traits is related to it. The stronger the religious values that direct the person toward the good and true, the more the self-centered structure is polished, and reveals a personality structure that treats others thoughtfully, doesn't despise, distances from arrogance, cares for society, and is far from prioritizing oneself. We know from the verses and hadiths that the arrogant behavior of a person is considered one of the most disliked characteristics of Allah. Arrogance and humiliating others are among the characteristics of the narcissistic personality that religion won't tolerate. This study aims to determine the effect of religious perceptions of generation Y and Z managers on narcissistic personality and evaluate their reflections on business life.

In the study, a scale consisting of 24 statements was used to measure the perception of religion, and one consisting of 18 statements from nine admiration dimensions and nine competition dimensions for narcissism. Validity and reliability analyses were conducted to ensure the construct validity. After entering the data into the SPSS-25 program, confidence analysis and exploratory factor analysis were performed, and structural equation modeling was performed in the AMOS-19 program to determine the effects of it on each other.

The study results have also shown that religious perceptions have effective results on narcissism. We see that religious values command a person to be humble, modest, respectful, loving and respectful, caring, helpful, and avoiding arrogant behavior through their wealth, titles, and children, in short, with what they own, both in their life and society. It is clear that these rules and regulations of religion don't tolerate narcissism, which are defined as pathological. When narcissistic traits appear in business life, it legitimizes a thought and behavioral mechanism that makes it appropriate to engage in unethical behavior for one's interests without regard. After examining the analysis results, we see that religious perceptions play a role in narcissistic behaviors.

**Key Words:** Generation Y and Z, Personality, Executive Personality Traits, Narcissism, Narcissistic Personality Traits, Perception of Religion.

### **Y ve Z Kuşağı Yöneticilerin Din Algılarının Narsist Kişilik Özelliklerine Etkisi ve İş Hayatına Yansımalarının Değerlendirilmesi**

#### **Öz**

Başkaları vasıtasıyla iş görme sanatı olarak tanımlanan yönetim işletmenin kalbi olarak metaforik bir benzetmeyle fonksiyonlar içinde en önemli rolü üstlenir. İşletmenin ana ve yan amaçlarının gerçekleştirilebilmesinde yönetim kapsamında alınan kararların ve yöneticilerin vizyonlarının, tecrübelerinin, kişilik özelliklerinin ve davranışlarının önemi açıktır. Bu kapsamda yönetim kademelerinde yer alan bireylerin kişilik yapısı yönetim tarzlarına ve dolayısıyla yönetim süreçlerinde aldıkları kararlara etki eder mahiyettedir. Din Allah'ın emir ve yasaklarını içeren toplumsal düzende insanın yaşamına dair kural, kaideler, emir ve yasakları iletmeleriyle bireyin toplum içinde diğerleriyle yaşamını düzenleyen sosyo-kültürel bir değerdir. Din, kültürün bir unsuru olarak kişiden kişiye değişen değerleri içinde barındırır. Din kavram olarak inanç ile bağdaşır. Dinin içinde önemli bir yer tutan inançlar dünyaya, varoluşa ve yaşama anlam vermede bireyleri derinden etkilemiştir. Bireyin dinî algıları hayatının her alanına sirayet eder. Din algısı bireyin kişilik özelliklerinde Allah inancıyla değişim, törpülenme ve erdemli davranışlara evrilme gerçekleştirir ya da gerçekleştirilmelidir. Çünkü din algısı yüksek bir kişide Allah'ın emirleri doğrultusunda bir yaşam biçimini kurma çabasının olması bir gerekliliktir. Din insanı iyiye,

doğruya, güzele, erdemli davranışlara, bencillikten uzaklaşmaya, yardım etmeye, empati yapmaya yani iyi bir insan olmaya yönelten değerlerdir. Bu haliyle bireyi topluma faydası olan, iyi bir insan yapan dinî yönelimlerin kişilik özelliklerini oluşumunda ve daha iyiye yönelik gelişiminde önemli bir rol üstlendiği söylenebilir. Kişilik ferdin tüm yaşam biçimini kapsayan bir olgu olduğuna göre kişiliğin bir çeşidi olan narsist kişilik özellikleri kişinin tüm yaşamına etki eden davranış biçimlerinin tamamını kapsar. Narsist kişilik yapısında kişinin kendini diğerlerinden daha iyi ve üstün gördüğü bir hâl söz konusudur. Dinî algılar açısından bakıldığında narsist kişilik özelliklerinin oluşumu kişinin dinî algılarıyla yakından ilgilidir. Kişiyi iyiye, doğruya yönelten dinî değer ve inanç unsuru ne derece kuvvetli ise ben diyen yapı o derece törpülenir ve diğerlerine de düşünceli davranan, küçük görmeyen, kibirden uzaklaşan, toplumu önemseyen, kendini öncelemekten daha uzak bir kişilik yapısı ortaya çıkarır. Zira dinî kurallar çerçevesinde ayetler ve hadislerden aktarılanlardan bilinir ki kişinin kibir gösteren davranışları Allah'ın en sevmediği özellikler içinde sayılmaktadır. Narsist kişilik yapısında oluşan olumsuz özellikler içindeki kibir, diğerlerinden kendini üstün görme, diğerlerini aşağılama dinin hoş göremeyeceği özellikler içindedir. Bu anlamda çalışmada da Y ve Z kuşağı yöneticilerin din algılarının narsist kişilik özelliklerine etkisi tespit edilerek iş hayatına yansımalarının değerlendirilmesi amaçlanmıştır.

Çalışmada din algısını ölçmek için 24 ifadeden oluşan ölçek, narsisizm için 9 hayranlık boyutu, 9 rekabet boyutundan toplamda 18 ifadeden oluşan ölçek kullanılmıştır. Ölçeklerin yapı geçerliliğini sağlamak için geçerlilik ve güvenilirlik analizi yapılmıştır. Veriler SPSS 25 paket programına girildikten sonra SPSS de güven analizi ve açımlayıcı faktör analizi yapılmış ve verilerin birbirine etkilerini belirlemek için AMOS 19 programında yapısal eşitlik modellemesi gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Araştırma sonuçları da göstermiştir ki dinî algılar narsisizm üzerine etkili sonuçlar ortaya koymaktadır. Dinî değerlerin kişinin gerek bireysel yaşamında gerek toplumsal düzen içinde mütevazı, kibirden uzak, diğer insanlara saygı, sevgi ve hürmet gösterebilen onlara değer veren, yardımsever olan, maliyla, unvanıyla, çocuklarıyla kısaca dünyada sahip olduklarıyla başkalarına kibirli davranışlardan sakınmayı, uzak durmayı emrettiği görülür. Dinin bu düzenleme ve kurallar ile aslında patolojik olarak tanımlanan narsist davranış kalıplarını hoş görmediği açıktır. Narsist kişilik özellikleri iş hayatında ortaya çıktığında diğerlerini düşünmeden, kendi çıkarları için etik olmayan davranışları yapabilmeyi uygun hâle dönüştüren bir düşünce ve davranış mekanizmasını meşrulaştırır formattadır. Analiz sonuçlarına bakıldığında dinî algıların kişinin narsist davranışlarda bulunma sürecinde onu törpüleyen bir rol üstlendiği görülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Y ve Z Kuşağı, Yönetici Kişilik Özellikleri, Narsisizm, Narsist Kişilik Özellikleri, Din Algısı.

## Introduction

The concept of management, which is defined as the art of doing business through others, and therefore the characteristics of white-collar workers in administrative positions play an important role in making appropriate decisions in the business. Religion is a set of socio-cultural values that regulates the individual's life with others in society by means of rules, orders, and prohibitions regarding human life in the social order of God and conveys the way to be a good person and a good servant. Religion, as an element of culture, contains values that vary from person to person. Religion is associated with belief as a concept. Beliefs, which have an important place in religion, have deeply affected individuals in giving meaning to the world, existence, and life. Human beings both attribute existence to the divine power and understand that they are responsible for their behavior in preparation for life after death. In this context, religion plays a role in both explaining existence and drawing the boundaries of how to behave in the world, providing the spiritual satisfaction of the individual and directing him/her towards the morally good and right.<sup>1</sup> The perception of religion reveals one's perspective on the element of belief. Religious perception is a perspective and way of life that varies from person to person. An individual's religious perceptions can and should permeate every aspect of his/her life. Religious perceptions change, refine, and evolve into virtuous behaviors in the personality traits of the individual with the belief in Allah. Because it is a necessity for a person with high religious perceptions to strive to establish a lifestyle in line with the commands of Allah. Religion is the set of values that lead people to good, truth, beauty, virtuous behavior, to move away from selfishness, to help, to empathize, in other words, to be a good servant and human being. In this way, we can say that religious orientations, which make the individual a good person who is

<sup>1</sup> İbrahim Agah Çubukçu, "Kültürümüzde Din", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 30 1/4, (1988), 131.

beneficial to society, play an important role in the formation of personality traits and their development for the better. Personality can be defined as an individual's way of life that includes elements such as goodness, beauty, honesty, happiness, evil, ugliness, intelligence, education, emotion, joy, sorrow, anger, faith, friendship, traditions, sociality, self-interest, morality, responsibility, culture, sincerity, talkativeness, jealousy, irritability. This is a concept that reflects all the characteristics of a person. In general, personality refers to all the characteristics of a particular individual. However, in behavioral terms, personality is the manifestations seen in the mental, physical, and spiritual characteristics of the individual.<sup>2</sup> Since personality is a phenomenon that covers the whole lifestyle of the individual, narcissistic personality traits, a type of personality, cover all the behaviors that is reflected in the whole life of the person. In the narcissistic personality structure, there is a state in which the person sees himself/herself as better and superior to others. In terms of religious perceptions, the formation of narcissistic personality traits is closely related to perception of religious. The stronger the religious values and beliefs that direct the person towards the good and the truth, the more the self-centered structure is polished, and it reveals a personality structure that treats others thoughtfully, does not belittle, moves away from arrogance, cares about society, and is far from prioritizing oneself. Because we know the verses and hadiths that a person's arrogant behavior is considered among the most disliked characteristics of Allah. Arrogance, seeing oneself as superior to others and humiliating others are among the negative traits of the narcissistic personality structure that religion cannot tolerate.

## 1. Conceptual Framework

### 1.1. Perception of Religion

In scholarly discourse, various faith traditions offer distinct definitions of religion. While M. Weber defines religion as "an act of human meaning-making and an attempt for the salvation of the soul", E. Durkheim defines it as "religion is a set of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, commanded and forbidden".<sup>3</sup> In Islamic Scholarship, al- Jurjani defines religion as a divine law that leads people of reason to what is good by their own choice. Tehanevi says, "It is an order, a law established by God to lead people of reason, by their own free will, which is worthy of praise, to what is good for their own benefit in the hereafter and in the world."<sup>4</sup>

Religion is the most important social phenomenon within the cultural values of a society. It plays a role in the lives of individuals covering the whole way of life. Religion encompasses the provisions that regulate social life. The concepts of right-wrong, good-bad, religious-worldly are evaluated together with the phenomenon of religion. The commands and prohibitions of religion encourage individuals to be right, to perform good, moral behaviors, to develop love and respect, to be kind, sharing, thoughtful and considerate of society rather than selfish. In this sense, religious rules and regulations are an element that recommends high, virtuous, and moral behavior patterns to individuals.

Religion is a solidaristic system of beliefs and practices related to sacred values and all elements that are kept separate and prohibited.<sup>5</sup> Religion includes indicators that evaluate concepts such

<sup>2</sup> Feyzullah Eroğlu, *Davranış Bilimleri* (İstanbul: Beta Basım, 2011), 207.

<sup>3</sup> Abdurrahman Kurt, "Sosyolojik Din Tanımları ve Dine Teolojik Bakış Sorunu", *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 17/2 (2008), 79.

<sup>4</sup> Ayşe Ak, "'Din' Kavramı ve İnsanların Dini Algısı Tartışmasında Din Eğitimi Biliminin 'Din'i.", *International Congress on Islamic Education* (İstanbul: YEKDER Yayınları, 2018), 42.

<sup>5</sup> Olga Breskaya et al., "Perceptions of the Functions of Religion and Attitude toward Religious Freedom: Introducing the New Indices of the Functions of Religion (NIFoR)", *Religions* 11/10 (2020), 507.



as good-evil, responsibility, virtue, conscience, orientation towards right behavior, respect for the right, honesty, keeping one's word, reliability, and respect within the scope of ethical elements in business life. All these concepts envisage the use of one's will in favor of what is good, right, right, honest, that is, what is accepted within the framework of the desired social, moral and religious rules.

Perception takes place within the intricate workings of the human brain. It involves the processing and interpretation of sensory input from our external environment, imbuing these inputs with meaning to make sense of our experiences. Given its inherently subjective nature, perception is a deeply personal phenomenon, often distinct from objective reality. When it comes to the perception of religion, it becomes even more complex, as it varies significantly from one individual to another. This variability is influenced by a multitude of internal and external factors, including a person's past experiences, beliefs, and characteristics.<sup>6</sup>

## 1.2. Narcissism

Narcissism is defined as self-love by the Turkish National Language Institution (TDK) and as the state of admiring oneself too much in the Oxford dictionary.<sup>7</sup> The first use of the term in the literature was in 1898 by Havelock Ellis. Nack (1899) defined narcissism by writing a German summary of Ellis' article. This reference attracted Freud's attention and Freud conducted research on narcissism by focusing on these definitions.<sup>8</sup> Clinical and psychiatric literature classifies narcissism as a personality disorder. The American Psychiatric Association outlines that a diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder requires the presence of at least five out of nine specific symptoms. These symptoms include arrogance, haughty behavior, perceiving oneself as special and unique, a lack of empathy, exploitation of others, and an excessive sense of entitlement.<sup>9</sup>

Narcissism is an individual differentiation consisting of grandiosity, self-love and inflated self-image. Narcissism consists of three ingredients; the first is the narcissistic self which is characterized by arrogance, uniqueness, sense of entitlement, and desire for power and prestige. The second is narcissistic relationships with low levels of empathy and emotional intimacy. This includes shallow relationships ranging from exciting and attractive to manipulative and exploitative. The third is exaggerated narcissistic strategies involving feelings of admiration and boasting.<sup>10</sup>

The origin of the term "narcissism" was the tale of Narcissus in Greek mythology, the story of a youth who fell in love with his own reflection. Psychologists, based on Freud's understanding, explain narcissism in terms of a sense of personal superiority, greatness, attention-seeking, and the affirmation of superiority. Narcissists are lacking in genuine empathy and may exploitatively take the credit for the success of others, as well as shifting any blame for negativity onto them. They may display an aggressive attitude when faced with negative feedback and criticism.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Hasan Arslan, "Dinle İlgili Düşünce, Tanım ve Algılamalar", *Hikmet Yurdu* 3/5 (2010), 252.

<sup>7</sup> TDK, Türkçe Sözlük, "Narcissism" (Ankara: TDK, 2005), 1457. *Oxford Dictionary*, "Narcissism" (Access Date: 13 December 2022).

<sup>8</sup> Robert Raskin - Howard Terry, "A Principal-Components Analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and Further Evidence of its Construct Validity", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 54/5 (1988), 890.

<sup>9</sup> W. Keith Campbell et al., "Narcissism in Organizational Contexts", *Human Resource Management Review* 21/4 (2011), 271.

<sup>10</sup> Champbell et al., "Narcissism in Organizational Contexts", 269.

<sup>11</sup> Charles A. O'Reilly III et al., "Narcissistic CEOs and Executive Compensation", *The Leadership Quarterly* 25/2 (2014), 219.

W. Keith Campbell et al., "Understanding the Social Costs of Narcissism: The Case of the Tragedy of the Commons", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 31/10 (2005), 1359.

Individuals with narcissistic personality traits think that they are special and unique, that better things should happen to them in their lives than to others, that they are smarter and more attractive, more dominant and powerful.<sup>12</sup> People with narcissistic personality traits have a false ego and self-consciousness that is not real, and they lack the ability to create deep and strong emotional bonds with others, and they create superficial love and relationships.<sup>13</sup>

### 2.3. Narcissistic Personality Traits from the Perspective of Religious Perceptions of Generation Y and Z and Reflections Thereof on Business Life

Generation is defined as a group of people who were born in approximately the same years, shared the conditions of the same age, therefore similar troubles, and fates, and were obliged to similar duties.<sup>14</sup> Generation Y is a term used for people born between 1980 and 1995, also referred to as the internet generation, millennials and Nexters. Generation Y is characterized as well-educated, confident, passionate, optimistic, socially conscious, and honest.<sup>15</sup> The concept of Generation Z is used for those born between 1995 and 2015. Generation Z is the first generation to grow up in an internet world where their understanding of access to information and worldview is shaped differently from previous generations.<sup>16</sup> The prominent characteristics of a Generation Z leader are competence, decisiveness, self-control, integrity, and forward thinking.<sup>17</sup> While Generation Y stands out with its low sense of loyalty, difficulty in adapting to authority, a desire for independence, frequent job changes, individualism, and growing up with technology, Generation Z stands out with its collaborative, creative, and born into technology.<sup>18</sup>

Research indicates that individuals exhibiting normal narcissistic personality traits in a business context often fulfill societal expectations, derive pleasure from life, take pride in their successes, and tend to experience self-blame in instances of mistakes and failures.<sup>19</sup> A moderate degree of narcissism can shield an individual from daily disappointments and stress, offering the benefit of self-confidence in achieving personal goals.<sup>20</sup> Narcissistic traits, when present at an optimal level, can enhance self-confidence by contributing positively to one's self-identity. Positive self-reflections help in reducing inconsistencies. Consequently, individuals with normal levels of narcissism often exhibit ambition and are typically successful and self-satisfied.<sup>21</sup>

When comparing normal levels of narcissism to narcissism characterized as a destructive and pathological disorder, several key distinctions emerge: 1. A normal narcissist exhibits truthfulness, sociability, and genuine self-confidence. In contrast, a destructive narcissist displays an inflated, often false sense of self-confidence. 2. For those with normal narcissism, power and wealth are enjoyed within reasonable limits, whereas destructive

W. Keith Campbell et al., "Narcissism, Confidence, and Risk Attitude", *Journal of Behavioural Decision Making* 17/4 (2004), 298.

<sup>12</sup> Campbell et al., "Narcissism, Confidence, and Risk Attitude", 298.

<sup>13</sup> Hatice Çoban - Ayşe İrmış, "Yöneticilerde Narsisizm Üzerine Bir Araştırma", *Uluslararası Yönetim İktisat ve İşletme Dergisi* 14/1 (2018), 125.

<sup>14</sup> TDK, Türkçe Sözlük, "Generation", 1268.

<sup>15</sup> Adelina Broadbridge et al., "13\_2\_30: Experiences, Perceptions and Expectations of Retail Employment for Generation Y", *Career Development International* 12/6 (2007), 526.

<sup>16</sup> Cecily L. Betz, "Generations X, Y and Z", *Journal of Pediatric Nursing* 44 (2019), A7-A8.

<sup>17</sup> Cristina Seaman et al., "Common Leadership Characteristics, Personality Traits, and Behaviors that Generations X, Y, and Z Leaders Find Effective for Shared Leadership: A Formal, Informal, and Rational Approach", *JIMS* 18/3 (2018), 7.

<sup>18</sup> See. H. Yunus Taş et al., "Geleceğimiz Olan Z Kuşağının Çalışma Hayatına Muhtemel Etkileri", *Uluslararası Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi* 7/13 (2017), 1031-1048.

<sup>19</sup> Çoban - İrmış, "Yöneticilerde Narsisizm Üzerine Bir Araştırma", 128.

<sup>20</sup> Roy Lubit, "The Long-Term Organizational Impact of Destructively Narcissistic Managers", *Academy of Management Perspectives* 16/1 (2002), 128.

<sup>21</sup> Aaron L. Pincus et al., "Initial Construction and Validation of The Pathological Narcissism Inventory", *Psychological Assessment* 21/3 (2009), 366.

narcissists are obsessed with obtaining power at any cost. 3. In relationships, normal narcissists are capable of valuing others' opinions and demonstrating interest and respect. On the other hand, destructive narcissists tend to exploit and devalue others. 4. Normal narcissists may vary in their attitudes towards authority, but destructive narcissists often perceive themselves as above standard rules and norms. 5. While normal narcissists maintain respectfulness and are aware of their behavioral limits towards others, destructive narcissists often show self-centered attitudes and a lack of empathy, disregarding the impact of their actions on others.<sup>22</sup> Research has demonstrated that when narcissistic personality traits are above normal and present in the person as a pathological disease, the behaviors that emerge are self-focused and without thinking about others and to the extent that they harm them. In this sense, the main reason that makes narcissism a personality disorder is the degree of deprivation. Therefore, narcissistic traits are expressed on a scale. The main factor that determines an individual as a narcissist is where the individual is on the scale. Looking at the literature, this is the reason why two different distinctions are made as normal narcissism and pathological narcissism.<sup>23</sup> In this sense, if the personality traits of those in managerial positions are in the tendency of destructive narcissism, there is a state of reflections on business life that is only oriented towards their own wishes, self-centered, more Machiavellian, who does not think about others, who puts the realization of their own goals above all values because they see themselves as superior and important than others. Studies reveal positive results that increase the level of success of individuals if narcissism has normal dimensions in managers.

## 2. Literature Review

Kohut (1966), in his article titled "Forms and transformation of narcissism", explained the types of narcissism and its transformation with inferences from the presentations of the fall meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association. He identified a close relationship between idealization and narcissism and based narcissism on Freud's personality theory of id, ego and superego.

Watson et al. (1984) tried to reveal the differences in the relationship between narcissism and the values put forward by religiously oriented and humanistic theorists. Their study contains important results regarding the relationship between religious orientation and narcissism. Accordingly, they claimed that individuals with high religious beliefs will realize the narcissism potential lower because of the values they reflect on their lifestyles, whereas humanists are more vulnerable due to their lack of beliefs that suppress narcissistic traits.

Raskin and Terry (1988) conducted an analysis of the internal and external validity of the narcissistic scale in their study in which they analyzed the basic components of the narcissistic personality inventory.

Kets de Vries and Miller (1985) examined the relationship between narcissism and leadership. They investigated the emergence of narcissistic behavior patterns, which they divided into three dimensions as reactive, self-deceptive and constructive, within the context of leadership and their effects in managerial context.

<sup>22</sup> Lubit, "The Long-Term Organizational Impact of Destructively Narcissistic Managers", 129.

<sup>23</sup> Özge Kocakula - A. Ender Altınoğlu, "Narsistik Kişilik Özelliklerinin Karar Süreçlerine Etkisi", *İstanbul Journal of Social Sciences* 18 (2017), 57.

See. Shahal Rozenblatt, *In Defence of Self: The Relationship of Self-Esteem and Narcissism to Aggressive Behaviour* (New York: Long Island University, Psychology, PhD Thesis, 2002).

Mullins and Kopelman (1988) tested the construct validity of four scales measuring narcissism. Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, and Marchisio (2011) examined narcissism in the organizational context through a literature review.

Heiserman and Cook (1998) examined Kernberg and Kohut's hostile, depressive and positive emotion effects on participants in their study; they found less hostile and depressive emotions and higher positive emotions in participants with low narcissism level as opposed to those with high narcissism level.

Van Uden and Zondag (2010) conducted the relationship between narcissism and religious coping styles and found a significant relation between narcissism and religious coping styles.

Kanten (2014) examined the part played by organizational climate how narcissistic personality traits affected organizational citizenship behavior.

Kocakula and Altunoglu (2017) in their study examining the effect of narcissistic personality traits on decision-making processes, determined that there is a relationship between decision-making processes and sub-dimensions of narcissistic personality traits according to the results of their analysis with the questionnaire they applied to 317 students studying in Aydın province.

Capalbo et al. (2018) analyzed the assumption that narcissistic leaders over identify themselves with the organizations they lead and may be in the process of resorting to any means to achieve their goals, including unethical behavior.

Kim (2018) examined the effects of narcissism behaviors of business managers operating in the public sector on the performance of businesses. In the study, he argued that narcissism behavior-oriented leadership cannot be sustained in the long term.

Bolelli (2018) analyzed the questionnaires of 157 people to investigate the work engagement of narcissistic personality traits and found that the need for shame and admiration and authority-approval seeking factors of narcissism have a significant effect on the desire and dedication dimension of work engagement.

In their study, Ozguner et al. (2018) tested the mediating role of fragile narcissism level under the influence of locus of control on entrepreneurial potential with hierarchical regression analysis.

Coban and Irmis (2018) examined the narcissistic personality tendencies of managers and the positive and negative reflections of these tendencies for the business.

Uzun, in his master's thesis examining the relationship between narcissism and religiosity, analyzed the questionnaires he conducted on university students with SPSS 22 and found a significant positive relationship between narcissism and religiosity.

Battal (2020) investigated the role of organizational identification in the relationship between narcissism and job satisfaction at work.

Erdil et al. (2019) examined the relationship between Generation Y and narcissism.

Yustisia et al. (2020), in their study investigating the relationship between religious extremism and narcissism, hypothesized that religious extremism may increase collective narcissism, which in turn will increase the tendency to approve extreme behaviors.

Salehi et al. (2020) examined the effect of narcissism of managers and auditors on the stability of the management team according to corporate performance and found a negative and significant relationship between the narcissism of managers and the stability of the management team.

Yildirim (2021) analyzed examples of toxic leadership in his research on narcissism and leadership. Toprak (2021) investigated the effect of Machiavellianism and narcissism personality traits on unethical behaviors in his master's thesis and analyzed the data set obtained from the questionnaires they conducted on 385 managers working in the private and public sectors in Ankara with SPSS and AMOS 23.0.

Özdemir and Taşhan (2021) examined how narcissistic personality traits affected the tendency to workaholism and found that narcissistic personality traits had a significant effect on workaholism tendency according to the results of their research on 387 academic staff.

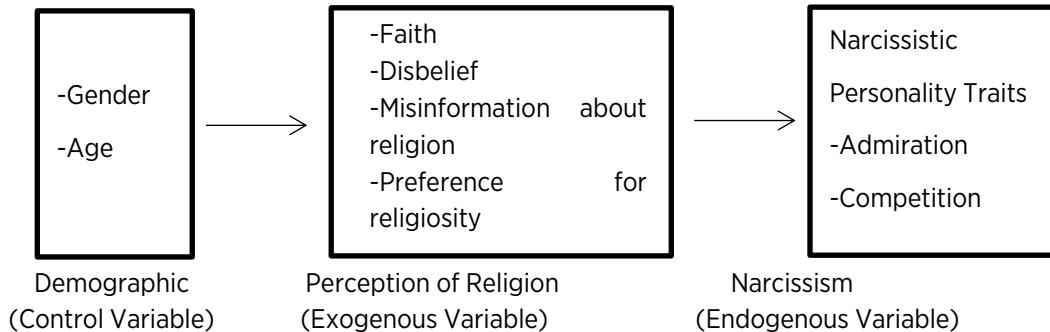
Aslan and Kartopu (2021) examined the effect of religiosity tendency on dark triad (narcissistic Machiavellian and psychopathic) personality traits.

Liu et al. (2022) conducted a survey with 67 team leaders and a scenario-based experimental study with 190 employees in their study in which they tried to find out when and why narcissists take part in the workplace. They obtained evidence that co-worker narcissism regulates the relationship between employee narcissism and employee.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. The Model of the Study and Hypotheses

Figure 1: The Model of the Study



The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

H1. The belief dimension of managers' perception of religion affects narcissistic personality traits.

H2. The disbelief dimension of managers' perception of religion affects narcissistic personality traits.

H3. The dimension of managers' misinformation about religion affects narcissistic personality traits.

H4. The religiosity preference dimension of managers' perception of religion affects narcissistic personality traits.

H5. The effect of managers' perception of religion on narcissistic personality traits creates a significant difference according to gender.

H6. The effect of managers' perception of religion on narcissistic personality traits creates a significant difference according to being generation Y and Z.

### **3.2. Variables of the Study**

The Perception of Religion Scale was sourced from the doctoral dissertation of Karimov, E. (2016). Narcissism scale was sourced from Demirci, I. and Ekşi, F. (2017). The research used a scale consisting of 24 statements to measure the perception of religion and a scale consisting of 18 statements in total, 9 admiration dimensions and 9 competition dimensions for narcissism. The perception of religion scale consists of the dimensions of belief, disbelief, misinformation about religion and preference for religiosity. Factor I of the scale comprised 9 items, Factor II 6 items, Factor III 5 items, and Factor IV 4 items. The total score of the scale was calculated based on these 24 items. In the study, perception of religion is an exogenous variable and narcissism personality trait is an endogenous variable.

### **3.3. Data Collection Tool**

Ethics Committee permission was obtained on 16.04.2021 with the decision numbered 2021/ 210 that the scales in the study questionnaires are ethically appropriate. The questionnaire forms were distributed by hand to the business owners and managers operating in Afyonkarahisar Organized Industrial Zone and information were given to them to choose the appropriate options regarding the statements in the scales of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was conducted between 15.10.2021-15.03.2022. 500 questionnaires were distributed in Afyonkarahisar Organized Industrial Zone and 358 data were obtained that could be used in the analysis.

### **3.4. Data Assessment Technique**

The scales used in the study consist of two dimensions. The first section includes questions about demographic features (age, gender). In the second section, 5-point Likert-type statements with answers ranging from "1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree" were used to determine the perception of religion and narcissism scales.

Validity and reliability analyses were performed to provide the content validity of the scales. Once the data were entered into the SPSS 25 package program, confidence analysis and explanatory factor analysis were applied in the SPSS package program, and Structural Equation Modeling was carried out in the AMOS 19 program to determine the effects of the data on each other.

### **3.5. Test of the Scales Used in the Study**

In order to test the validity of the scales used, a first-order multifactor model for the Perception of Religion scale and a single-factor confirmatory factor analysis for Narcissistic Personality Traits were conducted with the AMOS 19 program.

Since the agreement values obtained by the measurement models constructed to test the validity of the measures were not within reasonable limits, the modifications suggested by the AMOS program were implemented. As a result of the modifications, the modifications brought to the scale are shown in Table 1 and the fit values obtained by the measurement models are shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Changes to the Scales

Scales		Number of Statements	Number of Removed Statements	
<b>Religious Perception Scale</b>	Belief	9	1	
	Disbelief	6	1	
	Misinformation about religion	5	-	
	Preference for religiosity	4	-	
<b>Narcissistic Personality Scale</b>	<b>Admiration</b>	Venditation	3	-
		Uniqueness	3	-
	<b>Competition</b>	Attraction	3	-
		Devaluation	3	-
		Superiority	3	-
		Aggression	3	-

In Table 1, one statement has been removed from the belief dimension and one statement from the disbelief dimension of the Perception of Religion Scale. No statements were removed from the misinformation about religion dimension and the preference for religiosity dimension. No statement was removed from any dimension of narcissistic personality traits scale.

Table 2: Fit Values of the Scales

		$\chi^2$	Df	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
<b>Religious Perception Scale</b>	<b>Belief</b>	38.344	20	1.91	0.97	0.99	0.05
	<b>Disbelief</b>	11.537	5	2.30	0.99	0.99	0.06
	<b>Misinformation about religion</b>	10.004	5	2.00	0.99	0.99	0.05
	<b>Preference for religiosity</b>	3.576	2	1.788	0.99	1.00	0.00
<b>Narcissistic Personality Traits Scale</b>		237.80	81	2.93	0.92	0.89	0.07
<b>Good Fit Values</b>				$\leq 3$	$\geq 90$	$\geq 0.97$	$\leq 0.05$
<b>Acceptable Fit Values</b>				$\leq 5$	0.89-0.85	$\geq 95$	0.06-0.08

The fit values of the scales indicate that both scales meet the  $\chi^2/df \leq 3$  equality with their dimensions. The GFI value  $\geq 90$ , CFI value  $\geq 97$  and RMSEA  $\leq 0.06-0.08$  were found to be met by both scales.

#### 4. Findings

The normality analysis of the study is shown in Table 3. The normality analysis shows that the data are normally distributed since the kurtosis skewness values of all scale items and dimensions are between -2 and +2.

Table 3: Normality Analysis of the Scales

	Belief mean	Disbelief mean	Misinformation about religion mean	Preference for religiosity mean	N admiration	N competition
<b>N Valid</b>	348	348	348	348	348	348
<b>Skewness</b>	-1.485	-.349	1.172	-.923	-.075	.597
<b>Std. Error of Skewness</b>	.131	.131	.131	.131	.131	.131
<b>Kurtosis</b>	1.786	.692	.754	.473	.138	.579
<b>Std. Error of Kurtosis</b>	.261	.261	.261	.261	.261	.261

Table 4 shows the reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha analysis) of the study. The reliability analysis of the study shows that the Cronbach's Alpha values of both scales are highly reliable.

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of the Scales

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
<b>Religious Perception Scale</b>	.796	24
<b>Narcissism Scale</b>	.832	18

The KMO values of the study are given in Table 5.

Table 5: KMO Value of Scales

<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>			
	<b>KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy</b>		.963
<b>Perception of Religion Scale</b>	<b>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	<b>Approx. Chi-Square</b>	6.902E3
		<b>Df</b>	276
		<b>Sig.</b>	.000
	<b>KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy</b>		.840
<b>Narcissism Scale</b>	<b>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	<b>Approx. Chi-Square</b>	1.942E3
		<b>Df</b>	153
		<b>Sig.</b>	.000

Examining the criteria, the KMO value of the study was found to be excellent.

Table 6 shows the correlation values of the sub-dimensions in the scales. Before the correlation analysis, the mean scores of the participants on the dimensions in the scales were averaged to create a variable score for each participant and these scores were evaluated.



Table 6: Correlation Analysis of the dimensions in the scales

		1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>B</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	1					
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>						
<b>Db</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	-.181**	1				
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.001					
<b>M</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	-.731**	.462**	1			
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.000	.000				
<b>Pr</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	.835**	-.167**	-.672**	1		
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.000	.002	.000			
<b>Admiration</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	.018	.274**	.066	.024	1	
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.734	.000	.217	.650		
<b>Competition</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	-.227**	.220**	.328**	-.275**	.303**	1
	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient takes values between -1 and +1. According to the values of the correlation coefficient ( $0 < r \leq 0.3$ , weak;  $0.3 < r \leq 0.7$ , moderate;  $0.7 < r \leq 1$ , strong), the level of relationship between variables can be interpreted.<sup>24</sup>

According to the correlation table including the four dimensions of religious perceptions and the two main dimensions of narcissistic personality traits; Belief dimension has a weak correlation with Disbelief dimension ( $r = -.181$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), a strong negative correlation with Religious misinformation dimension ( $r = -.731$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ), a strong negative correlation with Religious preference dimension ( $r = .835$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ), and a weak negative correlation with Narcissism competition dimension ( $r = -.227$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ). Disbelief dimension has a moderate relationship with religious misinformation dimension ( $r = .462$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ), a weak relationship with Religious preference ( $r = -.167$ ,  $p < 0.02$ ), a weak relationship with Narcissism Admiration dimension ( $r = .274$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ), and a weak relationship with Narcissism Competition dimension ( $r = .220$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ). The dimension of misinformation about Religion has a moderate relationship with the Religious preference dimension ( $r = .672$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ) and a moderate relationship with the Narcissism Competition dimension ( $r = .328$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ). There is a significant relationship between narcissism admiration dimension and competition dimension ( $r = .303$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ).

#### 4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Demographic characteristics of the study participants are shown in Table 7. The participants consist of individuals in managerial positions in enterprises operating in Afyonkarahisar Organized Industrial Zone. Of the participants, 184 were male and 164 were female.

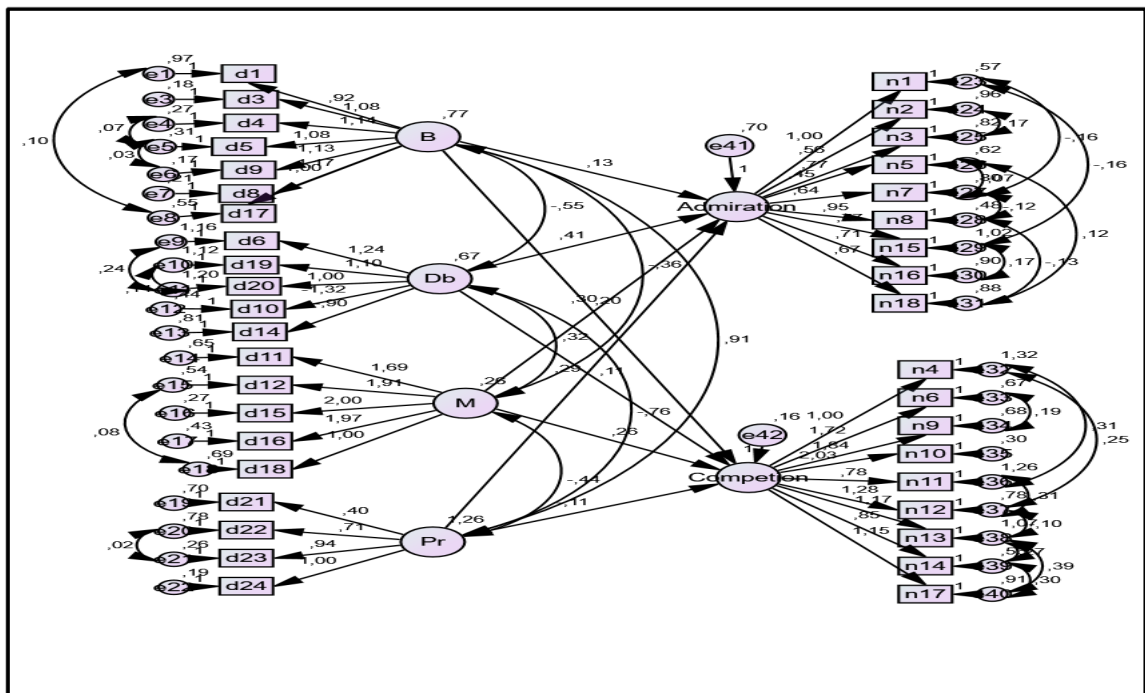
<sup>24</sup> Sait Gürbüz – Faruk Şahin, *Sosyal Bilimlerde Araştırma Yöntemleri* (İstanbul: Seçkin Yayıncılık, 2014), 254.

Table 7: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

	F Frequency	%	Total %
<b>Female</b>	184	52.9	52.9
<b>Male</b>	164	47.1	100.0
<b>Born between 1980-1995</b>	160	46.0	46.0
<b>Born in 1995 and later</b>	188	54.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	348	100.0	

### 5.2. Structural Equation Modeling

Figure 2: Structural Equation Model



Because the model's fit values of did not fall within the acceptable limits as seen in Figure 2, one statement was deleted from the Perception of Religion scale. This modification had the result that the fit values of the model were found to be within the limits of good fit values and sufficient evidence was provided that the model was structurally appropriate. Model fit values are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Structural Equation Model Fit Values

	$\chi^2$	Df	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
<b>Before the statements were Removed</b>	1656,150	722	2,29	0,81	0,89	0,06
<b>After the statements were Removed</b>	1419,518	665	2,12	0,84	0,92	0,05
<b>Good Fit Values</b>			$\leq 3$	$\geq 90$	$\geq 0,97$	$\leq 0,05$
<b>Acceptable Fit Values</b>			$\leq 5$	0,89-0,85	$\geq 95$	0,06-0,08

Table 9 presents the  $\beta$  coefficients, standard errors, p and  $\chi^2$  values between the variables according to the model.

Table 9:  $\beta$  coefficients, standard errors and p values between variables

Variables	Narcissism Dimensions	$\beta$	Standard error	P	R2	CR	Hypothesis Reject/Accept	
<b>H1. The belief dimension of managers' perception of religion affects narcissistic personality traits.</b>	<b>Admiration</b>	0.11	0.19	0.55	0.08	0.58	REJECTED	
	<b>Competition</b>	0.27	0.12	0.02	0.17	2.214	ACCEPTED	
<b>H2. The disbelief dimension of managers' perception of religion affects narcissistic personality traits.</b>	<b>Admiration</b>	0.36	0.14	0.01	0.08	2.481	ACCEPTED	
	<b>Competition</b>	0.11	0.08	0.17	0.17	1.35	REJECTED	
<b>H3. The misinformation about religion dimension of managers' perception of religion affects narcissistic personality traits.</b>	<b>Admiration</b>	0.21	0.22	0.34	0.08	0.94	REJECTED	
	<b>Competition</b>	0.30	0.14	0.03	0.17	2.15	ACCEPTED	
<b>H4. The religiosity preference dimension of managers' perception of religion affects narcissistic personality traits.</b>	<b>Admiration</b>	0.25	0.17	0.13	0.08	1.49	REJECTED	
	<b>Competition</b>	-1.42	0.10	0.17	0.17	-1.37	REJECTED	
<b>H5. The effect of managers' perception of religion on narcissistic personality traits is significantly different according to gender.</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Belief-Admiration</b>	0.34	0.28	0.22	0.11	1.20	ACCEPTED
		<b>Belief-Competition</b>	0.39	0.19	0.04	0.16	2.00	
		<b>Disbelief-Admiration</b>	0.31	0.19	0.10	0.11	1.63	
		<b>Disbelief-Competition</b>	-0.05	0.11	0.62	0.16	0.49	
		<b>Misinformation about Religion-Admiration</b>	0.30	0.28	0.28	0.11	1.08	
		<b>Misinformation about Religion-Competition</b>	0.22	0.18	0.21	0.16	1.234	
		<b>Preference for Religiosity-Admiration</b>	0.21	0.21	0.32	0.11	0.99	

		<b>Preference for Religiosity-Competition</b>	-0.23	0.14	0.09	0.16	-1.65		
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Belief-Admiration</b>	-0.20	0.32	0.53	0.09	-0.62		<b>ACCEPTED</b>
		<b>Belief-Competition</b>	0.12	0.18	0.66	0.17	0.66		
		<b>Disbelief-Admiration</b>	0.45	0.24	0.05	0.09	1.90		
		<b>Disbelief-Competition</b>	0.21	0.14	0.13	0.17	1.49		
		<b>Misinformation about Religion-Admiration</b>	-0.19	0.40	0.70	0.09	-0.38		
		<b>Misinformation about Religion-Competition</b>	0.21	0.24	0.36	0.17	0.90		
		<b>Preference for Religiosity-Admiration</b>	0.45	0.28	0.11	0.09	1.57		
		<b>Preference for Religiosity-Competition</b>	0.005	0.16	0.97	0.17	0.03		
		<b>H6. The effect of managers' perception of religion on narcissistic personality traits creates a significant difference according to being a generation Y and Z.</b>	<b>GENERATION Y</b>	<b>Belief-Admiration</b>	-0.06	0.26	0.80		
<b>Belief-Competition</b>	0.25			0.16	0.11	0.16	1.59		
<b>Disbelief-Admiration</b>	0.11			0.23	0.62	0.05	0.49		
<b>Disbelief-Competition</b>	0.25			0.14	0.07	0.16	1.76		
<b>Misinformation about Religion-Admiration</b>	0.48			0.28	0.09	0.05	1.68		
<b>Misinformation about Religion-Competition</b>	0.32			0.17	0.93	0.16	1.84		
<b>Preference for Religiosity-Admiration</b>	0.29			0.26	0.26	0.05	1.11		
<b>Preference for Religiosity-Competition</b>	-0.11			0.15	0.94	0.16	-0.07		

<b>GENERATION Z</b>	<b>Belief-Admiration</b>	0.17	0.32	0.67	0.13	0.53
	<b>Belief-Competition</b>	0.18	0.17	0.33	0.19	1.05
	<b>Disbelief-Admiration</b>	0.48	0.20	0.01	0.13	2.36
	<b>Disbelief-Competition</b>	0.008	0.09	0.70	0.19	0.07
	<b>Misinformation about Religion-Admiration</b>	0.02	0.36	0.99	0.13	0.06
	<b>Misinformation about Religion-Competition</b>	0.16	0.18	0.39	0.19	0.89
	<b>Preference for religiosity-Admiration</b>	0.28	0.23	0.19	0.13	1.19
	<b>Preference for Religiosity-Competition</b>	-0.22	0.12	0.05	0.19	-1.79

Looking at the results of the analyses;

H1. Managers' belief dimension affects narcissistic personality traits. Since  $p=0.50$   $p>0.05$  in the Admiration dimension of narcissism, no significant difference is found, and the hypothesis can be rejected. Since in the Competition dimension  $p=0.03$   $p<0.05$ , there is a statistically significant difference, and it is thus necessary to accept the hypothesis.

H2. Disbelief dimension of managers affects narcissistic personality traits. Since  $p=0.01$   $p<0.05$  there is a statistically significant difference in the Admiration dimension of narcissism and the hypothesis can be accepted. No significant difference is found in the Competition dimension since  $p=0.30$   $p>0.05$  and the hypothesis can be rejected.

H3. Managers' misinformation about religion affects narcissistic personality traits. There is no significant difference in the Admiration dimension of narcissism since  $p=0.30$   $p>0.05$  and the hypothesis is rejected. A statistically significant difference is found in the Competition dimension since  $p=0.02$   $p<0.05$  and it is thus necessary to accept the hypothesis.

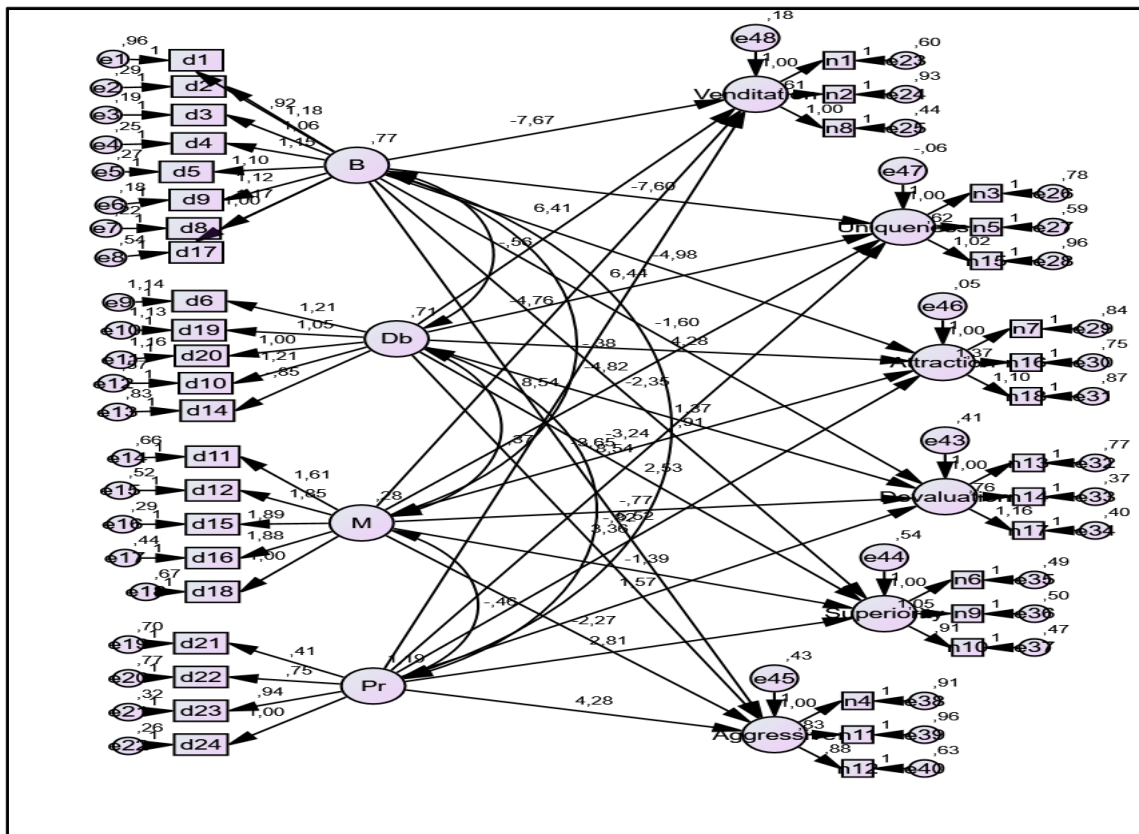
H4. Managers' religiousness preference dimension affects narcissistic personality traits. Since there is no significant difference in the Admiration dimension of narcissism  $p=0.15$  and in the Competition dimension  $p=0.10$   $p>0.05$ , the hypothesis is rejected.

H5. The effect of managers' perception of religion on narcissistic personality traits creates a significant difference according to gender. Since  $p=0.05$   $p<0.05$  for female managers in the narcissism competition dimension of the belief dimension of religious perception and  $p=0.04$   $p<0.05$  for male managers in the narcissism admiration dimension of the disbelief dimension of religious perception, there is a statistically significant difference and it is thus necessary to accept the hypothesis.

H6. The managers' perception of religion on narcissistic personality traits has the effect of creating a significant difference according to being generation Y and Z. Since  $p=0.01$   $p<0.05$  in the admiration dimension of narcissism of the disbelief dimension of religious perception in Generation Z managers and  $p=0.05$   $p<0.05$  in the competition dimension of narcissism of the religiosity preference dimension of religious perception, a statistically significant difference is found and it is thus necessary to accept the hypothesis.

When the hypothesis results are analyzed, we see that belief, disbelief and misinformation dimensions of religious perception affect narcissistic personality traits. In terms of gender, the study found that the dimension of belief in women creates a significant difference in the competition dimension of narcissism and the dimension of disbelief in men produces a significant difference in the admiration dimension of narcissism. In terms of the generations Y and Z examined in the study, while there was no significant effect of the dimensions of religious perception on both dimensions of narcissism in the generation Y, it was determined that the disbelief dimension of religious perception in the generation Z made a significant difference in the admiration dimension of narcissism and the dimension of preference for religiosity made a significant difference in the competition dimension of narcissism.

Figure 3. Structural Equation Model of the Scales' Sub dimensions



The evaluation of the scale's sub-dimensions following the Structural Equation Model is shown in Figure 3. The Structural Equation Model fit values of the sub-dimensions are within acceptable limits. RMSEA: 0.03,  $\leq 0.05$   $\chi^2/df$ : 1.96  $\leq 3$  are good fit values. Table 10 shows the P CR standard error values and the levels of mutual influence of the sub-dimensions of the scales.

Table 10: Values of Sub-dimensions

Dimensions			S.Error	CR	P
Venditation	<---	B	3.034	-2.529	.011
Attraction	<---	B	2.036	-2.445	.014
Devaluation	<---	B	.791	-2.017	.044
Superiority	<---	B	1.193	-1.972	.049
Aggressive	<---	B	1.645	-2.219	.027
Uniqueness	<---	B	3.037	-2.502	.012
Venditation	<---	Db	2.376	2.699	.007
Uniqueness	<---	Db	2.381	2.702	.007
Attraction	<---	Db	1.604	2.670	.008
Devaluation	<---	Db	.620	2.213	.027
Superiority	<---	Db	.940	2.689	.007
Aggressive	<---	Db	1.296	2.591	.010
Venditation	<---	M	2.187	-2.179	.029
Uniqueness	<---	M	2.190	-2.203	.028
Attraction	<---	M	1.466	-2.209	.027
Devaluation	<---	M	.564	-1.362	.173
Superiority	<---	M	.856	-1.619	.106
Aggressive	<---	M	1.181	-1.920	.055
Venditation	<---	Pr	3.158	2.705	.007
Uniqueness	<---	Pr	3.165	2.700	.007
Attraction	<---	Pr	2.126	2.599	.009
Devaluation	<---	Pr	.824	1.911	.056
Superiority	<---	Pr	1.245	2.255	.024
Aggressive	<---	Pr	1.720	2.491	.013

Perception of religion scale consists of the dimensions of belief (B), disbelief (Db), misinformation about religion (M) and preference for religiosity (Pr). Admiration dimension of narcissism scale consists of Venditation, Uniqueness, Attraction and Competition dimension consist of Devaluation, Superiority, Aggression. Looking at the Structural Equation Model analysis values of the sub-dimensions, we see that misinformation about religion has no effect on the sub-dimensions of the competition dimension of narcissism, Devaluation and Superiority, with  $p < 0.05$ . It was determined that all other dimensions of perception of religion affect the dimensions of narcissism with  $p < 0.05$ .

### Conclusion and Discussion

According to the hypothesis results; belief, disbelief and misinformation dimensions of religious perception affect narcissistic personality traits. In terms of gender, it has been determined that the dimension of belief in women creates a statistically significant difference in the competition dimension of narcissism and the dimension of disbelief in men creates a statistically significant difference in the admiration dimension of narcissism. With regard to Generation Y and Generation Z, no significant effect of the dimensions of perception of religion on both dimensions of narcissism was observed in Generation Y, while in Generation Z, it was determined that the dimension of disbelief of perception of religion made a statistically significant difference

in the admiration dimension of narcissism and the dimension of preference for religiosity made a statistically significant difference in the competition dimension of narcissism. When the Structural Equation Model analysis values of the sub-dimensions are examined, it is seen that misinformation about religion has no effect on the sub-dimensions of the competition dimension of narcissism, devaluation and superiority, at  $p < 0.05$ . All other dimensions of perception of religion were found to have an effect on the dimensions of narcissism with  $p < 0.05$  equality. When evaluated with the literature, Akin and Kartopu (2021) indicated the relationship between religiosity tendency and narcissistic, Machiavellian and psychopathic personality traits, which are referred to as the dark triad, and found that religiosity tendency affects the dark triad personality traits. Similarly, Ozel (2013) conducted a study focusing on narcissism and religion within Islam, uncovering the crucial role religion plays in mitigating pathological narcissism.<sup>25</sup> Complementing these findings, Campbell et al. (2011), in their research on narcissism in organizational contexts highlighted the pervasive impact of narcissistic personality traits on business processes, underscoring the need for further research in this area.<sup>26</sup> Kartopu (2013) researched a negative correlation between religious inclination and narcissistic behaviors, indicating that as religious inclination increases, narcissistic personality traits tend to diminish.<sup>27</sup> Van Uden and Zondag (2010) examined the relationship between religious coping styles and narcissism and found a positive relationship between narcissism and religious coping styles. They found that there was a relationship between the use of religious coping styles and a decrease in the level of narcissism.<sup>28</sup> In their study, Wink et al. (2005) found a positive effect of religion on positive narcissism and a negative effect on pathological narcissism in older age groups.<sup>29</sup>

The results of the research have also shown that religious perceptions reveal effective results on narcissism. Managers' religious perceptions affect their narcissistic tendencies. From the perspective of Islam, the widespread belief of the region where the research was conducted; although there is no definition of narcissism in the Islamic literature, it has been reported that narcissistic personality traits are not welcomed with a number of verses regarding the states and behaviors that occur in individuals within the scope of their sub-dimensions. Warnings are given in many verses in the Holy Quran for dimensions such as grandiosity, arrogance, self-righteousness, and humiliation of others. Examples of these include:

Verse 34 of Sūrat al-Baqara;

To the angels: "Prostrate yourselves to Adam!" and all except Iblis immediately fell down in prostration. Iblis, on the other hand, resisted, became arrogant and became one of the disbelievers.<sup>30</sup>

Verse 36 of Sūrat al-Nisā':

Serve Allah and associate nothing with Him. Do good to your parents. Do good to relatives, orphans, the poor, close neighbors, distant neighbors, close friends, the stranded, and the slaves, servants, and workers under

<sup>25</sup> İsa Özel, "Kur'ân Ekseninde Narsizm ve Din." *Journal of International Social Research* (2013), 6/28.

<sup>26</sup> See. Campbell et al., "Narcissism in Organizational Contexts", 268-284.

<sup>27</sup> See. Saffet Kartopu, "Narsisizmin Dindarlık Eğilimleriyle İlişkisi: Gümüşhane Üniversitesi Örneği", *International Journal of Social Science* 6/6 (2013), 625-649.

<sup>28</sup> See. Marinus HF van Uden – Hessel J. Zondag, "I Just Believe in Me: Narcissism and Religious Coping", *Archive for The Psychology of Religion* 32/1 (2010), 69-85.

<sup>29</sup> See. Paul Wink et al., "Spiritual Seeking, Narcissism, and Psychotherapy: How Are They Related?", *Journal for The Scientific Study of Religion* 44/2 (2005), 143-158.

<sup>30</sup> *Kur'an-ı Kerim* Meâli, çev. Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır (İstanbul: Seda Yayınları, 2014), al-Baqara 1/ 34.



your hands. For Allah does not love those who are arrogant and boast too much.<sup>31</sup>

Verse 48 of Sūrat al-A'raf:

The people of A'raf call out to some of the men of Hell whom they recognize by their faces and say: "See, neither your multitudinous followers, nor your incalculable wealth, nor your arrogant behavior have availed you today".<sup>32</sup>

Verse 146 of Sūrat al-A'raf:

I will turn away from understanding my signs those who are arrogant in the earth unjustly, for whatever miracle they see, they do not believe in it. If they see the right path, they do not follow it. But if they see the way of rebellion and transgression, they immediately adopt it as the way to follow. This is because they deny Our signs and are utterly incapable of understanding them.<sup>33</sup>

Verse 23 of Sūrat al-Naḥl:

Surely Allah knows what they conceal and what they reveal. He does not love those who are arrogant.<sup>34</sup>

Verse 76 of Sūrat al-Mu'minūn:

Enter the gates of Hell to abide in it forever! Wretched is the destination of the arrogant!<sup>35</sup>

Verse 23 of Sūrat al-Ḥadīd:

We have done this so that you may not grieve over what you have lost, and that you may not be spoiled by what Allah has bestowed upon you. For Allah does not love anyone who is arrogant and boastful before people.<sup>36</sup>

Verse 18 of Sūrat Luqmān:

Do not despise people and turn away, and do not walk arrogantly on the earth; Allah does not love anyone who is proud and boastful.<sup>37</sup>

The verses make it clear that Islam advises people to avoid the aspects of narcissism, or in some verses explicitly forbids them.

It is obvious that religious values command a person to be humble, far from arrogance, respectful, loving and deferential to other people, caring for them, helpful, avoiding arrogant behavior towards others with their wealth, title, children, in short, with what they have in the world, both in their individual life and in the social order. These regulations and rules of religion do not tolerate narcissistic behavior patterns that are defined as pathological. When narcissistic personality traits emerge in business life, it legitimizes a thought and behavior mechanism that makes it appropriate to do unethical behaviors for one's own interests without considering

<sup>31</sup> al-Nisā' 4/ 36.

<sup>32</sup> al-A'raf 7/ 48.

<sup>33</sup> al-A'raf 7/ 146.

<sup>34</sup> al-Naḥl 16/ 23.

<sup>35</sup> al-Mu'minūn 23/ 76.

<sup>36</sup> al-Ḥadīd 57/ 23.

<sup>37</sup> Luqmān 31/ 18.

others. The results of the analysis show that religious perceptions play a moderating role in the process of engaging in narcissistic behaviors.

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