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Editorial

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Impact of National Cultural Dimensions on Child Rights Policy Management: A Cross-Country Study

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Abstract

Efforts to improve children's welfare are guided by international frameworks like the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, the implementation of these rights varies significantly across countries due to the influence of cultural factors. This study explored the relationship between national cultural dimensions and the Child Rights Index (KRI) through a cross-country comparative analysis. Using Hofstede's cultural dimensions as an explanatory framework, data from 78 countries spanning 2015-2022 were analyzed. The KRI evaluates countries' performance in upholding children's rights across five domains: the right to life, health, education, protection, and an environment that promotes children's rights. A multiple regression model was employed to assess the impact of cultural dimensions on KRI scores. The findings revealed that cultural dimensions such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation significantly influence KRI scores. These results underscore the importance of integrating cultural factors into child rights policies to develop effective strategies for promoting and protecting children's well-being globally.

Keywords: *Culture, child rights, hofstede, kidsrights index, multiple regression analysis*

Öz

Çocuk refahını iyileştirmeye yönelik çabalar, 1989 tarihli Birleşmiş Milletler Çocuk Haklarına Dair Sözleşme gibi uluslararası çerçevelerle yönlendirilmektedir. Ancak, bu hakların uygulanması, kültürel faktörlerin etkisi nedeniyle ülkeler arasında önemli ölçüde farklılık göstermektedir. Bu çalışma, ulusal kültürel boyutlar ile Çocuk Hakları Endeksi (KRI) arasındaki ilişkiyi ülkeler arası bir karşılaştırmalı analiz yoluyla incelemiştir. Hofstede'nin kültürel boyutlarını açıklayıcı bir çerçeve olarak kullanan araştırmada, 2015-2022 yılları arasını kapsayan 78 ülkeden elde edilen veriler analiz edilmiştir. KRI, çocuk haklarının yaşama, sağlık, eğitim, koruma ve çocuk haklarını destekleyen bir ortam sağlama gibi beş alandaki uygulanma performansını değerlendirmektedir. Kültürel boyutların KRI skorları üzerindeki etkisini değerlendirmek için çoklu regresyon modeli kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, güç mesafesi, belirsizlikten kaçınma ve uzun dönemli yönelim gibi kültürel boyutların KRI skorlarını önemli ölçüde etkilediğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu sonuçlar, çocukların refahını koruma ve teşvik etmeye yönelik etkili stratejiler geliştirmek için çocuk hakları politikalarına kültürel faktörlerin dikkate alınmasının ülkelerin çocuk hakları politikaları geliştirilmesine ve yönetimine olan etkilerini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kültür, çocuk hakları, hofstede, çocuk hakları endeksi, çoklu regresyon analizi*

Introduction

Children have faced various forms of hardship, neglect, and abuse since ancient times throughout the world. Historically, various legal arrangements have been made at the international level to improve the situation of children. The most recent of these is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child dated November 20, 1989, signed by all member states of the UN except the USA. It is not possible to say that the provisions of the Convention have been implemented at the same level in all state parties. There are significant differences among the countries that have signed the Convention in terms of the social adoption of the understanding of children's rights and the related policy and legal changes. One of the main reasons for this situation is likely to be socio-cultural characteristics. As a matter of fact, child rights researchers state that the meaning given to childhood in Eastern and Western cultures differs, and that while in Eastern cultures childhood is not attributed a special meaning and is seen as a period that should end quickly, in Western societies a special and privileged fiction of childhood independent from adults is developed (see Holt, 2000; Doğan, 2000; Tan, 2019).

Childhood researcher Heywood (2003) emphasizes the cultural determinants in societies' perceptions, understandings, and practices concerning children, asserting that the investigation of childhood perceptions in different times and places should be conducted within the context of the cultural conditions of that era and location. Furthermore, as technological advancements continue to accelerate cultural change (Postman, 1992), childhood itself is undergoing a transformation. Therefore, when evaluating the status of children's rights in societies, it is imperative to take into consideration the phenomenon of 'culture'.

Culture is a commonly employed concept to underscore the variety among nations. The shared cognitive framework that differentiates individuals in one group or classification from those in other groups or classifications serves as an illustration of culture (Hofstede, 2011). In this respect, culture serves as a commonly utilized

concept to emphasize the diversity among nations. It entails the shared cognitive framework that sets apart individuals belonging to a specific group or category from those in different groups or categories, as articulated by Hofstede (2011:3). Culture, given its influence on the behaviors of individuals constituting a society (Needle, 2004), stands as one of the most potent factors shaping human conduct (Soares et al., 2007) and holds the potential to significantly impact the stance of societies and institutions regarding children's rights. It is well-established that culture permeates various domains and that many issues are influenced by cultural contexts. Cross-cultural studies, in particular, are frequently employed to expound upon diverse topics. The objective of this research is to comparatively analyze which cultural characteristics of societies affect the realization of children's rights.

Among the significant contributions to cross-cultural differentiation studies are those conducted by Kluckhohn & Strodbeck (1961), Hall (1976), Hofstede (1984), Schwartz (1992), and Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars (2008). In this study, Hofstede's model serves as the primary framework.

Theoretical Framework

The concept of culture is multi-dimensional and expansive, making it challenging to arrive at a universally agreed-upon definition (Goodenough, 1970). Nevertheless, various definitions provided by scholars shed light on the understanding of the concept. One such definition, presented by Hoult (1969), elucidates the etymological origin of the term. According to this perspective, the word 'culture' is derived from the Latin verb 'cultura' or 'colere,' which in classical Latin signifies 'to care for' or 'to cultivate.' In an agricultural context, it describes the act of planting, tending, and growing crops (Hoult, 1969). DiStefano & Maznevski (2000) define culture as 'the assumptions and norms that determine how interactions within a society or a specific group will occur and the approach they will exhibit in their endeavors'. Conversely, culture denotes a societal way of life characterized by regularly repeated patterns of thinking, feeling,

behavior, shared values, and dissemination through symbols (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). In other words, culture encompasses the thinking patterns that individuals convey to each other in all facets of society (Hofstede, 1984). Similarly, Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997) conceptualize culture as "a set of rules and methods developed by a society over time to address the problems they encounter in their interactions". Latouche (1993) asserts that the fundamental function of culture is to provide meaning to individuals' and societies' psychological worlds and concrete experiences. Geertz (1973) also emphasizes that individuals can only live in conjunction with cultural patterns. According to Fichter (2002), culture encompasses four fundamental characteristics. Culture consists of signs and symbols that differentiate societies from each other. Culture not only includes the values of the society in which it exists but also interprets them; it forms the elements of social solidarity; for these reasons, culture consists of elements that dominate the development and progress of a society. Therefore, culture is composed of factors that exert influence over a society's development and progress. Adler (1991) categorizes these elements of culture as 'knowledge, beliefs, morals, laws, customs,' and 'all the characteristics and habits that an individual possesses as a member of a society.' According to Parker (1998), the components of culture encompass behaviors, norms, customs, language, and symbols, along with the values, beliefs, and assumptions that elucidate them.

Recently, cultural differentiation studies have been frequently used to explain situations on different subjects. These studies were pioneered by the most important intercultural differentiation studies, Kluckhohn & Strodbeck (1961), Hall (1976), Hofstede (1984), Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars (1993). Hofstede's research is the most frequently referenced among these studies. He analyzed various cultures in his cross-country study, focusing on six dimensions (Hofstede, 1984; Hofstede & Bond, 1984). Power distance refers to the degree to which less powerful members of a society accept the unequal distribution of power and the authority of one person over others,

representing a fundamental anthropological and societal concept linking social inequality. The second dimension is individualism-collectivism, which describes a culture's bipolar structure. Individualism emphasizes an individual's self-preservation and the welfare of their immediate family, while collectivism necessitates individuals to maintain loyalty to the groups or collectivities they belong to. As the third dimension, femininity-masculinity reflects the prominence of values such as assertiveness, materialism, self-confidence, independence, ambition, competitiveness, dominance, obedience, aggression, and authoritarianism in a culture. If values related to interpersonal relationships and the importance placed on individuals are less emphasized, it signifies a masculine-oriented culture. Values that prioritize the overall quality of life and human relationships are indicators of a feminine culture. Another dimension is uncertainty avoidance, which explains the beliefs created by individuals in response to feeling threatened in ambiguous situations and a society's ways of dealing with conflict and threats. The fifth dimension is short-term versus long-term orientation, which elucidates how much a culture's members are willing to delay gratifying material, social, and emotional needs. The final dimension is called as indulgence defined as the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised. Relatively weak control is called "Indulgence" and relatively strong control is called "Restraint". Cultures can, therefore, be described as indulgent or restrained.

In this research, the cultural dimensions determined by Hofstede were used to evaluate the differences between countries concerning their practices of children's rights. Hofstede's cultural dimensions offer a framework for discerning variations among cultures using a national culture's profile and the specified dimensions. Through this framework, explanations can be sought for the characteristic behaviors exhibited by culturally diverse groups. Hofstede's interpretation underscores the importance of comprehending the typical characteristics associated with a particular dimension's low or high score. For instance, a high score in the Power

Distance Index (PDI) dimension signifies that a substantial portion of individuals in the society (country) are prone to exhibit certain characteristic behaviors. Given that all scores are derived from calculated statistical means, they are applicable for analyzing larger groups of individuals (samples) who share a common cultural background. Consequently, it is not feasible to employ Hofstede's scores to predict the behavior of individual members in a small, diverse team but it revolves around shared cognitive frameworks that set individuals within a particular group or category apart from those in other groups or categories (Hofstede, 2011). On the other hand, McSweeney (2002) critiques Hofstede's methodology, arguing that using national averages to represent cultural values overlooks within-country variations and individual differences. Likewise Moussetes (2007) argues that Hofstede's research lacks representation of women's perspectives, leading to a skewed understanding of cultural dimensions.

However, the key concept governing the study and presented in the theoretical perspectives is culture. The concept of culture is complex, and there is a wide range of literature and discussion related to perspectives on culture. Childhood perceptions vary widely across cultures, shaped by societal norms, values, and cultural practices. Kurt (2021) emphasizes that these cultural differences significantly influence how childhood is understood and valued, reflecting broader societal expectations. Emotional understanding is also culturally shaped, as evidenced by Möller, Bull, and Aschersleben (2022), who found that emotion socialization practices play a critical role in children's emotional development. In the realm of education, Zhang and Pelletier (2022) note that global early childhood education trends, such as learning through play and child-centered curricula, are increasingly integrated with traditional cultural emphases, balancing innovation with accountability. Furthermore, Gaygısız (2013) underscores the positive association between long-term orientation and developmental outcomes, suggesting that culturally driven future-focused values contribute to more effective child development strategies.

These findings collectively highlight the intricate interplay between cultural factors and the shaping of childhood experiences, demonstrating the need for culturally sensitive approaches in child rights and education policies.

The KidsRights Index (KRI))

The 20th of November 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, aimed at improving children's rights worldwide, guarantees children's rights to life, development, protection, and participation, while also assigning the responsibility to states parties to provide these rights to children. The compliance of states parties with the provisions of the Convention is overseen by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Various indices developed in this field serve a significant function in monitoring the situations in countries. One of these indices is the KidsRights Index (KRI) which is a global ranking that measures how children's rights are respected worldwide and the extent of countries' commitment to improving children's rights annually. The index includes rankings of all 193 United Nations member states that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have sufficient data available. This study examines how cultural dimensions identified by Hofstede relate to children's rights rankings in different countries, highlighting disparities in children's rights situations globally.

The KRI collates information from three credible sources: current statistical data provided by UNICEF and UNDP, and qualitative data delivered by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Besides various child rights concerns, such as underage marriages or the challenges faced by children in conflict zones, display significant disparities among different countries, making it difficult to conduct fair comparisons when integrating these issues into an index. Additionally, the scarcity or absence of data on specific topics like violence against children or the treatment of refugee minors poses challenges in quantifying and achieving meaningful comparability in these areas. As a result, the KRI focuses on broader themes that are universally

relevant to all states parties to the CRC (Child Rights Convention) and for which reliable data is generally accessible.

The KRI results show that there are differences in scores on both a regional and country-specific level. The KRI evaluates different aspects of children's well-being, such as life quality, health, education, protection conditions, and the overall environment that supports children's rights in each country. It aims to create a combined score reflecting each country's efforts in promoting children's rights. Additionally, it offers a strategic plan to help children meet their present and future needs. Due to the complexity of calculating child development scores which involve numerous factors across various topics, research on child development often focuses on social and economic issues. Moreover, analyzing the KRI allows for comparing sustainable development progress among different countries and regions.

KRI comprises a total of twenty indicators that collectively assess and evaluate the five domains whereas the thirteen indicators are based on quantitative data while seven are derived from qualitative information. The collected data undergoes a systematic evaluation for all countries in the Index, using a consistent calculation method. Each country is assessed across five Domains, leading to an overall ranking. These domains include the Right to Life (e.g., child mortality, life expectancy, maternal mortality), Right to Health (such as malnutrition rates, immunization coverage, access to sanitation and clean water), Right to Education (including schooling years for girls and boys), Right to Protection (covering issues like child labor and birth registration), and Enabling Environment for Child Rights (assessing how well countries adhere to children's rights principles). Scores are based on assessments by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in areas like non-discrimination, child participation, budget allocation, etc. These indicators reflect the broader context needed for children's rights globally. With its focus on these five domains, the KRI stands out as a unique annual global measure of nations' dedication to enhancing children's rights (Gray, 2023).

Hence, the objective of this study is to elucidate how the cultural structures of national countries affect their KRI scores. This will be accomplished through an analysis employing a multiple regression, utilizing a cross-sectional dataset encompassing 78 countries. This approach aims to shed light on certain cultural attributes that may help elucidate why some nations achieve higher KRI scores than others, which is one of the main questions of this study. In other words, disparities in KRI scores among countries, reflecting variations in their success in areas such as child care, education, nutrition, and other dimensions of sustainable development, may be attributed to cross-cultural distinctions.

Consequently, this study investigates the influence of national cultural dimensions on KRI scores through explanatory modeling, in accordance with hypotheses that have been tested using KRI scores collected for 78 countries during the period spanning 2015 to 2022. This study is expected to provide valuable knowledge for nations as they strive to create and enforce policies that enhance child development while being in line with their own cultural values.

The Research Model and Hypotheses

Efforts to improve the welfare of children are regulated by international legal frameworks such as the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, how these rights are put into practice differs from country to country since culture plays a significant role in shaping the implementation and effectiveness of child rights policies. Culture is a widely utilized concept that underscores the diverse distinctions existing among nations. This study focuses on Hofstede's cultural diversity model as a means to capture and analyze these cultural variations. Hofstede's model comprises six distinct dimensions. In developing hypotheses about the potential influence of these cultural dimensions on the KRI, we thoughtfully consider the possible consequences of various countries' cultural orientations, particularly concerning individuals, with a particular emphasis on children.

In Hofstede's model, the first dimension is power distance (PWDS), ranging from zero for low PWDS to 100 for high PWDS. This dimension measures a country's accepted level of inequality. Low scores indicate a culture that tolerates minimal differences, while high scores show a society where significant hierarchical relationships are considered natural. In high PWDS cultures, social hierarchy is well-defined and unquestioned, whereas in low PWDS cultures, there is a tendency to question authority and seek to distribute power more evenly. Countries that prioritize citizen equality and individual autonomy tend to focus on developing social welfare policies, ensuring that essential services such as education and healthcare are accessible to all regardless of social status or wealth. In societies characterized by high power distance and hierarchical structures, equal access to basic social services is not expected, as these services often hinge on an individual's social status (Triandis, 1984; Khatri, 2009). Less industrialized societies with lower education levels, reduced urbanization, and high-income inequality tend to show more hierarchical cultural traits (Basabe & Ros, 2005). Consequently, these countries are less likely to offer equal opportunities for education, healthcare, and nutrition to all children. Thus, countries with lower PWDS scores are anticipated to provide equal access to education, safety, healthcare, and nutrition, irrespective of a child's family social status..

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *Hofstede's Power Distance dimension has a significant and negative effect on KRI's score.*

Hofstede's second cultural dimension, individualism (INDUV) versus collectivism, is measured on a scale from zero to 100. Individualism reflects independent actions while collectivism emphasizes group-oriented behaviors. Individualistic cultures value personal independence and achievement, while collectivist cultures stress duty to the group. Interpersonal bonds are weaker in individualistic cultures compared to strong group connections in collectivist cultures, affecting societal structures like education and healthcare. Higher levels of

economic development in countries usually correspond to stronger support for human rights and equality, reinforcing the relationship between development and individualism. Individualistic cultures prioritize children's well-being by offering access to education, healthcare, and nutrition. Individuals in these cultures mainly focus on their immediate family unit, especially their children, striving for a better future. Therefore, nations scoring high on the individualism dimension (INDUV) are likely to prioritize sustainable child development.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *Hofstede's Individuality dimension has a significant and positive effect on KRI's score.*

The third dimension, known as Masculinity (MSCL) versus femininity is measured on a scale from zero to 100. In cultures that are considered masculine, traits such as confidence, competitiveness, the pursuit of wealth, and material goods are highly regarded. On the other hand, societies with a feminine orientation place importance on qualities like empathy, collaboration, modesty, unity, and aiding others. Societies that lean towards femininity prioritize the well-being of individuals, especially children, more than those leaning towards masculinity. They offer significant support for child growth by addressing various needs. According to research conducted by Rodrigues and Blumberg (2000), feminine societies allocate more resources to programs focused on human development compared to masculine ones. As a result, nations with lower levels of masculinity are expected to score higher on the KRI.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *Hofstede's Masculinity dimension has a significant and positive effect on KRI's scores.*

The fourth dimension, known as uncertainty avoidance (UNAV), ranges from zero to 100, indicating weak to strong uncertainty avoidance in a culture. It measures how much a society tries to lessen anxiety by reducing uncertainty and dealing with ambiguity and unpredictability. In essence, it

reflects society's inclination to grapple with ambiguity and unpredictability, as elucidated by Wennekers et al. in 2010. Furthermore, it signifies people's preferences for structured versus unstructured environments. As noted by Hofstede & McCrae (2004) high UNAV scores indicate a preference for clearly defined and comprehensible rules to minimize the occurrence of unforeseen and non-standard situations. Conversely, low UNAV signifies a more open, adaptable, and tolerant approach to ambiguous circumstances. In high UNAV cultures, individuals may harbor concerns about potential future changes, both for themselves and their children, motivating them to provide enhanced education, healthcare, safety, and nutrition to ensure resilience in the face of potential catastrophic shifts. In cultures where uncertainty is strongly disliked, individuals may aim to provide their children with education, safety, and nourishment to ensure their future. As a result, countries with high UNAV rankings are predicted to also perform well in KRI.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): *Hofstede's Uncertainty avoidance dimension has a significant and positive effect on KRI's score.*

In Hofstede's classification, the fifth dimension measures a society's temporal perspective. Long-term orientation (LNGT) reflects adapting traditions to change and focus on saving, investing, and determination for long-term goals. Short-term orientation (SHRT) emphasizes immediate results, honoring traditions, and fulfilling social duties. Studies indicate that SHRT may overlook health compared to LNGT societies which invest in increasing life expectancy. As a result, long-term-oriented societies prioritize the future and strive for its improvement. In light of this, it can be inferred that LNGT cultures value the welfare and enduring development of their children, recognizing them as crucial elements of the future. Studies also indicate positive relationships between long-term orientation and social and economic development. Hence, countries with high LNGT scores are anticipated to achieve high scores in KRI scores. Every society must balance preserving connections to its history

while facing current and future challenges, with different priorities for these goals. Societies that rank low on this aspect tend to cling to traditional customs and rules, showing skepticism towards societal changes. Conversely, societies ranking high on this dimension adopt a more practical stance by promoting saving and advancements in contemporary education to prepare themselves for what lies ahead. To realize the long-term focus, Moss & Petrie (2002) argue that physical, social, cultural, and discursive spaces need to be created for children to interact with others in society.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): *Hofstede's Long Term Orientation dimension has a significant and positive effect on KRI's score.*

The sixth and final dimension, known as Indulgence (INDLG) versus restraint, is assessed on a scale ranging from zero, signifying cultures with restraint, to 100, signifying cultures characterized by indulgence. This dimension focuses on how people within a community find ways to fulfill their core longings for a satisfying existence. Cultures that rank high in indulgence tend to support the unrestricted pursuit of innate human wants, valuing pleasure and amusement. These societies prioritize the pursuit of happiness and the fulfillment of desires, encouraging individuals to seek joy and excitement without too many limitations or constraints placed upon them. In contrast, restrained societies impose stringent social norms that limit individuals' ability to satisfy their desires. In restrained societies, many citizens often perceive themselves as constrained by rigid rules and norms. Consequently, in societies characterized by high indulgence, individuals are likely to prioritize the well-being of their children due to the more permissive and open-minded atmosphere. They are more likely to view the development of future generations as a fundamental component of a free and liberated society According to Percy-Smith (2010), children and young people should have opportunities to interact with others, to discover and learn about themselves in public spaces, schools, neighborhoods, associations, and organizations, thereby increasing their capacity to shape and

influence their lives and futures. Consequently, they might encounter limited opportunities to ensure a more promising future for their descendants. This trend is observed in nations characterized by rigorous rules and lower progress in sustainable growth. Therefore, nations scoring higher on the Indulgence Index are anticipated to demonstrate more favorable results in the advancement of children.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): *Hofstede's Indulgence dimension has a significant and positive effect on KRI's score.*

Data and Methods

In the study, for examining the hypotheses stated above, KRI points are used, as the only global ranking that measures how children's rights are respected worldwide and countries' commitment to improving children's rights. The KRI is created

was conducted with a subset of valid data from 78 countries. This subset was chosen due to the absence of NCD and KRI data for certain countries spanning the years from 2015 to 2022. Since the scores of NCD of the countries do not change over time, the average of the KRI values of each country for the 2015-2022 period was calculated. Table 1 provides details on the data's definition and descriptive statistics of NCD and MKRI scores.

In this research, it is aimed to assess our hypotheses by investigating the influence of National Cultural Dimensions [Power Distance (PWDS), Individualism (INDUV), Masculinity (MSCL), Uncertainty Avoidance (UNAV), Long-Term Orientation (LNGT), and Indulgence (INDLG)] on the MKRI through an explanatory modeling approach (Shmueli, 2010). To evaluate the possible effects of independent variables on dependent variable, a multiple regression model was proposed, and the formulation of the multiple regression model is elucidated in

Table 1 Data Definition and Descriptive Statistics

| | Variable Name | Abbr. | Source | Unit of Measurement | Descriptive Statistics | | | |
					Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
	Mean of Kids Rights Index	MKRI	Kids Rights Foundation, in cooperation with Erasmus University Rotterdam	Mean of Index Score (0-1) Covering 2015-2022 Term	0.401	0.940	0,748	0.123
National Culture Dimension	Power Distance	PWDS	Hofstede Insight´s CEO (Cultural Executive Ownership) Program	Dimension Score (0-100)	11	100	64.756	21.044
	Individualism	INDUV			10	90	40.231	21.817
	Masculinity	MSCL			5	100	47.590	19.254
	Uncertainty Avoidance	UNAV			8	100	68.782	21.174
	Long-Term Orientation	LNGT			4	88	44.987	24.426
	Indulgence	INDLG			10	100	45.128	22.819
	Countries (N=78)		Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, and Zambia					

by the KidsRights Foundation, in collaboration with the Erasmus School of Economics and the International Institute of Social Studies.

The NCD data were collected for each country from the Hofstede-Insights Centre's (HIC) website, which hosts an extensive dataset covering numerous countries. In this research, the analyses

Equation 1.

$$MKRI_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PWDS_i + \beta_2 INDV_i + \beta_3 MSCL_i + \beta_4 UNAV_i + \beta_5 LNGT_i + \beta_6 INDL_i + \varepsilon_i$$

$MKRI_i$: *The mean score of the KRI value of the ith country covering the term of 2015-2022*

$PWDS_i$: *The PWDS score of the ith country,*

INDUV$_i$: *The INDUV score of the ith country,*
MSCL$_i$: *The MSCL score of the ith country,*
UNAV$_i$: *The UNAV score of the ith country,*
LNGT$_i$: *The LNGT score of the ith country,*
INDLG$_i$: *The INDLG score of the ith country,*
ε$_i$: *The error term in the regression model.*

Results and Findings

For exploring the possible effects of independent variables (PWDS, INDUV, MASC, UNAV, LNGT, and INDLG) on the dependent variable (MKRI), a correlation analysis (CA) and a multiple regression analysis were performed and the summary of regression analysis and hypotheses result is illustrated in Table 2..

Table 2 The Outline of CA and Multiple Regression Analysis

	CA					
	MKRI	**PWDS**	**INDUV**	**MSCL**	**UNAV**	**LNGT**	**INDLG**
MKRI	1						
PWDS	-0,29700*	1					
INDUV	0,25400*	-0,71400*	1				
MSCL	-0,13054	0,09882	0,04258	1			
UNAV	0,14792	0,35000*	-0,28100*	-0,00602	1		
LNGT	0,37100*	-0,00572	0,24100*	0,04801	0,08592	1	
INDLG	-0,10580	-0,37500*	0,10588	0,04088	-0,20463	-0,47000*	1

(*): Correlation coefficients are significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

(a) The regression model and the coefficients of independent variable are significant at α =0.05 level.

(b) Since the tolerance value > 0.1 and VIF <10 in the multiple regression model it can be expressed that there is no multicollinearity in the models (Hair et al., 2014).

(c) The result of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test indicates that the error term of the model is distributed normally (p>α=0.05).

(d) The result of White Homoscedasticity Test indicates that there is no heteroscedasticity in the model (p>0.05).

may influence MKRI. While PWDS has an impact on MKRI in reverse directions, UNAV and LNGT have impacts on MKRI in the same direction. By using the SPSS statistics program, it is found that whereas one percentage change in UNAV and LNGT induces 0.00140 and 0.00173 percentage change, respectively, in KRI at the same (positive) direction, one percentage change in PWDS causes 0.00248 percentage change in KRI in the reverse

Dependent Variable	R²	SE	F	p	Independent Variables Coeff.	Unstand. Coeff. $β_i$	t	p	Collinearity Statistics Tol.	VIF	Hyp. ID	Hypothesis Result
Multiple Regression Analysis^{c,d}												
MKRI					(Constant)	0.78845	7.05889	0.00000^a			-	-
					PWDS	-0.00248	-2.60289	0.01125^a	0.37057^b	2.6985^b	H$_1$	**Accepted**
	0.29343	0.10731	4.91427	0.00000^a	INDUV	-0.00032	-0.36644	0.71513	0.41560^b	2.4061^b	H$_2$	**Rejected**
					MSCL	-0.00063	-0.96673	0.33696	0,94334^b	1.0600^b	H$_3$	**Rejected**
					UNAV	0.00140	2.25146	0.02745^a	0.86025^b	1.1624^b	H$_4$	**Accepted**
					LNGT	0,00173	2.86538	0.00548^a	0,68598^b	1.4577^b	H$_5$	**Accepted**
					INDLG	-0.00024	-0.34572	0.73058	0.61699^b	1.6207^b	H$_6$	**Rejected**

(negative) direction.

Analyzing the outcomes derived from multiple regression model computations reveals that the regression model is statistically significant overall at a 95% confidence interval (CI). The coefficients of external factors (PWDS, UNAV, and LNGT) within this regression model are notably significant at a significance level of =0.05. These results support the idea that three National Cultural Dimensions (PWDS, UNAV, and LNGT)

Moreover, it can be concluded that the most effective NCD is PWDS according to regression results.

On the other hand, contrary to expectations, the coefficients of other external factors (INDUV, MSCL, and INDLG) are not statistically significant at the =0.05 level. Also reported R² value of 29.3%

indicates that the model explains a moderate portion of the variance in the dependent variable, leaving 70.7% unexplained. This suggests there may be additional factors or variables influencing the outcome that are not captured by the current model.

Consequently, the observed signs of the exogenous variables (PWDS, UNAV, and LNGT) align with the theoretical framework underpinning our research, as previously discussed in earlier sections, and grounded in the literature. Furthermore, the regression model upholds the fundamental assumptions of regression analysis, including but not limited to addressing issues of multicollinearity, normality, and heteroscedasticity (Table 2). In this manner, the results derived from the regression analysis serve to bolster the overall statistical rigor of our study, affording us the capability to provide informed commentary on these findings in the subsequent conclusion and discussion sections.

Discussion & Conclusion

Taking into account the cultural factors that impact children's rights since culture plays a significant role in shaping the implementation and effectiveness of child rights policies in different countries, understanding and addressing the influence of culture on child rights is crucial for developing effective strategies to protect and promote the well-being of children. Culture allows for a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and barriers faced by children in different countries. For instance, countries with a strong collectivist culture may prioritize communal harmony and group cohesion over individual rights, leading to potential challenges in promoting and protecting the rights of every child on an equal basis. Furthermore, cultural norms and traditions may perpetuate harmful practices such as child labor, early marriage, or female genital mutilation, hindering the realization of children's rights and resulting in lower rankings on the KRI.

The findings showed that PWDS considerably and adversely affects MKRI scores. Additionally, the results have shown that UNAV and LNGT have respectively significant and favorable

influences on the MKRI scores of countries. On the other hand, because their coefficients in the regression models are not statistically significant at the 95% CI, the null hypotheses regarding the effects of INDUV (2nd hypothesis), MSCL (3rd hypothesis), and INDLG (6th hypothesis) on the MKRI are rejected.

To the best of our knowledge, no prior research has been conducted that specifically examined the influence of cultural orientations on the KRI scores of nations except a study by Faygan et al. (2022) examining the impact of national cultural dimensions on the Sustainable Child Development Index (SCDI). The study revealed that PWDS and MSCL negatively predict SCDI scores, while LNGT positively predicts SCDI scores in countries.

In light of the research findings, it is conceivable to assert that societies characterized by a higher level of Long-Term Orientation (LNGT) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UNAV) with lower levels of Power Distance (PWDS) tend to exhibit higher KRI scores. These conclusions find support in the existing interdisciplinary literature which backs up these findings, with empirical proof supporting our observations. Woldarsky et al. (2019) found that in societies with high power distance, mothers tend to prioritize their children's adjustment to the environment rather than their desires and needs, unlike mothers in low power distance cultures who focus more on their children's growth. Besides, Finkelhor et al. (2013) found that an increase in crimes against children is observed when chaos, uncertainty, and crisis disrupt the established order with regard to the uncertainty avoidance dimension. Similarly, Figlio et al. (2019) proved that students from long-term-oriented countries perform better academically compared to those from short-term-oriented nations.

Regarding hypothesis #1 (Hofstede's Power Distance dimension has a significant and negative effect on KRI's score.); it can be noted that in societies characterized by high power distance, the prevalence of patriarchal relationships is observed. In these relationships, there exists a hierarchy in which the state holds authority over the individual, the employer over the employee, the teacher over the student, the elderly over the young, and men over women. The patriarchy

establishes superiority based on authority and power, legitimizing itself through the assumption of being larger, richer, holier, and more powerful than the "other" with whom it interacts. In this unequal relationship shaped by power, the "weak" is considered worthy of "protection" only when they submit, approve, and unquestionably show respect to the "strong and sacred." However, the duration, nature, and extent of this "protection" remain within the purview and rights of the "powerful." Obedience, arbitrariness, and dependency are fundamental elements in this hierarchical system, extending from the political realm to all aspects of social life and ultimately into family life. Children build their own autonomous and creative cultures when they spend time and interact together (Danby & Baker, 1998; Corsaro & Streeck, 1986; Mayall, 1996 cited in Cobb, Danby and Farrell, 2005).

In the political arena, those who endorse political power or belong to the needy population conditionally benefit from social services and protection provided by the state. Meanwhile, in family life, the representation of authority and power lies with the male figure, who establishes his hegemony over the women and children within the household, conditional upon endorsing the political power. In situations where the hierarchical presence of a male figure is absent, authority is wielded by women over children. Although children are protected within this hegemonic and hierarchical family structure, the quality, adequacy, and terms of this protection are not widely questioned by society or political authority unless a problem arises that disrupts the status quo.

Within families, teachers also hold the right to establish authority over children during their school years. (Mendel, 1971) This pattern of relationships based on authority, obedience, and power is further ingrained in a child's socialization process, shaping their adulthood experiences in the workforce and other societal processes. In this system, children are disciplined through strict methods while their capacity for thinking, development, and freedom of expression is overlooked. They are seen as beings to be protected, and this protection must be provided

according to the expectations of the protector, with children being expected to meet these standards and remain grateful for the protection. While the duty of "protecting the weak" assigned by patriarchy may seem to provide a strong foundation for the protection of children's rights, it should not be forgotten that this duty is often arbitrary and conditional, particularly when it comes to children. In reality, the protection claimed by the powerful can often be nothing more than a discourse of superiority based on sometimes, if not frequently, unfounded assumptions, such as being "smarter," "more experienced," or "more knowledgeable" than the children. Moreover, the authority granted to adults for "protection" may not always result in the actual protection of children. This discourse often ends up entrusting children to their perpetrators. In societies with high power distance, where relationships are hierarchical and the powerful are favored and protected, the situation of children representing the weak is not widely acknowledged socially or politically. Since children do not possess voting rights (Wall, 2008), they are not given priority in resource allocation. Consequently, in societies with a high power distance, unequal, vertical, and rigid relationship patterns hinder the implementation of children's participation rights, such as the right to think and express themselves freely. The authority granted to the powerful, with the weak expected to comply, also hinders the development of children's protection rights. Unless protection is provided to children in the form of services within the framework of a "rights" perspective, jointly delivered by parents and the state, it is not easy to claim that children can be fully protected.

Considering hypotheses #4 and #5 (Hofstede's Uncertainty avoidance and Long Term orientation dimensions have a significant and positive effect on KRI's scores) it can be concluded that, in paternalistic societies with high power distance, resistance to change and low levels of long-term orientation are common. Paternalism inherently encompasses conservatism and resistance to change, as preserving power is one of its primary objectives. Additionally, change can entail rebellion and a shift in power dynamics. In a

system where adults are favored and perceived as powerful, little attention is paid to the needs of children as evolving and changing entities that the established order does not cater to adequately. Furthermore, the ability to adapt to changing conditions can sometimes elevate children above adults, potentially leading to a shift in power. Consequently, in societies that prioritize preserving the existing order, the ideas, needs, and desires of future generations, represented by children, are not given priority. Therefore, in such societies, the well-being of the current order and the preservation of the powerful take precedence over the future conditions of children. These societies often direct their resources toward maintaining the status quo rather than allocating them for the benefit of future generations. For example, the concept of sustainable development anticipates the use of resources without endangering the future needs of children. In countries with high power distance and a low long-term orientation, such as Türkiye and Malaysia, efforts to implement this approach fall short compared to countries with a high long-term orientation like Finland.

One of the prominent theories in criminology pertains to disruptions in the socialization process. According to this theory, individuals who have not acquired socialization properly are more likely to engage in criminal activities. Unwritten rules such as traditions and customs prepare individuals for living in societal harmony, while written legal rules, such as laws, punish those who act contrary to this order, ensuring societal security. Factors like rapid urbanization, population growth, migration, technological advancements, economic crises, and environmental crises disrupt social control processes within society and increase the risk situations individuals may encounter. In situations where legal regulations are not swiftly and comprehensively enacted, and the functions of monitoring and punishment are not carried out effectively to ensure security, vulnerable individuals are more prone to becoming victims of crime, particularly children. In most societies, an increase in crimes against children is observed when chaos, uncertainty, and crisis disrupt the established order (Finkelhor et. al, 2013). Different

forms of vulnerability among children are exacerbated in such circumstances. The inability to access sufficient resources and appropriate environments for growth and development, an inability to nurture their abilities, and dependency on adults in various aspects are among the prominent factors. In situations where legal regulations aimed at preserving societal security are in place, social control processes are operational, societal institutions fulfill their functions effectively, and regulations that address potential risk factors for children are implemented, children's protection rights can be more fully realized.

The research indicates that the overall cultural orientations of countries influence their child-rearing methods and perspectives significantly. Hence, cultural diversities can give rise to distinct manifestations in the realms of educational systems, healthcare, social services, and the allocation of economic resources within a nation. Policy implications for child rights and protection systems must be informed by cultural contexts to ensure their effectiveness and acceptance. In high power distance cultures, training programs for authorities are critical to fostering equitable treatment of children, addressing societal norms that may perpetuate hierarchical inequities. Likewise, in hierarchical societies with high power distance, the society is not anticipated to offer the same chances for basic social services to everyone on an equal basis because having these services mostly depend on individual's social status" (Khatri, 2009; Triandis, 1982, as cited in Fayganoğlu et al., 2022, p. 473). For societies with high uncertainty avoidance, implementing clear and comprehensive guidelines for child protection services helps to reduce ambiguity and enhance adherence to policies. In long-term oriented cultures, embedding children's rights into educational systems can cultivate enduring respect for these rights and promote intergenerational awareness. Tailored educational programs on children's rights should reflect the cultural values and beliefs of the target populations to enhance their relevance and impact. In this sense, regarding KidsrighIndex reports, it can be said that the countries with the highest index values have

similar characteristics when compared to the countries with the lowest index values, by having higher levels of long-term orientation and uncertainty avoidance with lower levels of power distance. This shows us that Hofstede's cultural dimensions highlight the central role of cultural dimensions in shaping attitudes and practices around child rights, underscoring the need for culturally sensitive and context-specific policy frameworks.

To enhance the practical application of child rights policies, several strategies can be recommended. First, policymakers and practitioners should undergo cultural sensitivity training to better understand the nuanced cultural factors influencing child rights. Second, actively engaging local communities in the development and implementation of policies ensures cultural relevance and promotes acceptance. Finally, fostering collaboration between international organizations and local governments can facilitate the creation of culturally appropriate frameworks. Policies must adapt to local and community-specific contexts, reassess frameworks to reflect globalization's impact, and address intra-national diversity to ensure effectiveness in settings like child rights and education. Consequently, it is reasonable to execute that cultural values exert a notable influence on the development of child rights policies, as culture forms the bedrock upon which society is established.

Limitations and future research

The primary focus of this study centers on cultural dimensions, with the KRI outcomes being solely associated with these dimensions. This restricts the analysis to factors directly related to cultural dimensions, neglecting other potential influences. Besides, several limitations should be acknowledged in the present study. Firstly, the analysis relies on data from 78 countries, and therefore, any generalizations should be made within the context of these specific countries. When interpreting the results derived from the analysis of KRI data from years between 2015 to 2022, this limited coverage should be kept in mind. It is important to note that with the availability of

updated data, the results may potentially manifest different patterns.

Another noteworthy limitation pertains to the quality and reliability of the data used to construct the KRI scores. Specifically, issues such as the absence of data for certain countries and the reliability of data sources for others are critical considerations when developing indices of this nature. However, it is imperative to underscore that the KRI is the pioneering and sole global ranking system that annually assesses the observance of children's rights on a global scale and evaluates the extent to which countries are dedicated to enhancing these rights.

Future research endeavors could address these limitations by utilizing updated KRI and Hofstede's National Cultural Dimensions (NCD) data, covering a broader spectrum of countries. This would enable the examination of countries with diverse cultural attributes or from various geographical regions. Such investigations would facilitate the identification of potential primary cultural determinants of KRI scores and may allow for cross-country comparisons within the context of cultural dimensions. Hofstede's framework, while influential, faces criticism for outdated data, overgeneralization, and a static cultural view (McSweeney, 2002). It oversimplifies cultural complexity and underrepresents non-Western values (Tung & Verbeke, 2010). Incorporating alternative models like Schwartz's Theory may offer nuanced insights, enhancing cultural analysis and policy applications (Schwartz et al., 2012).

In future studies, alternative frameworks (e.g., Schwartz's Values Theory) could provide additional insights and robustness. In this regard, Schwartz's theory of basic human values allows for different levels of analysis, with the 10 basic values reliably assigned to four higher-order dimensions: Openness to Change, Conservation, Self-Transcendence, and Self-Enhancement (Cieciuch, Davidov, & Algesheimer, 2024). Besides, Harkness and Super (2020) discuss the evolution of cultural perspectives in human development, emphasizing the need for integrating contemporary frameworks to enhance understanding. Likewise, Lancy (2015) provides a comprehensive analysis of childhood across cultures, offering alternative frameworks

that challenge conventional developmental theories.

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Appendix A: The Compounds of Kidsrights Index (KRI)		
Domains	*Indicators*	*Data sources*
Right to Life	Under-five mortality Life expectancy at birth Maternal mortality ratio	The KidsRights Index pools data from three reputable sources: quantitative data published and regularly updated by UNICEF and UNDP, and qualitative data published by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in the detailed individual country assessments that it adopts for all States Parties to the CRC (the so-called Concluding Observations).
Right to Health	% of under-five-year-olds suffering from underweight Immunization of one-year-old children % of the population using improved sanitation facilities (urban and rural) % of the population using improved drinking water sources (urban and rural)	Twenty indicators together cover and measure these five Domains. Thirteen indicators are quantitative and seven are qualitative. The data collected is systematically rated for all the countries included in the Index, by applying a standard calculating method. Countries are ranked on each of the five Domains, which in turn generates a comprehensive overall ranking.
Right to Education	Expected years of schooling of girls Expected years of schooling of boys Gender inequality in expected years of schooling (absolute difference between girls and boys)	Domain 5, or the '*Enabling Environment for Children's Rights*', is an important and unique Domain of the KidsRights Index. Closely based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it reveals to what extent countries have operationalized the Convention's general principles and the state of their basic 'infrastructure' for making and implementing children's rights policies. The scores on Domain 5 are derived from the Concluding Observations (COs) adopted by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. These COs are the final product of the state reporting procedure that monitors how states are doing in implementing the Convention.
Right to Protection	Child labour Adolescent birth rate Birth registration	
Enabling Environment for Child Rights	Non-discrimination Best interests of the child Respect for the views of the child/child participation Enabling legislation Best available budget Collection and analysis of disaggregate data State-civil society cooperation for child rights	

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Challenges for the Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare Services: A Decision-Making Approach

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Abstract

This study aims to elucidate the interdependent effects of the challenges and risks of using artificial intelligence in the healthcare sector. The ten challenges and risks obtained by literature were assessed by five professionals involved in managing health. Participants were selected based on having at least ten years of academic or professional experience in health. The participants made their judgments on the topic of structured forms. DEMATEL (The Decision-Making Trial and Evaluation Laboratory) technique investigated the cause-effect relationships between the identified integration challenges. According to DEMATEL analysis results in terms of the degree of importance, safety and security risk (SSR) is ranked in the first place, and inadequate patient risk assessments (IPRA), data quality risks (DQR), verifiability risks (VR), stakeholders perceived mistrust (SPM), integration challenges (IC), ethical considerations (EC), algorithm/decision-making bias (AMB) and job displacement risks (JDR) are ranked in the following places. In addition, DQR, AMB, SSR, VR, IPRA, and DPR are causal variables; EC, IC, JDR, and SPM are regarded as effects. These factors highlight the need for robust mechanisms to ensure the integrity of data, the accuracy of risk assessments, and the transparency of the decision-making processes of AI. Negative impacts on ethics, inclusion, employment, and trust between stakeholders will likely be reduced by addressing the root causes, such as data quality, risk assessment, and algorithmic bias, and developing policies to address them.

Keywords: *Decision-making, digital health technology, health services administration*

Öz

Bu çalışma, sağlık sektöründe yapay zekânın kullanımına özgü zorlukların ve risklerin birbirine bağlı etkilerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Literatürden elde edilen on farklı zorluk ve risk, sağlık yönetiminde yer alan beş uzman tarafından değerlendirilmiştir. Katılımcılar, sağlık alanında en az on yıllık akademik veya profesyonel deneyime sahip olmalarına göre seçilmiştir. Katılımcılar konuyla ilgili değerlendirmelerini yapılandırılmış formlar üzerinden yapmıştır. Belirlenen entegrasyon zorlukları arasındaki neden-sonuç ilişkilerini araştırmak için DEMATEL tekniği kullanılmıştır. DEMATEL analizi sonuçlarına göre önem derecesi açısından emniyet ve güvenlik riski (SSR) ilk sırada yer alırken, yetersiz hasta risk değerlendirmeleri (IPRA), veri kalitesi riskleri (DQR), doğrulanabilirlik riskleri (VR), paydaşların algıladığı güvensizlikler (SPM), entegrasyon zorlukları (IC), etik hususlar (EC), algoritma/karar verme yanlılığı (AMB) ve iş değiştirme riskleri (JDR) sonraki sıralarda yer almaktadır. Ek olarak, DQR, AMB, SSR, VR, IPRA, DPR nedensel değişken olarak; EC, IC, JDR ve SPM ise etki olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bu faktörler, verilerin bütünlüğünü, risk değerlendirmelerinin doğruluğunu ve yapay zekânın karar alma süreçlerinin şeffaflığını sağlamak için güçlü argümanlara olan ihtiyacı vurgulamaktadır. Etik, kapsayıcılık, istihdam ve paydaşlar arasındaki güven üzerindeki olumsuz etkiler, veri kalitesi, risk değerlendirmesi ve algoritmalardaki yanlılıklar gibi temel nedenlerin ele alınması ve bunlara yönelik politikaların geliştirilmesi ile azaltılabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Dijital sağlık teknolojisi, karar verme, sağlık hizmetleri yönetimi*

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to grow in its potential to be involved in various healthcare-related tasks. These roles enable the automation of routine medical practices, robotics, simple transcription, resource management, and decision support mechanisms. However, there is still a long way to go regarding the digitization of healthcare (due to technical and other challenges) and effective stakeholder engagement to increase the reliability of these use cases, ensure their validation, and link or hierarchically structure the components. Meanwhile, several risks and challenges arise, including patient injury due to system errors, patient privacy in obtaining data and drawing conclusions from AI, and more (Sunarti et al., 2021).

Implementing AI in healthcare opens the door to a set of benefits. There are clear benefits to applying the technology to healthcare diagnosis and treatment processes, such as improving and clarifying patient management options and outcomes, as well as potential secondary benefits, such as reduced referrals, reduced costs, and time savings. It can also support rural health facilities and encourage recruitment and retention in rural areas. Ultimately, this can contribute to a more equitable global health system (Tobore et al., 2019; Jawaid, 2023). Finally, while there are benefits, the future of AI in healthcare is not entirely optimistic. Many issues surround AI, including how AI will meet physicians' rights and responsibilities, how AI will protect privacy, and how current laws will cope with these developments. It has been demonstrated that technology and rules can be developed and applied to healthcare product development (Peterson et al., 2022).

Despite the benefits and opportunities of implementing AI in healthcare, several studies have explored the implications, risks, and challenges of integrating AI into the healthcare sector. Some researchers enlarged challenges perceived by healthcare leaders in Sweden regarding AI implementation, including external conditions, internal capacity building, and professional role transformations (Peterson et al., 2022). Also, from the perspective of ethical and legal risks, other researchers investigated a series of considerations (Chikhaoui

et al., 2022; Wang & Liu, 2023). Finally, with their study, the scientists aimed to guide principles for the responsible development of AI tools in healthcare (Badal et al., 2023).

Artificial Intelligence Integration Challenges and Risks in Healthcare

As mentioned above superficially, the literature highlights diverse critical risk factors associated with AI implementation (Table 1). These factors include algorithm/decision-making bias, integration challenges, practical implementation, variability, safety, security, ethical considerations, data quality, inadequate patient risk assessment, job displacement, and stakeholders' perceived mistrust. Authors have all contributed insights into these risk factors, emphasizing the importance of mitigating biases, ensuring data quality, and addressing ethical concerns to build trust and enhance the effectiveness of AI tools.

Table 1. Artificial Intelligence Integration Challenges and Risks in Healthcare

	Challenges	References
DPR	**Data privacy risks** Potential threats and vulnerabilities associated with the use of AI in the processing of sensitive/critical patient information.	Kelly et al., 2019 Ma, 2022 Velev et al., 2023 Abid et al., 2023 Matheny et al., 2020 Zhou & Liu, 2022 Dwiedi et al., 2021 Yılmaz, 2024
AMB	**Algorithm/decision-making bias** It covers a multitude of factors that may hinder the effective use of AI technologies in health systems, such as data integrity, data ownership, data sharing across organizational silos, medical ethics issues, liability for medical errors, and system failure.	Kelly et al., 2019 Ma, 2022 Abid et al., 2023 Matheny et al., 2020 Zhou & Liu, 2022 Esmaeilzadeh, 2020
IC	**Integration challenges** It addresses numerous factors that may hinder the effective use of AI technologies in health systems, such as data integrity, data ownership, data sharing across organizational silos, medical ethics issues, liability for medical errors, and system failure.	Kelly et al., 2019 Matheny et al., 2020 Zhou & Liu, 2022
VR	**Verifiability risks** This refers to the potential for inconsistency or variation in the performance and outcomes of AI algorithms and systems.	Dwiedi et al., 2021
SSR	**Safety and security risks** It addresses potential vulnerabilities and threats to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of critical health data and AI systems.	Ma, 2022 Zhou & Liu, 2022 Dwiedi et al., 2021
EC	**Ethical considerations**	Ma, 2022

	It addresses the potential ethical implications and challenges associated with the development, deployment, and use of AI technologies in the delivery of healthcare services.	Velev et al., 2023 Abid et al., 2023 Matheny et al., 2020 Zhou & Liu, 2022 Esmaeilzadeh, 2020	
DQR	**Data quality risks** It addresses potential challenges and vulnerabilities related to the accuracy, completeness, and reliability of the data used to develop and deploy AI algorithms.	Velev et al., 2023	
IPRA	**Inadequate patient risk assessment** The potential for AI systems to incorrectly assess or evaluate patient health risks leads to inappropriate or incorrect treatment decisions.	Nizam et al., 2021	
JDR	**Job displacement risks** This refers to the potential impact of AI technologies on the roles and responsibilities of healthcare workers. With the integration of AI, certain tasks traditionally performed by healthcare workers have the potential to be automated, leading to concerns about job displacement in the healthcare sector.	Matheny et al., 2020 Zhou & Liu, 2022 Sevim et al., 2024	
SPM	**Stakeholders perceived mistrusts** It refers to the concerns and reservations of various individuals and groups involved in health service delivery regarding the adoption and use of AI technologies. These stakeholders include healthcare professionals, patients, policymakers, and the public.	Esmaeilzadeh, 2020	

his study aims to identify the interdependent effects of the challenges and risks inherent in using artificial intelligence in the healthcare sector.

This study is divided into five sections. The first section provides an overview of the role of AI in the healthcare sector. The second section identifies the challenges and risks of implementing AI in healthcare. The third section presents detailed information about the methods employed in the study. The fourth section presents the study's results in a step-by-step format. The fifth section discusses the results and offers a conclusion.

Material and Methods

Data for this cross-sectional study was collected between 19th and 23rd August 2024. It is a study designed according to the DEMATEL approach, one of the techniques used in Operations Research. XXX University Ethics Committee approved this study for Non-Interventional Clinical Research (Number: E-10840098-202.3.02-4783, Decision Number: 753, Date: 01.08.2024). Written informed consent was provided by all participants using the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Participants

As a result of the literature review, artificial intelligence and its risks in the provision of health services have been revealed and categorized. Five different health and health management professionals, living and working in Türkiye, assessed the risks that were obtained. In the selection of the participants, it was determined that they had at least ten years of academic or professional experience in health management. Participants performed their judgments about the topic on DEMATEL forms.

Table 2. Detailed Information of Participants

Participants (Part.)	Specialization	Education	Position	Experience
Part. 1	Health Management	PhD	Prof.	20 years
Part. 2	Health Management	PhD	Asst. Prof.	10 years
Part. 3	Health Management	Master	Lecturer	18 years
Part. 4	Nurse	Master	Lecturer	15 years
Part. 5	Physician	PhD	Deputy Chief Physician	13 years

DEMATEL Method

DEMATEL is a methodology for constructing and analysing a structural model that includes the causal relationships between complex factors such as (Wu, 2008; Wu & Lee, 2007). Apart from the other multicriteria decision-making techniques, DEMATEL assumes that there is a causal relationship between criteria. DEMATEL is based on graph theory and solves problems with directed graphs, known as digraphs. They visualize factors into cause group and effect group and represent a communication network (Wu & Lee, 2007; Lin & Tzeng, 2009). In DEMATEL analysis, the factors are compared to each other with the numbers between 0 and 4, and their influence levels are obtained. Table 3 shows the linguistic expressions and numerical equivalents of DEMATEL analysis (Wu & Lee, 2007).

Table 3: DEMATEL Linguistic Expressions

Linguistic terms	Abbreviated Notation	Influence Scores
No Influence	NO	0
Very Low Influence	VL	1
Low Influence	L	2
High Influence	H	3
Very High Influence	VH	4

The steps of the DEMATEL method are briefly as follows;

Step 1: Determination of the relationships between the criteria with the pairwise comparison forms

For the identified risks in the effective use of AI in health services, the direct-relation matrix (A) was determined with the numbers corresponding to the linguistic expressions (Table 3) in line with the expert opinions by creating a pairwise comparison matrix.

Step 2: Normalization of the direct-relation matrix

Based on the direct-relationship matrix (A), the normalized direct-relationship matrix (M) is obtained using equations (1) and (2) below (Hung et al., 2006; Tsai & Chou, 2009).

$$M = k \times A \qquad (1)$$

$$k = Min\left(\frac{1}{\max_{1\leq i \leq n}\sum_{j=1}^{n}|a_{ij}|}, \frac{1}{\max_{1\leq i \leq n}\sum_{j=1}^{n}|a_{ij}|}\right) \qquad (2)$$

$$i, j \in \{1,2,3, \dots, n\}$$

Step 3: Calculation of the total relation matrix

After a normalized direct-relationship matrix is obtained, the total relationship matrix (S) is constructed using equation 3 (Hung et al., 2006; Tsai & Chou, 2009).

$$S = M + M^2 + \cdots = \sum_{i=1}^{\infty \leftarrow} M^i = M (I - M)^{-1} \qquad (3)$$

Step 4: Calculation of the dispatcher and receiver group

The sum of the columns in the S matrix is (R) and the sum of the rows is (D), and the degree of influence of each criterion on the others and the relationship with the others is determined by using D-R and D+R values by calculating equations 5 and 6

after calculating equation 4 (Wu & Lee, 2007; Tsai & Chou, 2009)

$$S = \left\lfloor S_{i,j} \right\rfloor_{n\text{xn}}, \ i, j \in \{1,2,3 \dots, n\} \qquad (4)$$

$$D = \sum_{j=1}^{n} S_{i,j} \qquad (5)$$

$$R = \sum_{i=1}^{n} S_{i,j} \qquad (6)$$

Step 5: Setting the threshold value and obtaining the influence-directional graph diagram

With the DEMATEL method, the 'four degrees' values of each factor, including 'R_i', 'D_i', 'D_i+R_i' and 'D_i-R_i', can be calculated to determine the criteria (Lin & Tzeng, 2009). Where 'R_i' represents the degree of influence exerted on other factors and 'D_i' represents the degree of influenced from other factors. '$D_i + R_i$' indicates the degree of relationship with other factors, and '$D_i - R_i$' means the strength of influence that can be divided into dispatchers or receivers (Chen et al., 2020).

Results

After literature review AI integration challenges in healthcare were determined. The determined challenges were then evaluated by employing DEMATEL as mentioned material and method section. As a result of the data collected from experts in the field, the opinions of each different expert were integrated into a direct-relation matrix table (Table 4).

Table 4. The Initial direct-relation matrix (Integrated)

	DPR	AMB	IC	VR	SSR	EC	DQR	IPRA	JDR	SPM
DPR	0,00	2,40	3,00	2,80	3,40	2,60	1,40	1,80	1,20	3,20
AMB	2,00	0,00	2,80	3,00	2,40	3,60	2,20	3,20	0,80	3,20
IC	1,80	2,60	0,00	1,80	2,40	2,40	2,40	2,40	2,00	2,20
VR	2,00	2,20	3,00	0,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,40	0,80	2,80
SSR	3,60	2,20	2,60	3,20	0,00	2,80	2,80	2,80	1,60	4,00
EC	3,60	2,60	2,00	2,40	2,00	0,00	1,60	2,20	1,20	2,80
DQR	2,40	3,60	2,60	3,60	2,80	3,20	0,00	3,80	1,60	2,40
IPRA	2,00	2,60	2,80	3,20	2,40	2,40	3,20	0,00	1,60	3,40
JDR	0,80	0,40	1,80	0,60	1,20	0,80	1,20	0,40	0,00	2,00
SPM	2,60	1,00	3,20	1,40	2,20	2,20	1,60	2,60	3,00	0,00

The normalized direct-relation matrix is calculated from Eq. (1) and Eq. (2) as demonstrated in Table 5.

The normalized direct-relation matrix switch to the Total Relation Matrix by employing Eq. (3) as demonstrated in Table 6.

Table 5. *The normalized direct-relation matrix*

	DPR	AMB	IC	VR	SSR	EC	DQR	IPRA	JDR	SPM
DPR	0,00	0,09	0,12	0,11	0,13	0,10	0,05	0,07	0,05	0,12
AMB	0,08	0,00	0,11	0,12	0,09	0,14	0,08	0,12	0,03	0,12
IC	0,07	0,10	0,00	0,07	0,09	0,09	0,09	0,09	0,08	0,08
VR	0,08	0,08	0,12	0,00	0,12	0,12	0,12	0,13	0,03	0,11
SSR	0,14	0,08	0,10	0,12	0,00	0,11	0,11	0,11	0,06	0,15
EC	0,14	0,10	0,08	0,09	0,08	0,00	0,06	0,08	0,05	0,11
DQR	0,09	0,14	0,10	0,14	0,11	0,12	0,00	0,15	0,06	0,09
IPRA	0,08	0,10	0,11	0,12	0,09	0,09	0,12	0,00	0,06	0,13
JDR	0,03	0,02	0,07	0,02	0,05	0,03	0,05	0,02	0,00	0,08
SPM	0,10	0,04	0,12	0,05	0,08	0,08	0,06	0,10	0,12	0,00

Table 6. *The total relation matrix*

	DPR	AMB	IC	VR	SSR	EC	DQR	IPRA	JDR	SPM
DPR	0,4190	0,4740	**0,5697**	0,5289	0,5464	0,5434	0,4386	**0,5137**	0,3283	**0,6136**
AMB	**0,5199**	0,4200	**0,5956**	0,5679	0,5444	0,6082	0,4929	**0,5921**	0,3341	**0,6482**
IC	0,4457	0,4484	0,4247	0,4608	0,4760	**0,4977**	0,4376	**0,4940**	0,3297	**0,5374**
VR	**0,5238**	0,5035	**0,6063**	0,4702	0,5681	0,5936	0,5234	**0,6036**	0,3372	**0,6406**
SSR	0,6057	0,5297	0,6304	0,6101	0,4982	0,6201	0,5432	0,6159	0,3863	**0,7165**
EC	0,5156	0,4579	0,5103	0,4914	0,4770	0,4257	0,4202	**0,4987**	0,3098	**0,5707**
DQR	0,5792	0,5892	0,6434	0,6394	0,6076	0,6490	0,4613	**0,6638**	0,3909	**0,6822**
IPRA	0,5202	0,5128	0,5993	0,5766	0,5476	0,5727	0,5275	0,4856	0,3634	**0,6568**
JDR	0,2079	0,1817	0,2626	0,2052	0,2262	0,2214	0,2072	0,2068	0,1240	0,2835
SPM	0,4515	0,3764	**0,5142**	0,4245	0,4501	0,4668	0,3930	0,4750	0,3534	0,4362
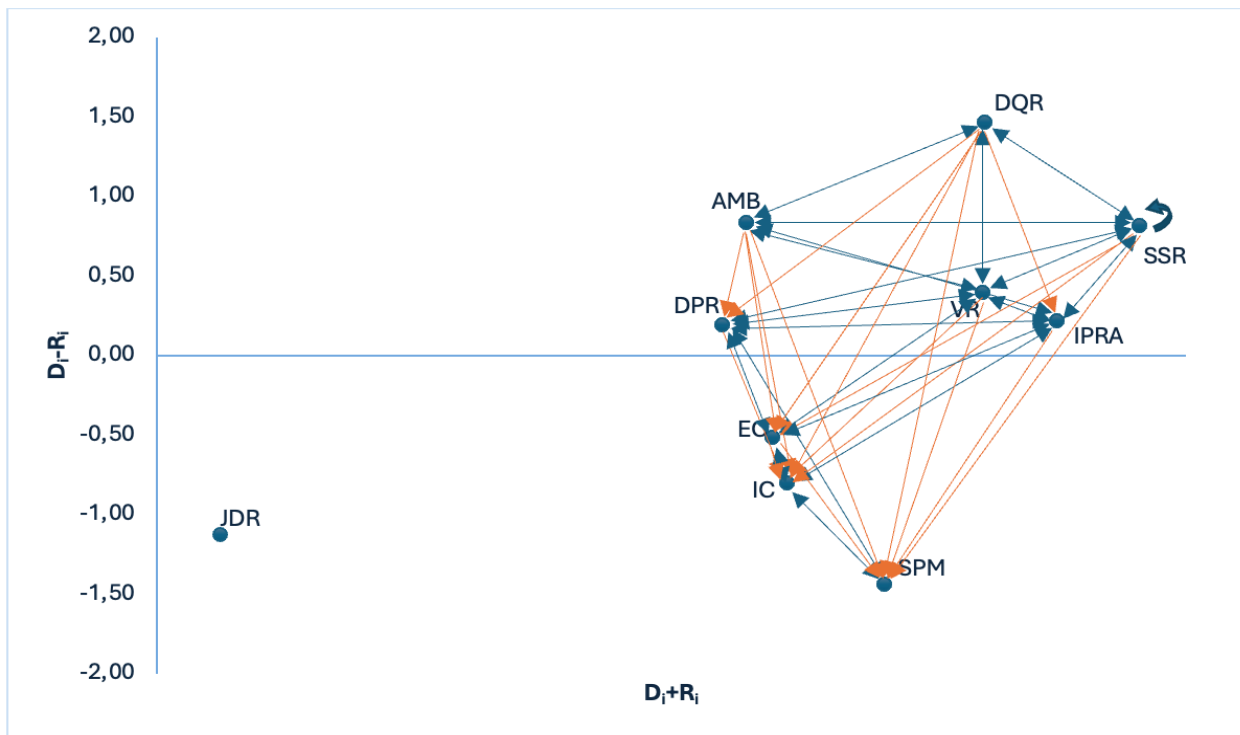
Figure 1. *The cause-and-effect values*

According to the computed total relation matrix, the threshold value is computed as 0,4839. To compute the threshold value for relations, it is sufficient to calculate the average values of Table 6. In order to obtain an appropriate impact-relationship map, such a threshold value is used to obtain sufficient information for further analysis and decision-making. A graph is created using the threshold data in Figure 1. The model of significant relations is presented in bold letters in Table 7.

Table 7. The cause-and-effect values

	D_i	R_i	D_i+R_i	D_i-R_i
DPR	4,9756	4,7884	9,7639	**0,1872**
AMB	5,3233	4,4935	9,8168	**0,8298**
IC	4,5520	5,3565	9,9085	-0,8045
VR	5,3702	4,9751	10,3453	**0,3951**
SSR	5,7561	4,9417	10,6978	**0,8144**
EC	4,6774	5,1985	9,8758	-0,5211
DQR	5,9060	4,4449	10,3509	**1,4611**
IPRA	5,3624	5,1492	10,5116	**0,2133**
JDR	2,1265	3,2572	5,3837	-1,1307
SPM	4,3411	5,7857	10,1268	-1,4446

Figure 1 shows the model of significant relations. This model can be represented as a diagram in which the values of (D_i+R_i) are placed on the horizontal axis and the values of (D_i-R_i) on the vertical axis. The position and interaction of each factor with a point in the coordinates (D_i+R_i, D_i-R_i) are determined by the coordinate system.

(D_i+R_i) represents the degree of importance each factor plays in the entire system. In other words, (D_i+R_i) indicates both factor's impact on the whole system and other system factors' impact on the factor. In terms of the degree of importance, SSR is ranked in the first place, and IPRA, DQR, VR, SPM, IC, EC, AMB, DPR, and JDR are ranked in the next place.

The positive value of (D_i-R_i) represents a causal variable, and the negative value of (D_i-R_i) represents an effect. In this study, DQR, AMB, SSR, VR, IPRA, and DPR are considered to be a causal variable; EC, IC, JDR, and SPM are regarded as an effect.

These results carry both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study extends the application of DEMATEL in healthcare by demonstrating its capacity to dissect complex interrelations among integration challenges. Practically, the insights offer a roadmap for healthcare organizations to prioritize interventions. For example, enhancing DQR and SSR as foundational elements could create a ripple effect, positively influencing dependent factors like JDR and SPM.

Discussion

A few challenges and risks need to be considered for the effective and ethical use of AI technologies in health care. These include factors that may make it difficult for healthcare systems to smoothly orient themselves to and utilise the use of AI tools. These challenges have been identified in various academic papers as DPR, AMB, IC, VR, SSR, EC, DQR, IPRA and JDR and were the argument for this study. The associated challenges relate to the complexities associated with the use of AI to process vital patient information and to deliver services in an efficient and responsible manner.

Unfortunately, it is not possible for decision-makers to solve various problems at the same time or in a limited period with fixed resources. For this reason, it is necessary to allocate scarce resources in the most optimal way for the purpose. The interplay of challenges and risks in the use of artificial intelligence in health services has been the subject of analysis by the DEMATEL method. By this method, among the barriers to the use of AI in health services and those that affect other barriers were identified. In this context, it would be appropriate for decision-makers to focus on DQR, AMB, SSR, VR, IPRA, and DPR barriers. As a matter of fact, there are findings and inferences in the literature regarding these barriers.

DPR is cited as a key risk and includes threats and vulnerabilities when managing critical patient data (Shahriar et al., 2023). Indeed, this risk is further exacerbated by the presence of AMB, which includes data integrity, ownership, data retention, and various ethical issues that can complicate the use of AI tools in healthcare service delivery (Mosaiyebzadeh et al., 2023). Furthermore, immature procedures regarding data ownership, data sharing and data processing, medical ethics, and liability with IC pose significant barriers and make the

integration of AI in healthcare even more complex and challenging (Nia et al., 2023). In addition, trust in AI applications can be increased by reducing concerns about data privacy at the stage of service delivery using AI applications (Kar et al., 2021). In addition, trust in AI applications can be enhanced through the reduction of data privacy concerns at the service delivery stage of AI applications (Kar et al., 2021). Ensuring that AI is seamlessly integrated into clinical workflows while prioritizing patient safety can provide insights into key issues such as data sharing, algorithm transparency, data standardization, and interoperability (Temsah, 2024).

The risk of verifiability is an important factor in the application of AI to ensure that the performance and outcomes are verifiable (Massella et al., 2022). Furthermore, the risks associated with the use and processing of health data in AI applications can be explained by SSR. At this point, Sreenivasan (2024) highlighted that the importance of preventing and protecting against potential vulnerabilities and threats.

EC explains some ethical implications and challenges associated with the active use of AI applications in delivering healthcare. In this regard, Amedior (2024) notes that there are aspects of AI technologies that require ethical development. Furthermore, research on the ethical implications of AI in healthcare emphasizes that important issues such as confidentiality, trust, accountability, and bias should be taken into account in order for AI applications to be more involved in-service delivery (Dhar et al., 2023).

DQR also includes factors that can lead to vulnerabilities and biased results in data analysis, i.e., data quality risks. In fact, Arigbabu (2024) also highlighted the possibility of data quality as a source of security vulnerabilities and emphasized the creation and processing of data in a quality manner.

Among other factors, deficiencies and biases in patient risk assessment processes (IPRA) are fundamental factors in wrong treatment decisions and jeopardize patient outcomes (Li et al., 2023). The digital transformation of healthcare and its further development of AI practices may have an impact on the roles and responsibilities of the existing healthcare workforce. Indeed, Williamson (2024) interprets this transformation through automation

and decision support systems, arguing that it will increase concerns about the displacement of personnel.

Moreover, Douglas et al. (2022) have put forth the proposition that the deployment of AI in healthcare applications can serve to mitigate negative bias and facilitate the effective integration of AI through the engagement of relevant stakeholders.

By systematically addressing the identified causal factors and their interrelations, healthcare organizations can achieve more sustainable and effective AI integration, ultimately enhancing patient outcomes and system efficiency.

Conclusion

The effective navigation of challenges and risks by healthcare stakeholders can be achieved through the utilization of insights derived from current research. This enables the responsible and ethical deployment of AI technologies to enhance the delivery of healthcare and the outcomes for patients. The performed analysis revealed that ethical considerations, integration challenges, and stakeholder perceived mistrust are effect variables influenced by the aforementioned causal factors. This implies that addressing the root causes, such as data quality, risk assessments, and algorithmic biases, will likely mitigate the negative impacts on ethics, integration, employment, and trust among stakeholders. Decision makers should adopt rigorous data management practices to ensure the reliability of AI systems, implement advanced AI-driven risk assessment tools, and promote algorithm transparency through explainable AI techniques to build trust between healthcare providers and patients. Continuing training programs are essential to stay abreast of AI developments and improve their application in healthcare. Adhering to ethical guidelines and actively reducing bias in AI algorithms will ensure fair and equitable healthcare delivery. Collaboration with IT specialists, data scientists, and other healthcare professionals is also important for successful AI integration into clinical workflows.

Literature-based challenges can be the limitations of this study. Future research should focus on exploring sector-specific nuances to validate the

findings across different healthcare domains. Longitudinal studies assessing the impact of targeted interventions on these challenges would provide valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of AI integration in healthcare. With various and comprehensive data collection methods like face-to-face interviews, the Delphi technique, etc., deep investigation can be performed.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

Financial Support

No financial support was provided.

Ethical Consideration

This study was approved by the Istanbul Medipol University Ethics Committee for Non-Interventional Clinical Researches (Number: E-10840098-202.3.02-4783, Decision Number: 753, Date: 01.08.2024).

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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The Relationships Between Knowledge Hiding, Organizational Justice, Workplace Friendship and Job Interdependence

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Abstract

This study was designed to determine the effects of social groups and relationships, which are among the basic subjects of sociology, on management science. In this context, the relationship between knowledge hiding, organizational justice, workplace friendship and job interdependence was investigated. This research, using quantitative analysis techniques, was conducted in a public institution operating in the transportation sector. Data were collected with the help of survey forms and at this stage, a simple random sampling method was preferred without any restrictions. Data obtained from 274 employees working in TR1, TR2, TR5, TR7 and TRB regions were analyzed with traditional statistical methods and structural equation modeling (SEM). According to the findings, the tendency to hide knowledge increases in environments where organizational justice is low, the friendship bonds of employees with a high perception of organizational justice are stronger, and this reduces their knowledge hiding behaviors. The study also found that the perception of organizational justice is higher in individuals with higher work experience, organizational justice and knowledge hiding behaviors do not differ according to gender, and the tendency to hide information in blue-collar employees is much lower than in white and gray collar employees.

Keywords: *Information hiding, organizational justice, workplace friendship, job interdependence, social exchange theory*

Öz

Bu çalışma, sosyolojinin temel konularından olan sosyal gruplar ve ilişkilerin yönetim bilimi üzerindeki etkilerini tespit etmek amacıyla tasarlanmıştır. Bu kapsamda, bilgi saklama davranışının örgütsel adalet, arkadaşlık bağları ve görev bağımlılığıyla ilişkisi araştırılmıştır. Nicel analiz tekniklerinin kullanıldığı bu araştırma, ulaştırma sektöründe faaliyet gösteren bir kamu kuruluşunda yürütülmüştür. Veriler anket formları yardımıyla toplanmış ve bu aşamada herhangi bir kısıt gözetilmeksizin basit tesadüfi örnekleme yöntemi tercih edilmiştir. TR1, TR2, TR5, TR7 ve TRB bölgelerinde görev yapan 274 işgören üzerinden elde edilen veriler geleneksel istatistik yöntemleri ve yapısal eşitlik modellemesiyle (YEM) analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre örgütsel adaletin düşük olduğu ortamlarda bilgi saklama eğilimleri artmakta, yüksek örgütsel adalet algısına sahip işgörenlerin arkadaşlık bağları daha güçlü olmakta ve bu durum bilgi saklama davranışlarını azaltmaktadır. Çalışmada ayrıca, iş deneyimi yüksek olan bireylerde örgütsel adalet algısının daha yüksek olduğu, örgütsel adalet ve bilgi saklama davranışlarının cinsiyetlere göre farklılaşmadığı, mavi yakalı işgörenlerde bilgi saklama eğilimlerinin beyaz ve gri yakalılara kıyasla çok daha düşük olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Bilgi saklama, örgütsel adalet, iş yeri arkadaşlığı, görev bağımlılığı, sosyal değişim teorisi*

Introduction

Following the Third Industrial Revolution that occurred in the mid-20th century, the importance of information for organizations has steadily increased and has played critical roles in achieving strategic advantages. Unlike previous periods, accessing information in the 21st century has become extremely easy, paralleling advancements in communication technologies. However, this has also brought about certain challenges. Accordingly, it is essential to identify useful information among a vast amount of data (data mining) and to ensure the accuracy of that information and its ability to provide the desired benefits to the organization. After all this, it is necessary to process the information, develop it, and make the best use of it to achieve organizational goals. This can only be achieved by sharing the available information under appropriate conditions within the organization. Otherwise, the behavior of withholding information within the organization will increase, leading to various challenges for organizations.

According to a study conducted in America, 76% of employees have admitted to hiding knowledge at least once in their professional careers. In another study conducted in China, this rate was measured at 46% (Connelly et al., 2012). On the other hand, there is a cost associated with knowledge hiding behavior for organizations. A study on companies listed in the Fortune 500 found that such behavior leads to an annual loss of $31.5 billion for these companies (Iqbal et al., 2022). Another study conducted by Panopto (2018) revealed that employees waste an average of 5.3 hours each week waiting for information from their colleagues. This wasted time slows down organizations' creativity and development capabilities, leads to missed opportunities, hinders intra-organizational collaboration, and results in non-compliance with work norms (Nguyen et al., 2016).

To reduce these negative effects and increase the efficiency of organizational activities, there are several important tasks that managers need to undertake. These include identifying the factors leading to knowledge hiding, generating solutions, and promoting beneficial information sharing. According to studies in the literature, the perception of organizational justice held by employees plays a significant role among the factors that lead to knowledge hiding behavior (Oubrich et al., 2021). Thus, employees' perception of justice is higher in organizations exhibiting inclusive leadership styles, resulting in increased efficiency and decreased knowledge hiding behavior (Eberlin & Tatum, 2008). In social exchange theory (SET), this situation is explained by the tendency of employees to maintain their current behaviors when they believe there is fairness between the benefits they provide to the organization and their own gains (Blau, 1964). Furthermore, the environment and conditions within the organization can play active roles in the dynamics of knowledge hiding behavior. Research in the literature indicates that employees' knowledge hiding behavior is influenced by variables such as friendship ties and job interdependence levels (Fong et al., 2018; Islam & Chaudhary, 2024).

This study will first address employees' knowledge hiding behavior, followed by an exploration of organizational justice that may lead to such behavior within the framework of SET, examining the roles of friendship ties and job interdependence through quantitative analysis methods and structural equation modeling (SEM). In the conclusion section, the findings will be compared with similar studies in literature, and suggestions for future research will be provided. Given that no research has been found that includes all four mentioned variables together, the study aims to contribute to the field.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development
Knowledge Hiding in Organizations

As important as it is for organizations to share valuable knowledge, the hiding of such information, and consequently the insufficient utilization of knowledge, is equally significant. The behavior referred to in the literature as "knowledge hiding" is defined by Serenko and Bontis (2016) as "an intentional concealment of any information or knowledge from any other individual who has requested it," and it is categorized into *intra-organizational knowledge hiding* and *mutual knowledge hiding*.

Additionally, it is worth noting that not all un-shared information falls within this scope.

In the 21st century, where entrepreneurship is prominent, organizations can rapidly rise and surpass established companies due to their modern approaches to knowledge and business practices. This situation presents opportunities for newly established startups with limited capital, while posing a threat to established companies that struggle to adapt to change. Many of these organizations draw their power from digital possibilities and unique business ideas. Examples include Alphabet (Google), founded in 1998 by two PhD students, which has a company value of over $3 trillion as of 2024; Meta Platforms (Facebook), initially designed as a social platform for Harvard students in 2004, which has quickly grown to over 2 billion users and a value of $1.5 trillion; and Airbnb, founded in 2008 by two entrepreneurs, Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia, who struggled to pay their rent and now operates in 191 countries with a valuation of $85 billion. This list could go on, but their commonality lies in effectively combining innovative business ideas with technology and maximizing the benefits derived from their knowledge levels (Bandera et al., 2017).

While the ability to store vast amounts of information is a technical achievement, its true value emerges only when organizations can effectively analyze, apply, and transform this knowledge into actionable strategies and innovations. For instance, organizations like Google, Facebook, and Airbnb not only store extensive data but also utilize advanced analytics and creative approaches to convert this information into competitive advantages. This highlights the vital importance of effectively utilizing stored knowledge to achieve organizational goals, adapt to dynamic market conditions, and sustain growth. Knowledge hiding, however, can obstruct this process by limiting the flow of valuable information within the organization. Such behaviors may occur when requested information is unavailable, deemed low-value, or contains critical and confidential content. In some cases, knowledge hiding manifests as a "white lie," often to safeguard employees' feelings, thoughts, or security. To leverage knowledge effectively, it is necessary to distinguish between knowledge hiding behaviors that hinder organizational objectives and those aimed at protecting employee welfare (Connelly et al., 2012). Once this distinction is made, organizations must identify and address the root causes of harmful knowledge-hiding behaviors to ensure that critical information is not only stored but also effectively utilized for innovation and competitive advantage.

Organizational Justice and Knowledge Hiding

According to numerous studies in literature, organizational justice plays a significant role among workplace factors that lead to knowledge hiding (Ghani et al., 2020). Organizational justice, defined by Greenberg (1990) as "the concept of organizational justice refers to the organization members' perceptions of whether the organization that they are part of is treating them fairly" is examined within the framework of Social Exchange Theory (SET) across three dimensions: *procedural justice, interactional justice,* and *distributive justice* (Bies and Moag, 1986):

Distributive Justice: This dimension pertains to the perceived fairness of the outcomes or resources distributed within an organization. It focuses on whether employees believe they are receiving a fair share of rewards, such as salary, benefits, and promotions, based on their contributions or needs (Adams, 1965). The equity theory suggests that employees assess fairness by comparing their input (e.g., effort, skills) with the outputs (e.g., rewards, recognition) relative to others. When employees perceive equitable distributions, their job satisfaction and organizational commitment tend to be higher (Colquitt et al., 2001).

Procedural Justice: Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the processes and procedures that lead to outcomes or decisions within an organization. It emphasizes the consistency, transparency, and impartiality of decision-making procedures (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Employees are more likely to accept unfavorable outcomes if they believe that the decision-making processes were fair, unbiased, and applied consistently. Procedural justice plays a crucial role in fostering trust and organizational commitment (Greenberg, 1990).

Interactional Justice: This dimension focuses on the quality of interpersonal treatment employees receive during the implementation of procedures and outcomes. Interactional justice can be further divided into two subcategories: interpersonal justice and informational justice. Interpersonal justice refers to the respect and dignity of employees shown by authorities or decision-makers, while informational justice concerns the transparency and adequacy of the information provided during decision-making (Bies & Moag, 1986). Employees value being treated with respect and having clear, honest communication, as it fosters trust and positive relationships within the organization (Colquitt et al., 2001).

On the other hand, procedural justice refers to "fair behavior in organizational decision-making, resolution of payment disputes, and processes related to work, as well as fair distribution of resources". This dimension of justice is considered highly important and a priority for organizational management, as it directly affects employees' work methods and motivation levels. It is known that employees who believe they are treated fairly when their individual performances are assessed tend to trust their managers and organizations (Mahmood et al., 2023). Interactional justice means "treating individuals equally in organizational processes". This type of justice involves managers in decision-making positions being sensitive to employees and providing justifications when explaining their decisions. This, in turn, increases employees' perceptions of fairness toward their organizations and managers, reducing their tendencies to hide knowledge (Jahanzeb et al., 2020). Distributive justice evaluates employees' feelings of fairness regarding the allocation of rewards such as salaries, incentives, goods, and fringe benefits. When employees at the same level receive different salaries, perceptions of fairness toward the organization may be compromised, which can manifest in individual performance, teamwork, and the quality of work (Donglong et al., 2020). This situation is explained in SET as "employees continuously comparing their organizational inputs with the rewards they receive and attempting to maintain the status quo in scenarios where they believe they are treated fairly". Together, these three dimensions of organizational justice contribute to employees' overall perceptions of fairness and are essential in shaping organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment, and performance. If adequate attention is not paid to these three dimensions of organizational justice, a series of negative outcomes involving knowledge hiding behaviors within the organization will be inevitable (Ghani et al., 2020; Jahanzeb et al., 2020; Oubrich et al., 2021). Based on these studies, it is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 1: Organizational justice has a negative impact on knowledge hiding.

The Effect of Workplace Friendship

Organizations represent more than just a means for employees to earn money; most of the active hours of a 24-hour day are spent at the workplace. Therefore, organizations are environments with strong social aspects for employees. As a result, individuals who are happy at work are likely to perform their expected duties well, be more productive, and spread these gains to their surroundings.

The happiness of employees in organizations is not something they can achieve solely by themselves. Individuals can only be happy when they have strong friendship ties and will strive to maintain this happiness. SET posits that friendships among employees and between employees and leaders will develop over time, leading to increased mutual commitment, trust, and loyalty within the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Hsu et al. (2019) suggest that for reciprocal trust to exist within an organization, organizational justice must be established, and that organizational justice and friendship ties positively influence each other. According to the literature, the second hypothesis is established:

Hypothesis 2: Organizational justice positively influences friendship ties.

Friendship ties represent a voluntary social phenomenon that arises among individuals in either horizontal or vertical hierarchical positions. These

connections are characterized by mutual interactions both within and outside the organization, and they are grounded in shared elements such as trust, respect, commitment, and common values (Ozbek, 2018). Despite the frequent emphasis on the significance of knowledge sharing by organizational leaders, many organizations fail to act in alignment with this principle. Consequently, given the critical role of friendship ties for both individuals and organizations and the varying practical implications they present, this topic has recently garnered increasing attention from academics (He & Wei, 2022).

Researches in literature demonstrates that workplaces with high perceptions of organizational justice tend to foster stronger workplace friendships. These friendships, in turn, contribute positively to various organizational outcomes, including the development of an innovative organizational climate, increased productivity, enhanced job satisfaction, the achievement of organizational goals, improved performance, and more effective knowledge sharing (Song, 2006; Mao et al., 2012; Chen et al., 2013; Methot et al., 2016; Sias & Shin, 2019; He & Wei, 2022). Considering these findings, the third hypothesis of this research is proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 3: Friendship ties negatively impact knowledge hiding. Workplace Friendship as Mediator

Workplace friendship has the potential to affect and alter all dynamics that emerge within an organization. Studies have shown that behaviors such as sabotage, cynicism, or hiding important knowledge are closely related to dissatisfaction in organizations (Shahzad & Mahmood, 2012; He et al., 2021). According to researchers, the presence of workplace friendship in an organization not only brings numerous benefits and advantages but also serves as a protective structure for the organization and its employees. Considering that establishing a corporate image is very difficult but destroying it is quite easy, the importance of workplace friendships for organizations and the need to support them becomes clearer (Xing, 2022).

In this context, many decisions made by organizational management should be reviewed within the scope of procedural justice, interactional justice, and distributive justice (which are the dimensions of organizational justice) and it should not be overlooked that gaining employees' trust is critical to achieving organizational goals. As interactions develop, employees will experience stronger perceptions of organizational support and happiness, encouraging them to adopt a "positive reciprocity" attitude in rewarding the organization (He et al., 2022). The three hypotheses developed so far, considering similar studies in the literature (Islam & Chaudhary, 2024) and the finding in SET that "workplace friendship inhibits knowledge hiding" (He et al., 2022), lead to the following fourth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Friendship ties mediate the effect of organizational justice on knowledge hiding.

Job Interdependence as Moderator

In organizations, tasks are often complex and involve mutual dependence among individuals. Accordingly, engaging in knowledge hiding while performing a task implies that information you may need in the future could also be withheld from you. This concept, referred to in the literature as job interdependence, has a significant impact on knowledge hiding (Fong et al., 2018). An employee who, under normal circumstances, does not want to share their knowledge may be inclined to share it out of fear of failure, knowing they might face the same situation tomorrow.

On the other hand, if there is competition within the same team and individual activities are prioritized, employees may be more inclined to hide knowledge (since there is no mutual job interdependence). Studies have shown that in scenarios where tasks are independent of other team members, the impact of knowledge hiding on innovative behaviors like team creativity is less significant (Stapless & Webster, 2008). In summary, job interdependence supports intra-organizational communication and collaboration, thus enabling mutual alignment among individuals (Bachrach et al., 2006). When considering the role of job interdependence in organizational processes and the proposition "SET posits that the benefits received

from others evoke a sense of obligation in employees, encouraging them to reciprocate these benefits either directly or indirectly" (Blau, 1964; Yang & Chae, 2021), the following two hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 5: Job interdependence moderates the effect of organizational justice on knowledge hiding.

Hypothesis 6: Job interdependence moderates the effect of workplace friendship on knowledge hiding.

reviewed by the highest-level managers in the relevant regions, the survey forms were sent down to the hierarchy to subordinate employees. Care was taken to ensure broad coverage in distributing the surveys, and forms were sent not only to a single region but to the TR1, TR2, TR5, TR7, and TRB regions, covering approximately 30 provinces.

Before starting field research, the sample size needed to represent the study population was calculated. For a population of N=10,000, assuming a
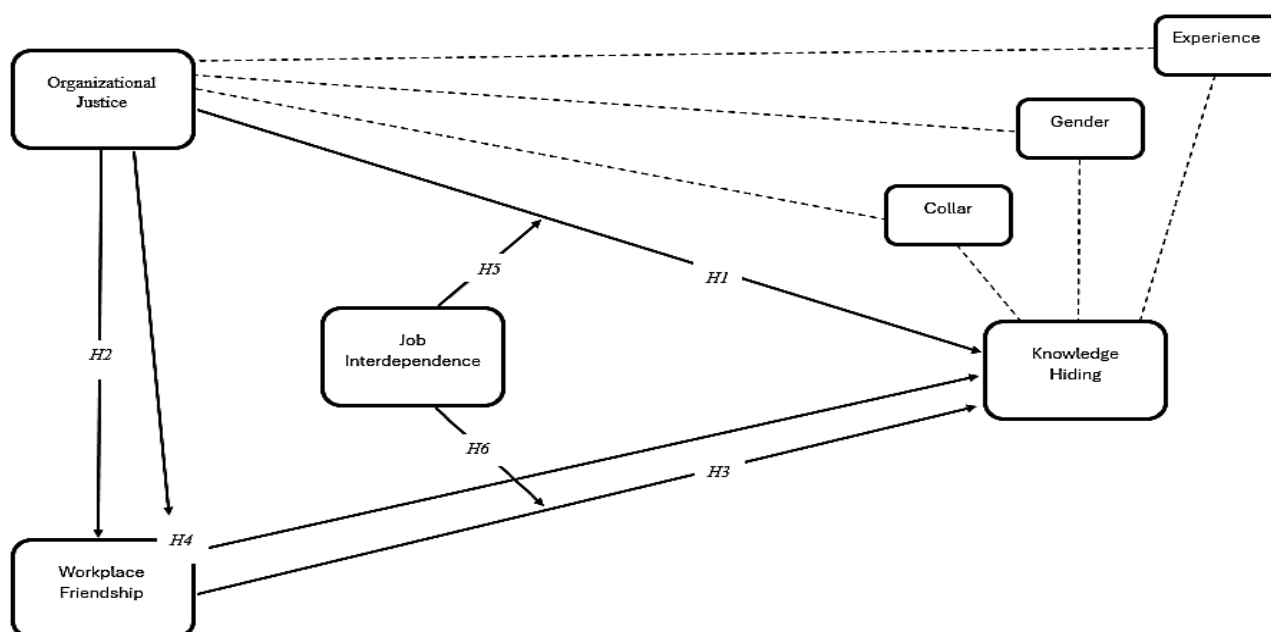
Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Method

Samples and Procedures

This study was conducted on the personnel of a public organization operating in the transportation sector across a vast geographic area. Data from employees was collected using survey forms. The surveys were sent via digital platforms, and the simple random sampling method was adopted without making any distinctions between different sample groups. At the beginning of the survey, a brief note explained the purpose of the study, how the data would be used, the confidentiality of personal information, and the contribution of carefully provided answers to the research. After being

population proportion value of 80%, with a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error, the sample size (n) was calculated to be 240 (Julious, 2019). After reaching a reasonable level of this figure, data collection was stopped, and 274 usable data points were obtained after excluding a small number (9) of extreme and outlier values.

The study sample consisted of 247 men and 27 women. Of the employees, 42% were between the ages of 31-40, while only 6% were aged 61 and above. In terms of education, 59% were university graduates, and none were below high school level. The proportion of postgraduate degree holders was measured at 6%. Regarding work experience, the largest group, at 38%, had 8-15 years of experience. As for monthly total income, two values were almost equal: 44% earned between 21,000-40,000 TL (650-1,250 USD), while 42% earned between 41,000-60,000 TL (1,250-1,850 USD).

Although Turkey is the 18th largest economy globally as of 2024, it ranks among the countries with the highest inflation rates, which gives special significance to the income levels of employees (The World Bank, n.d.). The last demographic data concerned employee categories: 65% were civil servants, 32% were workers, and 3% were contract workers. Employees were classified by their job positions (e.g., regional and service managers as white-collar; supervisors as gray-collar; and train operations staff and workers as blue-collar). As a result, it was found that 49% of participants were blue-collar, 31% were gray-collar, and 20% were white-collar.

Data Analysis

SPSS v.21, Excel 2016, and Jamovi v.2.5.5 were used for data analysis in this study. After determining descriptive statistics, reliability values, and inter-item correlations, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to examine the validity and internal consistency of each construct. Finally, the structural equation model (SEM) and p-values in mediation-moderation tests were used to test the hypotheses. Hayes' (2013) steps were used to test mediation effects.

Measures

All scales used in this study were prepared in a 5-point Likert type. In the surveys, 1 represented "Strongly Disagree," and 5 represented "Strongly Agree." Besides demographic information, four scales with seven dimensions were included in the survey forms.

The knowledge hiding (KH) scale consisted of two dimensions: intra-organizational knowledge hiding (IKH) and reciprocal knowledge hiding (RKH). The workplace friendship (WF) scale and the job interdependence (JI) scale were unidimensional. The last scale used in the study, organizational justice (OJ), was divided into three sub-scales: procedural justice (PJ), interactional justice (IJ), and distributive justice (DJ). In total, there were 23 items across the scales. All scale items consisted of either positive or negative statements, ensuring consistency, with one exception: item six of the WF scale ("I don't consider anyone I work with

to be a real friend"), which was reverse coded before analysis.

In studies where individuals evaluate themselves, common method bias (CMB) is a frequent issue. To ensure that each dimension reflected only its related values, the Harman Single Factor test was applied before data analysis. Based on the results, the Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings percentage of variance was measured at 28%, well below the 50% threshold, indicating no CMB problem in the study (Kline, 2005). Detailed information on the study dimensions is as follows:

1. *Organizational Justice*: The first scale in the study is the organizational justice scale developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993), consisting of three dimensions and eight items. The first dimension, procedural justice, has three items, one of which is, "Were you able to express your opinions and feelings when the rules in your organization were established?" The second dimension, interactional justice, also contains three items, including "Does your supervisor value your dignity and respect when communicating with you?" The third and final dimension, distributive justice, has two items, one of which is, "Do the opportunities (material, moral) you receive in your organization reflect the effort you put into work?" The reliability values of the organizational justice scale's dimensions were measured at ,839; ,844 and ,914 respectively.

2. *Knowledge Hiding*: The second scale is the knowledge hiding scale, developed by Serenko and Bontis (2016), consisting of two dimensions and six items. The intra-organizational knowledge hiding dimension includes three items, such as, "They generally provide me with only part of the information I need," while the reciprocal knowledge hiding dimension includes items like, "I generally provide only part of the information they need." The reliability results of the knowledge hiding dimensions were found to be ,874 and ,890 respectively.

3. *Workplace Friendship*: The third scale used in this study was from Nielsen et al. (2000) is a two-dimensional and 12-item Workplace Friendship scale. The scale consists of Friendship Opportunity and Friendship Prevelance dimensions, consisting of six questions each. In terms of compliance with the scope of the research, only the Friendship

Prevelance dimension was used in this study. An example item of the dimension is "I have the opportunity to get to know my co-workers." The reliability of the job interdependence scale was ,865.

4. *Job Interdependence*: The third scale used in the study is the unidimensional job interdependence scale, developed by Campion et al. (1993), consisting of three items, such as, "I cannot perform my tasks without receiving information or materials from my colleagues." The reliability of the job interdependence scale was ,818.

5. *Control Variables*: Based on previous studies in the literature (Podsakoff et al., 2009; Wu & Parker, 2017), the control variables in this study were divided into two categories. At the individual level, age, gender, and education were used; at the organizational level, work experience, status, and monthly total income were included.

Findings

Before proceeding with the analysis, the distribution of the data was examined. Parametric and non-parametric statistical methods differ depending on the type of data distribution. In the normality analysis, skewness and kurtosis values were first checked. According to Hair et al. (2010) and Byrne (2010), skewness values should be within ±2 and kurtosis values within ±7 to indicate normal distribution. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) suggested narrower limits of ±1.5. Most skewness and kurtosis values in the study fell within normality boundaries. However, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test was also applied to ensure normality, and the p-value was found to be <,001.

Table 1. Descriptive, Reliability, Validity, Normality and Multicollinearity Analysis

	Mean	SD	**Reliability**			
	Mean	SD	ω	CR	AVE	VIF
IKH	2,197	1,159	,874	,874	,700	1,376
RKH	1,222	,469	,890	,891	,734	1,103
WF	3,303	,945	,865	,861	,565	1,354
JI	3,184	1,007	,818	,817	,601	1,054
PJ	3,084	1,210	,839	,837	,646	1,764
IJ	3,456	1,129	,844	,840	,649	1,652
DJ	2,891	1,503	,914	,916	,846	1,356

Note. IKH: Intraorganizational knowledge hiding, RKH: Reciprocal knowledge hiding, WF: Workplace friendship, JI: Job interdependence, PJ: Procedurel justice, IJ: Interactional justice, DJ: Disributive justice. SD:

Standart deviation, ω: McDonald's omega, CR: Composite reliability, AVE: Average variance extracted, VIF: Variance inflation factor.

When the results are examined, it is observed that the lowest average is associated with the RKH scale (1.222), while the highest average is recorded for the IJ scale (3.456). Regarding the standard deviation (SD), which indicates the distance of the items constituting the dimensions from the dimension averages, the lowest value is found to be 0.469 for RKH, and the highest value is 1.503 for DJ. Instead of the commonly used Cronbach's Alpha (α) method for testing the reliability of the scales, the McDonald's Omega (ω) method is adopted. This preference is based on evidence suggesting that ω values are more sensitive and represent a more reliable index of internal consistency (Graham, 2006; Revelle & Zinbarg, 2009), with a lower likelihood of overestimating or underestimating reliability (Dunn et al., 2014). Accordingly, the ω reliability values in this study range between 0.818 and 0.914. Composite reliability (CR) values, another indicator of reliability, yield similar results, ranging between 0.817 and 0.916. To ensure CR values exceed the threshold of 0.50, the WF6 item, which exhibits the lowest factor loading, is excluded from the analysis. Following this adjustment, the average variance extracted (AVE) values range between 0.565 and 0.846, meeting the criterion for convergent validity as these values exceed the 0.50 threshold. For discriminant validity, the square roots of the AVE values are calculated and compared horizontally and vertically with the correlation values presented in the correlation table (Table 2).

According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, it is desired that the square root AVE values on the diagonal are greater than ,70 and higher than the correlation values of other dimensions (Hair et al., 2014). Based on findings, this condition is met. Finally, to ensure there is no multicollinearity problem, the variance inflation factor (VIF) values are checked. A VIF less than 5 indicates a low correlation of that predictor with other predictors. A value between 5 and 10 indicates a moderate correlation, while VIF values larger than 10 are a sign for high, not tolerable correlation of model predictors (James et al.,

2013). Since all VIF values were below 5, there is no multicollinearity problem.

seen within the desired ranges. In the single-factor structure where all variables were assigned to one factor, these values (x^2/df: 11,315; CFI: ,411; GFI: ,932; RMSEA: ,194; and SRMR: ,136) were found to be at lower limits. As can be understood from this, the four-factor structure had better goodness-of-fit values (Table 3), and this showed model met the structural discriminativeness criterion with very

Table 2. Correlation Between Constructs and Squared Root AVE (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

	Gen.	Age	Edu.	Exp.	Status	Collar	Income	IKH	RKH	WF	JI	PJ	IJ	DJ
Gender	-													
Age	,179**	-												
Education	-,169**	-,136*	-											
Experience	,267**	,842**	-,101	-										
Status	-,242**	,258**	,181**	,239**	-									
Collar	,263**	-,212**	-,342**	-,189**	-,775**	-								
Income	-,043	,084	-,063	,082	-,032	,074	-							
IKH	,011	,059	-,071	,034	-,092	,132*	,036	(,837)						
RKH	,001	,078	,036	,047	,018	-,035	-,056	,318**	(,856)					
WF	,098	,122*	,033	,169**	,151*	-,130*	,042	-,460**	-,262**	(,752)				
JI	,101	,008	-,042	-,034	-,050	,099	-,058	,039	,011	,096	(,775)			
PJ	,026	,125*	-,032	,089	,285**	-,248**	-,059	-,291**	-,131*	,421**	,200**	(,804)		
IJ	-,043	,108	,075	,076	,346**	-,334**	-,044	-,394**	-,236**	,430**	,106	,563**	(,806)	
DJ	-,024	,310**	-,052	,246**	,382**	-,406**	,048	-,157**	-,147*	,283**	,006	,467**	,411**	(,920)

*Note: *Correlation is significant at the ,05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the ,01 level (2-tailed). The numbers in parentheses are the square root of each construct's extracted average variance (AVE). Discriminant validity conditions are met for all values in the diagonal.*

low common method variance. Finally, it is seen R^2

Table 3. Measurement Model's Goodness of Fit (GoF) Results

Variables	x^2/df (≤2; ≤3)	CFI (≥,95; ≥ ,90)	GFI (≥,95; ≥ ,90)	NFI (≥,95; ≥ ,90)	RMSEA (≤ ,05; ≤ ,08)	SRMR (≤ ,05; ≤ ,10)
KH	2	,992	,995	,984	,060	,037
WF	2,205	,993	,998	,988	,066	,021
JI	0	1	1	1	0	0
OJ	2,457	,986	,994	,976	,073	,026
Four-factor model	1,755	,961	,984	,915	,052	,052
One-factor model	11,315	,411	,932	,392	,194	,136

Note. Good and acceptable GoF values are shown in parentheses in the first row. KH: knowledge hiding, WF: workplace friendship, JI: job interdependence, OJ: organizational justice. GFI: goodness of fit index, CFI: comparative fit index, NFI: normed fit index, RMSEA: root mean square error of approximation, SRMR: standardized root mean square residual, Gof: Goodness of fit.

Structural Equation Modeling Results

Before looking at the hypothesis results, the goodness-of-fit values of structural model are checked, which consists of four scales. In this context, each scale's x^2/df (chi-square/degrees of freedom), CFI (comparative fit index), NFI (normed fit index), RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation), and SRMR (standardized root mean square residual) values are found and questioned whether they had acceptable or good goodness-of-fit values. According to results, all Goodness of Fit (GoF) values were at good or excellent levels (here, the main focus is the four-factor model and the calculated values for each scale). The goodness-of-fit values of the four-factor model (x^2/df: 1,755; CFI: ,961; GFI: ,984; RMSEA: ,052; and SRMR: ,052) were

values, which show the sample's ability to represent the actual population, were ,458 for KH and ,306 for WF.

Hypothesis Testing

Regression, mediation, and moderation analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses, utilizing the bootstrapping method. This approach, which involves resampling a single dataset to generate multiple simulated samples, provided more robust and meaningful results.

The first hypothesis (H1), proposing that organizational justice negatively affects knowledge hiding, was supported (β: -0.333; SE: 0.099; p: 0.001). The second hypothesis (H2), which suggested a positive relationship between organizational justice and friendship ties, was also accepted (β: 0.553;

SE: 0.073; p < 0.001). The third hypothesis (H3), stating that friendship ties negatively affect knowledge hiding, was confirmed (β: -0.433; SE: 0.085; p < 0.001). The fourth hypothesis (H4), proposing that friendship ties mediate the relationship between organizational justice and knowledge hiding, was supported through mediation tests (β: -0.239; SE: 0.055; p < 0.001). The direct and indirect effects are presented in the Structural Equation Model (SEM) shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Direct and Indirect Effects

	Direct Effects				
Path				β %95 confidence	
Predictor	Dependent	β	SE	Lower	Upper	p
OJ	KH	-,333	,099	-,539	-,128	,001
OJ	WF	,553	,073	,449	,657	<,001
WF	KH	-,433	,085	-,609	-,257	<0,001
	Indirect Effects				
Path				β %95 confidence	
Predictor	Mediator	Dependent	β	SE	Lower	Upper	p
OJ	WF	KH	-,239	,055	-,334	-,118	<,001

However, the fifth hypothesis (H5), which posited that job dependence moderates the effect of organizational justice on knowledge hiding (β: -0.050; SE: 0.037; p: 0.395), and the sixth hypothesis (H6), suggesting that job interdependence moderates the effect of friendship ties on knowledge hiding (β: -0.214; SE: 0.041; p: 0.307), were both rejected due to non-significant p-values.

Additional analyses were conducted to account for control variables such as experience, gender, and collar categories. For discrete variables, comparison tests based on Z statistics (means) were used. For demographic variables with two categories, the Student's t-test was employed, while for variables with more than two categories, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was applied. The ANOVA test examining differences in organizational justice and knowledge hiding levels based on experience revealed significant values for organizational justice (p < 0.001) but non-significant results for knowledge hiding (p: 0.264–0.867). Employees with more experience demonstrated higher trust in their organization's justice across all dimensions.

The Student's t-test assessing the relationship between gender and the levels of organizational justice and knowledge hiding yielded non-significant p-values (p: 0.474–0.993), indicating no gender-based differences. The ANOVA test exploring differences in organizational justice and knowledge hiding levels by collar type showed significant results for organizational justice (p < 0.001) but non-significant values for knowledge hiding (p: 0.108–0.753). Group means revealed that blue-collar workers were less inclined to hide knowledge, while white- and gray-collar employees displayed similar tendencies in knowledge hiding.

Conclusion and Discussion

In the modern world, also referred to as the Information Age, the importance of knowledge has become greater than ever. Thanks to this, small enterprises have been able to grow rapidly and surpass their established competitors. Therefore, it has become a necessity for all businesses to access useful information and make the best use of it. However, businesses face some challenges in this regard. The main challenges include obtaining new knowledge that will shape the sector, data mining to select the correct and useful information from vast amounts of data, and making the best use of the knowledge already possessed. In this context, the issue that has increasingly attracted the attention of academics in literature is knowledge hiding behavior, which directly affects the efficiency of organizations. Many studies conducted in this field shed light on the psychological, social, and organizational reasons for knowledge hiding. In this study, the organizational and social factors leading to knowledge hiding were discussed.

Numerous studies on the organizational factors leading to knowledge hiding have shown that this behavior is closely related to perceived organizational justice (Oubrich et al., 2021). According to this, knowledge sharing increases in organizations that gain employees' appreciation in the dimensions of procedural, interactional, and distributive justice (Mahmood et al., 2023). As for the social aspect of knowledge hiding, studies in this field have examined knowledge hiding behavior within the framework of SET and found that individuals de-

cide whether to hide or share knowledge by considering their mutual gains and losses. According to this, an individual who suffers from hiding knowledge will not be inclined to continue this behavior. This situation becomes more prominent in work environments where there is mutual job interdependence. Another social component related to knowledge hiding that needs to be known is the structure of workplace friendship within the organization. Accordingly, in organizations where workplace friendship occurs, the tendency to hide knowledge decreases, and cooperation increases. This, in turn, undoubtedly increases the organization's productivity and efficiency.

In this study, six hypotheses were evaluated to examine the relationships between organizational justice, workplace friendships, and knowledge hiding behaviors. Control variables such as experience, gender, and collar type were also analyzed to gain deeper insights. The findings reveal that organizational justice significantly reduces knowledge hiding, supporting Jahanzeb et al. (2020), who emphasized that decision-makers' sensitivity and transparency increase perceptions of justice and decrease knowledge hiding behaviors. The analysis further indicates that organizational justice positively influences workplace friendships. This aligns with SET, which suggests that friendships formed in horizontal and vertical hierarchical positions foster perceptions of justice (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Additionally, strong workplace friendships significantly reduce knowledge hiding, consistent with He et al. (2022), who found that such relationships enhance well-being and promote knowledge sharing. Notably, workplace friendship also moderates the relationship between organizational justice and knowledge hiding. In environments characterized by strong workplace friendships, knowledge hiding behaviors driven by perceptions of justice are diminished. This finding echoes He et al. (2022), who described workplace friendships as inhibitors of knowledge hiding within the framework of SET.

Contrasting these significant results, the fifth hypothesis, which proposed that job interdependence moderates the effect of organizational justice on knowledge hiding, was not supported. Similarly, the sixth hypothesis, suggesting that task interdependence moderates the effect of workplace friendship on knowledge hiding, was also rejected. These findings indicate that interdependence in tasks does not influence knowledge-hiding behaviors related to organizational justice or workplace friendships. Notably, no reference studies in the literature were found to examine these non-significant interactions. Lastly, the study explored whether perceptions of organizational justice and knowledge hiding behaviors vary across the control variables of experience, gender, and collar type. Experience was found to significantly influence perceptions of justice, with more experienced employees demonstrating higher trust in organizational justice across all dimensions. In contrast, no significant differences were observed in knowledge-hiding behaviors based on experience, nor did gender influence either variable. However, differences were evident when comparing employees by collar type. Blue collar workers were significantly more willing to share knowledge than white or gray collar workers, whose knowledge sharing tendencies were nearly identical. While these findings highlight unique behavioral patterns among collar types, no studies were identified in the literature examining the combined effects of these control variables on the dependent and independent variables.

This study is distinct from others as it addresses both workplace friendship and job interdependence in the effect of organizational justice on knowledge hiding behavior. A review of the literature revealed no similar research. Furthermore, while SET suggests that employee behaviors are conducted based on a cost-benefit analysis, it does not address how this behavior differs based on collar type. For these reasons, it is assumed this study contributes to both the literature and SET.

Limitations of this study include the analysis being based solely on data from those who were willing to complete the survey forms, meaning that not all employees' data was collected, allowing for some flexibility in the results. Additionally, since the surveys were not conducted face-to-face, the importance of the topic could not be thoroughly explained by the researchers.

Future studies could benefit from including different sectors, applying the same study to the same participants at regular intervals, and conducting statistical analyses that include all studies in this

field using the meta-analysis technique. Additionally, comparisons between provinces can be made according to income levels, providing further insight into regional variations and their potential impact on the findings

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Childhood Maltreatment and Depression: The Role of Emotion Regulation and Irrational Beliefs

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Abstract

Numerous factors contribute to the relationship between childhood maltreatment and depressive symptoms in later life, with emotion dysregulation being a key component. This study explored the mediating role of difficulties in emotion regulation and irrational beliefs in the relationship between childhood maltreatment and depressive symptoms. The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS-16), and the Shortened General Attitude and Belief Scale (SGABS) were administered to a total of 354 participants aged 18-61. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to test several models. The initial model proposed that the link between childhood maltreatment and depression symptoms would be mediated by difficulties in emotion regulation and irrational beliefs. The results indicated that irrational beliefs did not fit the data and showed no significant relationship with depression, leading to its removal from the model. In subsequent models, the mediating role of emotion regulation difficulties in the relationship between the subscales of the CTQ and depression symptoms was examined. Emotion regulation difficulties were found to fully mediate the relationship between depression symptoms and emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and physical abuse, while partially mediating the relationship between depression symptoms and the neglect subscales. Results highlight the importance of understanding the multiple mechanisms involved in adult depressive symptomatology.

Keywords: *Childhood maltreatment, depressive symptoms, emotion regulation, irrational thinking.*

Öz

Çocukluk dönemi istismar ve ihmali ile yaşamın ilerleyen dönemlerindeki depresif belirtiler arasındaki ilişkiye, duygu düzenleme zorlukları da dahil olmak üzere birçok faktör etki eder. Bu çalışmada, duygu düzenleme güçlükleri ve irrasyonel düşünmenin çocukluk dönemi kötü davranımı ile depresyon belirtileri arasındaki ilişkiyi aracılık edip etmediği araştırılmıştır. Çalışmaya 18-61 yaşları arasında toplam 354 katılımcı katılmıştır. Çocukluk Çağı Travmaları Ölçeği (CTQ), Beck Depresyon Envanteri, Duygu Düzenleme Güçlüğü Ölçeği (DERS-16) ve Kısaltılmış Genel Tutum ve İnanç Ölçeği (SGABS) kullanılmıştır. Tasarlanan modelleri test etmek için yapısal eşitlik modellemesi (SEM) kullanılmıştır. İlk modelde, çocukluk dönemi kötü davranımı ile depresyon belirtileri arasındaki ilişkide, duygu düzenleme güçlükleri ve akıldışı inançların aracılık edeceği varsayılmıştır. Bulgular, akıldışı inançların (Kısaltılmış Genel Tutum ve İnanç Ölçeği) verilerle uyumlu olmadığını ve depresyonla olan ilişkisinin anlamlı olmadığını göstermiş ve modelden çıkarılmıştır. Model, çocukluk dönemi istismar ve ihmali ile depresyon belirtileri arasındaki ilişkiye kısmen aracılık eden duygu düzenleme güçlükleri ile test edilmiştir. Diğer modellerde, CTQ alt ölçekleri ile depresyon belirtileri arasındaki ilişkide duygu düzenleme güçlüklerinin aracı rolü test edilmiştir. Duygu düzenleme güçlükleri, depresyon belirtileri ile duygusal istismar, fiziksel istismar ve cinsel istismar arasındaki ilişkiye tam aracılık ederken, ihmal alt ölçekleri ile depresyon belirtileri arasındaki ilişkiye kısmen aracılık etmiştir. Sonuçlar, yetişkinlerdeki depresif belirtileri anlamak ve etkili müdahaleler tasarlayabilmek için birden fazla mekanizmanın anlaşılmasının kritik olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Çocukluk dönemi istismarı, kötü davranım, depresyon belirtileri, duygu düzenleme, akıldışı inançlar*

Introduction

Childhood maltreatment is a critical risk factor for adverse psychological outcomes, including emotion regulation difficulties and depression. Maltreatment and related risks may hinder the emotional development of children, depriving them of the opportunity to learn how to regulate their emotions (Jennissen et al., 2016). Household dysfunction, including parental conflict and instability (Negriff, 2019), parental depression and negative affect (Kohl et al., 2011; Smith, et al., 2014), creates a risk for childhood maltreatment. Emotion regulation is defined as the awareness, understanding, and acceptance of emotions, the ability to control impulsive behaviors when negative emotions arise, and the use of appropriate emotion regulation strategies that help individuals act in line with situational requirements and personal goals (Gratz & Roemer 2004). Studies highlight the critical role of emotion regulation in mitigating the adverse effects of childhood trauma, particularly in fostering resilience and addressing maladaptive emotional patterns. Research has shown that childhood emotional maltreatment can disrupt emotion regulation processes by contributing to increased aggression and emotional dysregulation through maladaptive schemas (Ertürk et al., 2018). These maladaptive schemas not only exacerbate emotional challenges but also underscore the importance of developing effective emotion regulation strategies as a means of fostering resilience. Recent studies further support this dynamic, revealing culturally relevant patterns in how emotion regulation mediates the relationship between trauma and resilience (Tanacıoğlu Aydın & Pekşen Süslü, 2023).

Many mental health problems appear to be characterized by difficulties in emotion regulation (Werner & Gross, 2010), and that these dysfunctional emotion regulation strategies are associated with more long-term and severe depressive symptomatology, particularly in the face of stressful life events (Aldao, et al., 2010; Mennin & Farach, 2007; Stikkelbroek et al., 2016).

Childhood Maltreatment, Emotion Regulation, and Mental Health Outcomes

Numerous studies indicate that, exposure to maltreatment during formative years disrupts emotional, cognitive, and social development, often leading to negative psychological outcomes such as depression and anxiety (Baldwin et al., 2023), as well as risk-taking and aggression in young adults (Odacı & Çelik, 2020). Research consistently shows that early adverse experiences can alter brain development and emotion regulation, increasing vulnerability to mental health problems throughout the lifespan. A history of childhood trauma is consistently found to be related particularly to depression and anxiety in adulthood (Afifi et al., 2006; Crow et al., 2014; Gibb et al., 2007) as well as in adolescence (Elkins et al., 2019). Although risk of depression is higher among females, emotional abuse was found to have the strongest impact on lifetime and recent depression, in both females and males (Chapman et al., 2004). Considering the severity and duration, experiencing multiple types of adverse childhood experiences increases the risk and severity of mental health problems including depression, panic attack, generalized anxiety disorder and also alcohol or substance abuse (Chapman et al., 2004).

Another factor affecting emotional distress may be beliefs about managing emotions. Individuals who believe that they cannot efficiently regulate their emotions, tend to avoid emotional experiences, particularly negative ones, and find emotion-evoking situations threatening and worrisome and use cognitive and behavioral avoidance strategies (Brockmeyer et al., 2012; Castella et al., 2018). They may also believe that they lack other alternative strategies or do not possess self-efficacy necessary to use other more positive emotion regulation strategies (Castella et al., 2018). As a result, individuals may default to less effective strategies due to a perceived lack of options or confidence in their ability to manage emotions effectively. In terms of functionality of emotion regulation strategies, Gross & John (2003) distinguished between two types of emotion regulation strategies, namely antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies which occur before an emotional response is fully

activated, and response-focused emotion regulation strategies occurring after an emotional response is fully generated. Cognitive reappraisal is considered an antecedent-focused strategy which affects how people experience, share with others and express negative emotions by reinterpreting the stressful event and making an effort to positively improve emotions. Individuals who successfully employ cognitive reappraisal are more likely to form close relationships in which they share both negative and positive emotions, their overall well-being is supported with high life satisfaction and self-esteem and also show less depressive symptoms. On the other hand, suppression is recognized as a response-focused strategy that only helps inhibit of behaviorally expressing negative emotions, by suppressing and concealing feelings and does not help in reducing the experiencing of negative emotions. Individuals using suppression seem to experience more negative emotions and less positive emotions, are less accepting of their emotions which they find unfavorable, have trouble in understanding and dealing with negative mood. They are reluctant to forming close relationships, are emotionally aloof, have problems in forming positive relations with others and refrain from sharing both negative and positive emotions. These individuals show lower levels of self-esteem, are dissatisfied with their lives, find themselves inauthentic, and also have more depressive symptoms while ruminating extensively about negative events (Gross & John, 2003). As a result, individuals who use antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies show a lower risk for depression, whereas those who use response-focused strategies show higher levels of depressive symptoms.

The use of emotion regulation strategies may not be fixed, and individuals who use mixed strategies may show less emotional distress compared to those who rely solely on maladaptive strategies. For example, individuals using adaptive strategies such as acceptance, cognitive reappraisal, and problem-solving, but who also exhibit high levels of rumination, did not experience psychological distress, suggesting that positive strategies compensated for maladaptive strategies. The opposite may also happen. Acceptance, which is considered a healthy emotion regulation strategy, when used with suppression, was found to be related to significantly more psychological distress, suggesting that suppression may weaken adaptive outcomes (Chesney et al., 2019).

Individuals with a history of ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) may exhibit poor emotion regulation skills (Pasha-Zaidi et al., 2020), avoiding or inhibiting emotional experiences and expressions later in life (Krause et al., 2003). When the association between a history of childhood trauma, mental health, and emotion regulation skills was investigated, maltreatment and depressive symptoms were found to be negatively related to adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies (Huh et al., 2017). In particular, individuals who were emotionally abused and neglected used more emotion-focused coping, which in turn was associated with an increase in psychiatric symptoms (Sheffler et al., 2019). They were vulnerable to stress and relied more on suppression instead of reappraisal as an emotion regulation strategy when dealing with stressful life events (Hong et al., 2018).

There are similar findings in research conducted with adolescent populations. Emotion dysregulation and depressive symptoms increased with the severity of maltreatment (Peh et al., 2017), and internalizing problems, including depression, were found to be predicted by maladaptive emotion regulation strategies such as rumination, catastrophizing, lack of positive reappraisal, self-blame, and blaming others, whereas positive refocusing was found to be a negative predictor of depression (Garnefski et al., 2005; Öngen, 2010).

Irrational Beliefs and Mental Health

According to Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), an individual's perceptions and cognitions about events and experiences define whether these events and experiences are considered stressful. Irrational beliefs are rigid, extreme, false, illogical, and lead to psychological disturbances and problems in interpersonal relationships. They also result in low frustration tolerance, involve biased and inaccurate generalizations and conclusions,

whereas rational beliefs are realistic, logical, flexible, consistent, and helpful (Dryden & Ellis, 2003). Depression, anxiety, anger, hurt, guilt, shame, and envy are among the feelings included in the psychological aspects of stress. According to this view, irrational beliefs are an important part of emotional and behavioral problems (Ellis et al., 1997), and aiming to change irrational beliefs as part of treatment, REBT has been shown to be efficient in the treatment of depression as well as anxiety, stress, aggressive behavior, and in helping with self-esteem problems (Xu & Liu, 2017; Gonzalez et al., 2004).

It is well documented that irrational thinking is related to mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, somatization, and stress levels (Dryden et al., 2010; Terán et al., 2020; Thyer et al., 2010), as well as traumatic stress symptoms (Crumpei, 2014). Additionally, irrational beliefs were negatively related to self-acceptance (Vasile, 2012), interpersonal relationships, self-reliance, and positive relations with parents (Terán et al., 2020).

Moreover, the role of irrational beliefs in linking childhood trauma and emotional dysregulation has also been investigated, emphasizing their relevance in understanding psychological distress (Duru & Balkıs, 2021). These findings underscore the importance of considering both emotion regulation and irrational beliefs as mechanisms in the pathways from childhood adversity to depression. Other studies show that, in terms of traumatic childhood experiences, maladaptive beliefs were found to be related to ACEs (Berman, 2017), childhood neglect was associated with irrational beliefs (Hwang & Lee, 2010), and negative automatic thoughts mediated the relationship between history of childhood maltreatment and depression (Hou et al., 2020

The Present Study

The goal of this study is to explore mechanisms and outcomes associated with childhood maltreatment, particularly its potential role in increasing the risk of depressive symptoms. Research suggests that children's emotional regulation is strongly influenced by their relationships with

caregivers. Problematic parental relationships may lead to poor emotional regulation skills and irrational beliefs, which, in turn, could contribute to a higher frequency of depressive symptoms. It was hypothesized that difficulties in emotion regulation and irrational beliefs would mediate the relationship between childhood maltreatment and depressive symptoms. To test this, three mediation analyses were conducted: one using the total score for childhood maltreatment and two separate analyses examining the abuse subscales (emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse) and the neglect subscales (emotional neglect and physical neglect). Child abuse and neglect reflect distinct experiences with unique dynamics and psychological consequences. Abuse involves active harmful behaviors, while neglect reflects an absence of adequate care and attention, and it is believed that these differences may influence how they contribute to depressive symptoms (Perrin-Miller & Perrin, 2013). By analyzing abuse and neglect separately, it was aimed to reveal how emotion regulation difficulties specifically mediate the pathways from each form of maltreatment to depressive symptoms. Furthermore, this approach allows for the identification of specific dynamics and potential non-mediations, which could suggest that certain types of maltreatment influence depressive outcomes through different mechanisms.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The sample included 354 participants (280 females and 74 males), aged between 18 and 65 (mean age = 29.93, SD = 11.91). Age groups were distributed as follows: 50.3% aged 18–24, 22.9% aged 25–38, 18.6% aged 39–52, and 6% aged 53–65, with 2% missing data. Most participants were university students (57.6%), followed by master's or PhD graduates (21.8%), university graduates (14.4%), and high school graduates (5.6%). The majority (72%) were single, while 26.8% were married, with 4 participants not reporting their marital status.

Data were collected through online questionnaires distributed via Google Forms. The forms included an introduction to the study, researcher

contact information, and informed consent. The researcher shared the forms with personal contacts and university students, who further distributed them to their networks.

Measures

History of Childhood Maltreatment: The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), developed by Bernstein et al. (1994), was used to assess participants' history of abuse and neglect during childhood. It consists of 28 items rated on a 5-point scale and covers five subscales: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect. Higher scores indicate greater experiences of abuse and neglect. Cronbach's alpha reliability for the total scale in this study was 0.79. Cronbach's alpha values for the subscales are as follows: emotional abuse (items 3, 8, 14, 18, 25), 0.85; physical abuse (items 9, 11, 12, 15, 17), 0.87; sexual abuse (items 20, 21, 23, 24, 27), 0.87; physical neglect (items 1, 4, 6, 2, 26), 0.50; and emotional neglect (items 5, 7, 13, 19, 28), 0.86.

The Turkish standardization study, carried out by Şar, Öztürk, and İkikardeş (2012), reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.93 for the overall scale. In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale is 0.79.

Depression Symptom Frequency: Depression symptoms were measured using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI; Beck et al., 1979), a 21-item self-report scale assessing symptoms over the past week. The scale ranges from 0 (no symptom) to 3 (severe symptom), with an internal consistency of 0.92. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.89. The Turkish standardization study was carried out by Hisli (1989), who reported an internal consistency of 0.80. The Cronbach's alpha for the present study is 0.89

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation: Difficulties in regulating emotions were assessed with the brief version of the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS-16; Bjureberg et al., 2016), a 16-item self-report tool. The DERS-16 consists of five subscales excluding the "awareness of emotional responses" dimension from the original version

(Gratz & Roemer, 2004). The items reflect difficulties in four dimensions which are acceptance of emotions, the ability to engage in goal-directed behavior and refrain from impulsive behavior when experiencing negative emotions, use of emotion regulation strategies perceived as effective, which include modulating emotional responses in a flexible way to meet situational demands, and awareness and understanding of emotions.

The Turkish standardization study was carried out by Yiğit & Yiğit (2017), with Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales ranging from 0.80 to 0.91. In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha is 0.95.

Irrational Beliefs: Irrational beliefs were measured using the Shortened General Attitude and Belief Scale (SGABS; Lindner et al., 1999), a 5-point self-report scale. The scale measures irrational thinking through seven subscales, including one for rational thinking and six for irrational beliefs (self-downing, other-downing, need for achievement, need for approval, need for comfort, demand for fairness). The internal consistency of the subscales ranges from 0.79 to 0.84.

The Turkish standardization study was conducted by Urfa & Urfa (2019), with Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales ranging from 0.72 to 0.91. In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha is 0.90.

Research Model

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized to examine whether emotional regulation and irrational beliefs serve as mediators in the connection between childhood maltreatment and depressive symptoms. The proposed model is presented in Figure 1.
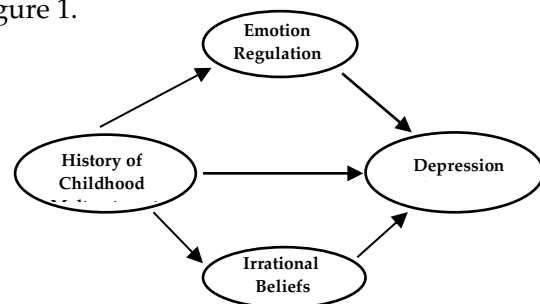

Figure 1. Research Model

Data Analyses

Descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated for the study variables. Missing data were identified from the demographic form. Outliers were detected, resulting in the exclusion of 6 participants from the dataset. Normality tests were conducted for the total scores of all questionnaires. For the BDI, item parceling was applied to create observed variables, as the scale does not include subtests. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated using the total scores to assess the relationships between latent variables for constructing a measurement model. Initially, the measurement model was evaluated, and the model fit indices confirmed a reflective measurement model, indicating that the latent variables influenced the measurement of the indicator variables in the current dataset.

Two models were tested: the first with CTQ as the independent variable, BDI as the dependent variable, and DERS-16 and SGABS as mediators; the second with CTQ subscales as independent variables and DERS-16 as the mediator.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 25.0 and LISREL 8.80.

Results

Scale means are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean Scores of CTQ, DERS-16, SGABS, and BDI

Variables	n	$\bar{X}$	SD
CTQ	354	46.31	9.11
EA	354	7.44	3.48
PA	354	5.76	2.13
SA	354	5.79	2.01
EN	354	10.57	4.55
PN	354	6.78	2.30
DERS-16	354	35.25	13.14
SGABS	354	72.50	15.52
BDI	354	11.64	8.40

Correlations among the latent variables, as shown in Table 2, indicate that childhood trauma, emotion regulation difficulties, irrational beliefs, and depression symptoms are positively and significantly correlated.

Table 2. Correlations Between CTQ, DERS-16, SGABS, and BDI

		CTQ	DERS-16	SGABS	BDI
1.	CTQ	-			
2.	DERS-16	0.44*	-		
3.	GABS	0.35*	0.69*	-	
4.	BDI	0.44*	0.69*	0.54*	-

*p< 0.01

Through structural equation modeling, it was determined whether the relationship between childhood maltreatment and depressi symptoms was mediated by emotion regulation and irrational beliefs (shown in figure 2). The structural model, which incorporated the SGABS which measured irrational beliefs, did not adequately fit the data ($\chi2/df = 668.22/165$, p < 0.05, RMSEA = 0.09, SRMR = 0.11, CFI = 0.88, GFI = 0.84). Moreover, when SGABS was included as a mediator, its relationship with the dependent variable (BDI) was not statistically significant, necessitating the removal of SGABS from the model.

With the exclusion of irrational beliefs, measured by SGABS, the model was further tested through a single mediator, which was emotion regulation measured by DERS. Measurements indicated that the structural model fit the data well ($\chi2/df = 200.66/62$ p < 0.05, GFI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.08, CFI = 0.97, SRMR = 0.057). Goodness-of-fit indices [$\chi2$, the goodness of fit index (GFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)] were utilized to evaluate how well the hypothesized model matched the actual data. The fit statistics for this model demonstrated that it was a good fit for the present data 0.90 or bigger for GFI and CFI; 0.08 or lower for SRMR and RMSEA).

In the structural model, the standardized coefficients representing the relationships between latent variables were significant. The path from CTQ

to DERS-16, showed a significant correlation (ß = 0.55, p < 0.05). Similarly, the path from DERS-16 to BDI was also significant (ß = 0.65, p < 0.05). The direct path from CTQ to BDI (ß = 0.17, p < 0.05) remained significant, suggesting DERS-16 partially mediated the relationship between CTQ and BDI.
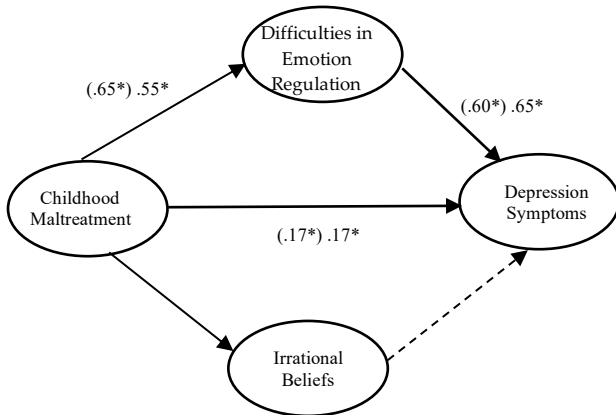

Figure 2. *Structural equation model CTQ, BDI, with DERS-16 as a mediator*

Figure 3. *Structural equation model CTQ abuse subscales, BDI, with DERS-16 as a mediator*
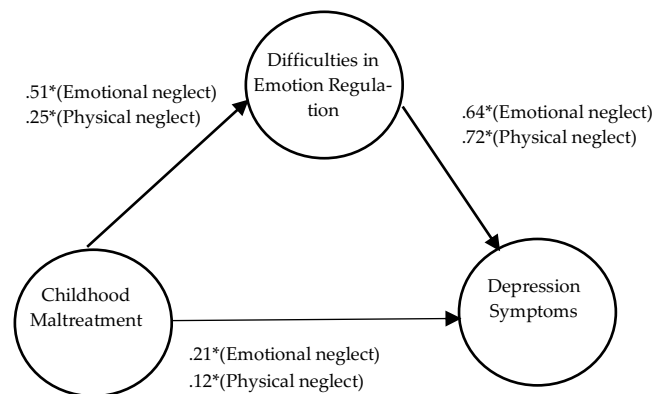
Figure 4. *Structural equation model CTQ neglect subscales, BDI, with DERS-16 as a mediator*

Three structural models were tested to examine whether DERS-16 mediated the relationship between the three subscales of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire measuring abuse (emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse) and BDI. Each model fits the data well.

Emotional abuse model: The fit indices demonstrated a good fit (χ^2/df = 192.02/62, p < .05, GFI=.92, RMSEA=.08, CFI=.98, SRMR=.042). Physical abuse model: The fit indices demonstrated a good fit (χ^2/df = 150.09/62, p < .05, GFI=.94, RMSEA=.06, CFI=.98, SRMR=.059). Sexual abuse model: The fit indices demonstrated a good fit as well (χ^2/df = 151.82/62, p < .05, GFI=.94, RMSEA=.06, CFI=.98, SRMR=.041).

Results show that the relationship between BDI, and the three subscales of CTQ [emotional abuse (ß= 0.09, p> 0.05), physical abuse (ß= -0.02, p> 0.05), and sexual abuse (ß= 0.04, p> 0.05)] was fully mediated by DERS-16 (see figure 3).

Finally, two additional models were tested to evaluate whether DERS-16 mediated the relationship of the two neglect subscales of CTQ (emotional neglect and physical neglect) and BDI. Both models demonstrated a good fit with the data.
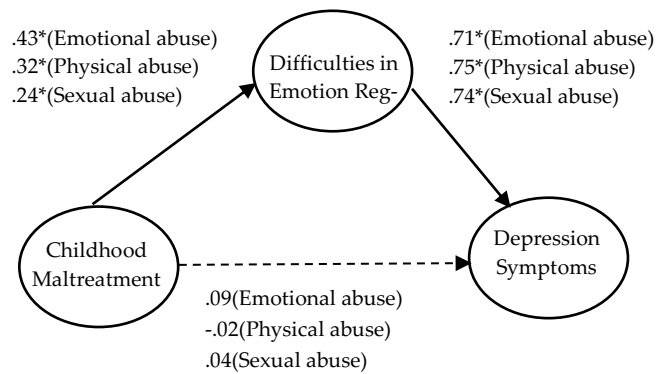
Emotional neglect model: The fit indices demonstrated a good fit (χ^2/df = 135.83/62, p < .05, GFI=.94, RMSEA=.06, CFI=.99, SRMR=.043). Physical neglect model: The fit indices demonstrated a good fit (χ^2/df = 148.12/62, p < .05, GFI=.94, RMSEA=.06, CFI=.98, SRMR=.041).

When the mediating effect of DERS-16, in the relationship between BDI and the CTQ-emotional neglect and CTQ- physical neglect subscales were tested, the relationships between BDI and both neglect subscales remained significant, indicating partial mediation. As shown in Figure 4, DERS-16 partially mediated the relationship between BDI and emotional neglect (ß = 0.21, p < 0.05) as well as physical neglect (ß = 0.12, p < 0.05).

Discussion

The current study explores mechanisms linking childhood maltreatment to depressive symptoms through the roles of emotion dysregulation and irrational thoughts, contributing to the growing literature on how these cognitive and emotional processes mediate the effects of adverse childhood experiences. Research has consistently demonstrated that childhood maltreatment, particularly emotional abuse and neglect, is associated with significant impairments in emotion regulation and an increased risk for depression. Difficulties in emotion regulation have been identified as a key mechanism linking maltreatment to depressive outcomes. Studies show that individuals with a history of maltreatment are more likely to use maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as rumination and emotional suppression, which exacerbate depressive symptoms (Gruhn & Compas, 2020). Additionally, maltreatment disrupts the development of adaptive regulation strategies like cognitive reappraisal, reducing resilience against depressive symptoms (Rodman et al., 2019). Relatedly, irrational beliefs may play an important role in this process, potentially developing in response to negative parental behaviors. These beliefs may reinforce emotional vulnerabilities and create a cycle of maladaptive responses, further predisposing individuals to depression.

To explore these relationships, a mediation model was tested to examine whether emotion regulation difficulties and irrational thinking mediated the association between childhood maltreatment and depressive symptom frequency. Additionally, two separate models were employed to investigate the mediating role of emotion regulation difficulties: the first examined the relationship between depression and the abuse subscales (emotional, physical, and sexual), while the second explored the association between depression and the neglect subscales (emotional and physical).

Results indicated that the direct association between childhood maltreatment, depression symptoms, and emotion regulation difficulties were strong, indicating a partial mediation of emotion regulation difficulties on the relationship between

childhood maltreatment and symptoms of depression. However, for irrational thinking, the mediation model did not fit the data, and no significant association was found between depression and irrational thinking, indicating that irrational thinking was not supported as a mediator in the model.

In the models examining subscales, emotion regulation difficulties fully mediated the relationship between emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and depressive symptoms. This finding suggests that emotion dysregulation is a key mechanism through which abuse subtypes influence depressive outcomes. In terms of neglect subscales, emotion dysregulation partially mediated the relationship between emotional neglect, physical neglect and symptoms of depression. Thus, results provide support for partial mediation of emotion regulation difficulties on the relationship between childhood neglect and depressive symptoms.

The cumulative effects of childhood maltreatment amplify difficulties in emotion regulation, making emotion dysregulation a critical target for interventions aimed at mitigating the psychological effects of childhood adversity (Humphreys et al., 2020). Emotion regulation plays a central role in mediating this relationship, as early adversity disrupts emotional development, leading to maladaptive regulation strategies such as rumination, emotional suppression, and heightened emotional reactivity (Su et al., 2019).

These difficulties in emotion regulation increase vulnerability to depression, as individuals are less able to manage negative emotions and recover from stress effectively (Chandan et al., 2019). Research also highlights that experiencing multiple forms of maltreatment exacerbates emotion regulation difficulties, compounding the risk for depression (Kisely et al., 2018). By exploring the interplay between childhood maltreatment, depression, and emotion regulation, this study contributes to understanding the pathways through which adverse experiences impact mental health, offering insights for targeted interventions.

Research consistently shows that experiencing multiple forms of maltreatment is associated with more severe depressive outcomes, emphasizing the importance of disentangling how specific types

of maltreatment contribute to mental health vulnerabilities (Kamal et al., 2022; Medeiros et al., 2020). Among these, emotional maltreatment stands out as uniquely associated with recurrent depressive episodes and heightened risk for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), demonstrating its enduring and significant psychological impact (Vallati et al., 2020). These findings highlight the importance of exploring diverse pathways, such as emotion regulation difficulties and cognitive distortions, through which childhood adversity increases the risk for depression. Previous research supports the central role of maladaptive emotion regulation strategies in this process. Findings suggest that childhood trauma significantly impacts emotion regulation and identity development, contributing to psychopathology (Dereboy et al., 2018) and maladaptive emotion regulation strategies further mediate the relationship between childhood trauma and depressive symptoms (Alpay et al., 2017; Huh et al., 2017).

In this study, the complete mediation of emotion regulation difficulties for the abuse subscales, highlights the central role of disrupted emotional processes in shaping depressive symptoms. Emotional abuse may exert its influence through emotion dysregulation, often accompanied by feelings of rejection and helplessness (Maciejewski & Mazure, 2006; Zelkowitz & Cole, 2016). These findings emphasize the significance of interventions aimed at enhancing emotion regulation skills to reduce vulnerability to depressive outcomes.

Contrary to expectation, in the first model, the mediating effect of irrational thinking on the relationship between childhood maltreatment and depressive symptoms was not supported. While previous research has identified associations between irrational beliefs and depression (Chan & Sun, 2020; Taghavi et al., 2006), limited evidence connects irrational beliefs directly to childhood maltreatment. For instance, Kocturk and Bilge (2017) found no significant difference in irrational beliefs between individuals with and without a history of childhood sexual abuse. Conversely, Duru and Balkıs (2021) identified irrational beliefs as mediators between childhood trauma and depression, suggesting that these beliefs may play an indirect

or context-specific role. In the present study, correlation analysis indicate that irrational thoughts are in fact related to all study variables and especially with emotion regulation difficulties (r=0.69). Also irrational thoughts and depression symptoms showed a strong correlation (r=0.54) supporting prior research and indicating a relationship between these variables, although the mediation model was not supported. One possible explanation is that while irrational beliefs may be influenced by a history of maltreatment, its role as a mediator may be secondary to, or interwoven with emotion regulation difficulties, thus the mediating role of these beliefs in the context of childhood maltreatment may be less direct. Early adverse experiences are well-documented to disrupt emotional development and adversely affect the ability to regulate emotions (Gruhn & Compas, 2020; Milojevich et al., 2020; Snyder et al., 2023). These immediate emotional processes may overshadow cognitive mechanisms like irrational beliefs in directly mediating the link between maltreatment and depressive outcomes. However, this does not mean that irrational beliefs are not influenced by maltreatment; rather, they may manifest their effects through more complex, indirect pathways, or in combination with other factors. Future research could explore these dynamics using moderated mediation models to better capture the interactions between cognitive and emotional mechanisms. For instance, individuals with stronger irrational beliefs about self-worth or approval-seeking, may be more vulnerable to developing depressive symptoms when they also struggle with emotion regulation. Alternatively, such beliefs may amplify the impact of emotion regulation difficulties, leading to more severe depressive outcomes.

Measurement limitations may also have contributed to the lack of a mediating effect in this study. Even though the sample characteristics of the present study are in part similar to Duru and Balkıs (2021), such as higher number of females and undergraduate students, the present study also includes high-school and master/PhD graduates which yields a more mixed sample. A major reason may be due to differences of the scales used to assess irrational thoughts. Internal consistency

was quiet high in the original study and in the present study (0.90), for which reason internal consistency doesn't strike out as a probable reason. The SGABS assesses general irrational beliefs and may not capture trauma-specific cognitive distortions. For instance, beliefs such as 'I am unlovable' or 'The world is unsafe,' which are commonly associated with maltreatment, may be more directly linked to depressive patterns (Chung & Shakra, 2020; Valdez et al., 2021). Including tools designed to measure these trauma-specific beliefs could yield different results and provide a clearer picture of how irrational beliefs mediate or interact with other factors.

Lastly, it is important to consider developmental and contextual factors. For instance, irrational beliefs might emerge later in life as maladaptive responses to unresolved emotional difficulties stemming from childhood maltreatment. In such cases, these beliefs might contribute to chronic or recurrent depressive symptoms, but their mediating role would be less apparent in models examining current symptoms of depression. As the diathesis-stress model of depression implies, these individuals may be vulnerable, but significant stressors may be lacking at a particular time period. Longitudinal studies help clarify these temporal dynamics and provide further insights into how cognitive and emotional factors evolve over time to influence depressive outcomes.

In conclusion, while this study did not find support for irrational beliefs as mediators in the relationship between childhood maltreatment and depressive symptoms, this finding underscores the importance of examining both the immediate impact of emotional disruptions and the gradual emergence of cognitive patterns to better understand the psychological consequences of childhood adversity. The results suggest that emotional dysregulation may play a more direct and central role in this pathway, while irrational beliefs might influence depressive outcomes in more complex or indirect ways.

Overall, these results suggest that troubled relationships with parents, and related adverse effects, may create negative, traumatic experiences and hinder children from forming adaptive ways of dealing with emotions. The intergenerational transmission of childhood maltreatment, in which a parental history of maltreatment adversely affects parenting skills, may create a risk for both direct childhood abuse and a chaotic household. This environment can indirectly prevent the child from learning healthy ways of experiencing and expressing emotions. The projection of early childhood experiences, in which the child was led to believe that they were helpless, not in control, and that negative emotions were unacceptable—or when the child was neglected and never had the opportunity to understand their feelings and emotionality—cumulates throughout adolescent and adult life, also affecting relationships with others. Furthermore, parents' overly critical and demanding attitudes, insensitivity, and unresponsiveness toward their children's needs may lead children to believe that they possess some inherent flaw that makes them unworthy of love and attention (Coates & Messman-Moore, 2014). This belief can culminate in maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as suppression or experiential avoidance, which are linked to higher vulnerability to depressive symptoms (Calam et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2014; Warmingham et al., 2011; Schierholz et al., 2016).

In such a household, parents may model hostility, verbal aggression, and low stress tolerance instead of healthy emotion regulation strategies. Parents' suppression of their emotions during interactions has been shown to negatively impact the quality of parent-child interactions, increasing stress transmission to children and reducing engagement and warmth within these relationships (Waters et al., 2020). Furthermore, studies shed light on how suppressive parenting styles may inadvertently foster children's use of maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as rumination and emotional suppression (Waters et al., 2020). These dynamics can reflect a bidirectional relationship, wherein children's maladaptive responses to parental behaviors exacerbate parental stress or emotional dysregulation, creating a feedback loop of negative emotional interactions (Chan et al., 2023). Such cycles underscore the centrality of emotion regulation in shaping not only individual psychological outcomes but also the quality of parent-child relationships.

Similarly, parental expressed emotion (EE), including criticism and emotional over-involvement, predicts greater depressive symptoms in children, with youth-reported EE emerging as a key mediator in this process (Berla et al., 2021). Parental behaviors characterized by criticism, inconsistency, or excessive control can further disrupt children's emotional development by fostering maladaptive cognitive appraisals that exacerbate emotional and psychological challenges (Berla et al., 2021). However, studies indicate that adaptive strategies such as cognitive reappraisal, when modeled by parents, can significantly buffer children against depressive symptoms (Kneeland et al., 2016). Interventions targeting such positive behaviors have shown promise in promoting resilience and emotional well-being. On the other hand, parents' collaborative coping strategies, which involve engaging positively with their children's emotional needs, have been associated with better emotional adjustment and more secure attachment patterns in children. Conversely, negative parental reactions to children's emotional expressions, such as minimizing or punitive responses, are linked to internalizing and externalizing problems and insecure attachment patterns (Waslin et al., 2022).

Given the importance of beliefs about emotions and how they are processed, these beliefs profoundly influence how struggles in life are managed (Leahy, 2015). Individuals who believe that they can manage and shape their emotions experience less negative affect and more cognitive reappraisal when faced with emotionally upsetting events (Kneeland et al., 2016). Relatedly, negative self-beliefs resulting from traumatic childhood experiences may lead to feelings of helplessness and the belief of failing to cope with emotionally demanding and challenging life events, which in turn may result in emotion dysregulation (Coates & Messman-Moore, 2014).

In sum, the present study and several aforementioned studies reveal a relationship between childhood maltreatment, maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, and depression. One explanation is that traumatic experiences related to childhood maltreatment, when not adaptively processed, result in trauma-related cognitions, emotional and/or physiological reactivity related to reminders of trauma, which maintain or trigger depressive symptomatology. Another alternative explanation is that the link between childhood maltreatment and depression is mediated through emotion regulation, wherein the development of emotion-regulation is impaired on emotional, cognitive, psychobiological, and interpersonal levels as a result of childhood maltreatment, creating a risk for future depression. In this case, emotion regulation skills should be a target in counseling and psychotherapy (Schierholz et al., 2016).

Conclusion and Practical Implications

Identifying the factors related to childhood maltreatment is crucial in preventing possible unfavorable outcomes, including mental health problems, and in planning interventions when risks arise within the family environment. Not all individuals react to adverse childhood experiences in the same way. Differences may arise from factors such as genetics, temperament, how adverse experiences are validated and interpreted, and the presence of supportive social and emotional relationships or encounters. These individual differences shape the unique responses each person exhibits when faced with distressing events and emotions, which can either amplify or mitigate the detrimental effects of maltreatment.

Children who grow up in environments where their needs and emotions are not accepted are invalidated, criticized, humiliated, or even ridiculed, may learn to avoid and repress their emotions. This avoidance can lead to *experiential avoidance*, defined as the unwillingness to remain in contact with particular memories, emotions, thoughts, bodily sensations, and/or behavioral predispositions. The individual may attempt to alter the form or frequency of these experiences or the contexts in which they occur (Hayes et al., 1996). Maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as experiential avoidance, formed and sometimes reinforced throughout life, influence how individuals perceive, evaluate, and assign meaning to emotionally arousing situations. These strategies also shape interactions with others.

As adults, individuals who have developed these dysfunctional emotion regulation strategies may struggle to connect with their emotions, become aware of them, or express them. They may also feel discomfort when others express emotions, which can hinder their ability to respond appropriately, form, and maintain close and intimate relationships. These established patterns can intensify negative emotions, lead to missed social and emotional opportunities, and create barriers to experiencing emotions in depth. Consequently, individuals may struggle to fully connect with themselves, their inner experiences, and their external relationships, preventing them from living authentic and fulfilling lives. Such disconnection may further contribute to depressive moods (Hayes et al., 2006). Given these outcomes, identifying and fostering adaptive emotion regulation strategies during counseling is essential for managing emotional distress.

Clinicians and counselors play a pivotal role in addressing these challenges. A clear understanding of how individuals assess emotions and respond, particularly in stressful or upsetting situations or during major life events, can guide treatment plans and support individuals throughout counseling. Understanding the multiple and interacting mechanisms and belief systems underlying depressive symptomatology can help psychotherapists and counselors uncover the core needs of clients. This, in turn, allows for the design of effective, targeted interventions. Emotion dysregulation is also widely recognized as a risk factor for developing mental health problems, including depression. As previously noted, stressful life events can impair the formation of adaptive emotion regulation skills, perpetuating an ongoing cycle of emotional distress (Abravanel & Sinha, 2015; Qian et al., 2022). Consequently, encouraging the use of effective emotion regulation strategies is a critical step toward improving mental health outcomes (Boggio et al., 2019; LeBlanc et al., 2017).

The fact that findings from this Turkish sample align with previous research conducted in other cultural contexts underscores the cross-cultural dimensions of these factors and their interrelationships. By contributing to a deeper understanding of how childhood maltreatment, depressive symptoms in adulthood, and emotion regulation strategies intersect across cultures, the present study highlights the universal relevance of addressing emotion regulation in therapeutic settings.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional design precludes any causal inferences about the relationships between childhood maltreatment, emotion regulation, and mental health outcomes. Future research employing longitudinal designs would provide stronger evidence for causal pathways and help elucidate the temporal dynamics of these relationships.

Second, the reliance on self-report measures introduces the potential for bias, including social desirability and inaccuracies due to participants' introspective abilities. The use of multiple methods, such as clinical interviews, observational data, or physiological measures, in conjunction with self-reports, could enhance the reliability and validity of findings.

Third, the sample predominantly comprised young, highly educated females, which limits the generalizability of the results to more diverse populations. Future studies should aim to recruit more heterogeneous samples, including individuals from varying socioeconomic backgrounds, age groups, genders, and cultural contexts. Additionally, the inclusion of clinical samples, such as individuals formally diagnosed with depression, anxiety, or other psychological disorders, would enhance understanding of how childhood maltreatment impacts emotion regulation and mental health in clinical populations.

Fourth, the study focused primarily on the participants' subjective experiences without integrating objective measures or corroborating perspectives, such as reports from family members or therapists. Incorporating such perspectives could provide a more holistic view of the dynamics under investigation.

Finally, while the study identified broad associations, it did not delve into the specific mecha-

nisms or processes underlying the observed relationships. Future research could benefit from employing in-depth, open-ended interviews to uncover the nuanced dynamics of how childhood maltreatment influences mental health outcomes. Additionally, experimental studies could explore the efficacy of targeted interventions aimed at improving emotion regulation skills in individuals with histories of childhood maltreatment.

By addressing these limitations, future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between childhood maltreatment, emotion regulation, and mental health, contributing to more effective prevention and intervention strategies.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Does Soft Skills Training Affect Youth Employment? Evidences from Turkey

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Abstract

In today's fast-paced, ever-changing labor market, soft skills are in high demand, especially for new graduates. This study examined the impact of soft skills training on youth employment. As the first sample, the quantitative research method was conducted by applying a questionnaire to the students of Gaziantep University Vocational School of Social Sciences in Turkey. As the second sample, a qualitative research method was conducted by selecting HR Managers homogeneously according to the statistical regional classification throughout Turkey and conducting interviews focusing on the soft skills of new graduates. Based on the results of our analysis, 14 required soft skills were identified. In cooperation with European Union countries, a training curriculum was designed using these 14 soft skills. Participants of the training program were randomly divided into control and experimental groups. The experimental group was only included in the soft skills training program. The employment rates of both groups were compared after nine months of follow-up. The findings showed that soft skills training resulted in higher employment rates.. The findings show that soft-skills training resulted in higher employment rates. Based on our findings, we propose that universities design and apply soft-skills curricula for young undergraduate and vocational school students to increase youth employment. Moreover, soft skills development must be considered when designing and conducting training programs for workers in public institutions and companies.

Keywords: *Soft skill training, youth employment, experimental research method, qualitative research method, quantitative research method*

Öz

Günümüzün hızlı tempolu ve sürekli değişen işgücü piyasasında, özellikle yeni mezunlar için sosyal beceriler yüksek talep görmektedir. Bu çalışma, sosyal beceri eğitiminin genç istihdamı üzerindeki etkisini incelemiştir. İlk örneklem olarak, Türkiye'deki Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Meslek Yüksekokulu öğrencilerine anket uygulanarak nicel araştırma metodu yürütülmüştür. İkinci örneklem olarak, Türkiye genelinde istatistiki bölge sınıflandırmasına göre homojen bir şekilde İK Yöneticileri seçilerek yeni mezunların sosyal becerilerine odaklanan görüşmelerle nitel araştırma metodu yürütülmüştür. Analiz sonuçlarımıza dayanarak, gerekli görülen 14 sosyal beceri belirlenmiştir. Avrupa Birliği ülkeleriyle işbirliği içinde, bu 14 sosyal beceriyi kullanarak bir eğitim müfredatı tasarlanmıştır. Eğitim programına katılanlar rastgele kontrol ve deney gruplarına ayrılmıştır. Deney grubu sadece yumuşak beceri eğitim programına dahil edilmiştir. Her iki grubun istihdam oranları dokuz ay boyunca takip edildikten sonra karşılaştırılmıştır. Bulgular, yumuşak beceri eğitiminin daha yüksek istihdam oranlarıyla sonuçlandığını göstermiştir. Bulgularımıza dayanarak, üniversitelerin genç istihdamını artırmak için genç lisans ve meslek okulu öğrencileri için yumuşak beceri müfredatı tasarlamalarını ve uygulamalarını öneriyoruz. Ayrıca, kamu kurumları ve şirketlerdeki çalışanlar için eğitim programları tasarlanırken ve yürütülürken yumuşak becerilerin geliştirilmesi göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *İnce beceri eğitimi, genç istihdamı, deneysel araştırma yöntemi, nitel araştırma yöntemi, nicel araştırma yöntemi*

Introduction

The global youth unemployment rate in 2023 was 13.3%, 3.5 times the adult unemployment rate (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2024). It is much higher in developing countries. The youth unemployment rate in Turkey, a developing and upper middle-income country, was approximately 17.9% in 2023 (Figure 1). Moreover, the youth unemployment rate appears to be fragile in extraordinary situations, such as crises and pandemics. These high-level rates and fragilities concern the future labor market.
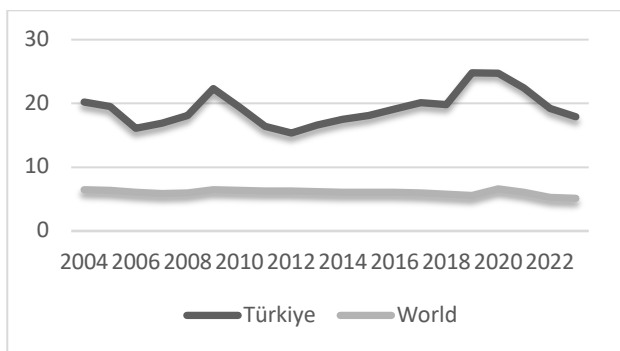

Figure 1. Youth unemployment rates (Source: International Labor Organization, 2024)

Labor market changes have been caused by multiple crises, rapid technological developments, globalization, and shifts in demographics and migrant populations. While social and economic transformations create new jobs, many older jobs disappear. In addition, the mismatch between technical and core (soft) skills worsens owing to the inequalities in access to education, training, and digital technology (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2023).

Recruitment experts no longer hire people who can perform flexible, creative, and judgmental tasks through technological development and automation (Ibourk & Aynaoui, 2023). Changing world characteristics through large and more integrated organizations and global connections is driving the growing demand for highly skilled workers that traditional high-tech education cannot provide (Murgor, 2017). Today, employers not only consider technical skills but also soft skills in recruitment (Murgor, 2017; Vasanthakumari, 2019). Sufficient soft skills levels positively affect

employability, success, and creative output (R. K. Wats & M. Wats, 2009).

In economic theory, labor productivity is emphasized to affect employment level. Technological developments and a person's technical knowledge determine labor productivity. Further, people's soft skills positively impact labor productivity (Wats & Wats, 2009). Thus, employers today consider not only technical skills while recruiting, but also soft skills, especially in the case of young candidates (Vasanthakumari, 2019).

Technical skills consist of technical and administrative knowledge (Dixon, Belnap, Albrecht & Lee 2010). Technical skills alone are insufficient for recruitment and long-term continuity of employment (R. F. James and M. L. James, 2004), and soft skills are increasingly being discussed in the recruitment process and employment continuity. With technological changes and automation, recruiters have started hiring people who can perform open-ended tasks requiring flexibility, creativity, and judgment. Recruiters state that a machine is often better than a human at performing routine tasks that can be codified according to a clear set of rules, but social interaction is one of the most essential tasks in the workplace, and there is currently no substitute for humans regarding social interaction. Technological machines cannot participate in flexible teamwork increasingly required in the modern economy (Ibourk & Aynaoui, 2023). Moreover, soft skills are necessary to face the challenges of the labor market [16]. Sufficient soft skills level will positively affect employability, success, and creative output (Wats & Wats, 2009).

Soft skills are generally defined as traits that encompass attitudes, habits, and interactions with other people. These skills make people better employees and provide opportunities indirectly related to technology. In other words, soft skills refer to one's ability to relate to others, organize oneself and others, and communicate in written, oral, or other ways (Geffel & Park, 2016). A study on soft skills conducted at Boston University and the University of Michigan Ross School of Business determined that employees who receive soft-skills training are 12% more productive than those who

do not. A study of Fortune 500 CEOs by the Stanford Research Institute and the Carnegie Mellon Foundation found that 75% of long-term business success comes from mastery of soft skills and only 25% from technical skills. Similarly, Harvard University reported that 85% of workplace success is attributed to soft skills and only 15% to technical skills (Vasanthakumari, 2019). Research conducted in different countries and market segments shows that soft skills, such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork, are the most desired soft skills by companies (Robles, 2012; Sharma, 2018). A study conducted with a sample of 173 people in the retail sector in the UK found that soft skills formed the backbone of the retail sector, and these skills were essential for both senior and entry-level positions in the organization (Nickson, Warhurst, Commander, Hurrell & Cullen, 2012).

Soft skills are important in both private and public sectors. Ward & Riddle (2014) created an employment readiness scale (ERS) to include soft-skills development in daily employment services within the scope of social work in Canada. This scale consists of soft skills, such as the ability to get help, customer's feeling of being able to take responsibility for being successful, and ability to continue the job. Another study revealed the most important soft skills for professors and teachers as resilience, reflexivity, empathy, collaborative working, self-efficacy, creativity, and effective communication (Fernandes, Jardim & Lopes, 2021). Today, people with advanced technical skills but weak soft skills face recruitment challenges and experience adaptation problems even if hired (Kolesnik, Oliinyk, Komarivska, Kazmirchuk & Imber, 2023).

Discussions continue on whether a sufficient soft-skills level in candidates positively affects the recruitment processes and continuity of employment. While Evenson (1999), states that students' development of soft skills positively impacts the employment process, Klaus (2010), indicates that apart from technical and professional skills, people whose interpersonal skills have not developed can be prevented from their promising careers. Moss & Tilly (1996), conducted face-to-face interviews with 56 human

resource (HR) managers in four industries in the Los Angeles and Detroit Metropolitan areas between 1991 and 1992 regarding the importance of soft skills during recruitment. The findings show that soft skills, especially motivation and communication skills, are important in recruitment because of competitive market conditions. Further, the soft skills of black Americans were found to be inadequate compared to those of others, putting the former at a disadvantage in the labor market. Singh & Jaykumar (2019), surveyed employers, faculty, and students to investigate the soft skills graduates should possess for employment in India's hospitality industry. Communication, business ethics, teamwork, interpersonal skills, and customer service skills were determined as the most important ones. Employers demand graduates with the right attitudes, technical knowledge, and soft skills.

For students, critical thinking and work ethics are important soft skills for obtaining a job. Crawford & Dalton (2016), determined the soft skills necessary for building an environment for students in the US and identified soft skill differences between sectors. Their study of 7548 participants found that soft skills such as communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and self-management are essential for recruiters. Research conducted for agricultural services, education and information development, building environment, product creation and manufacturing, government, human and animal health, and medical services determined the differences in soft skills needs between these sectors. Of the seven different indicators determined for each soft skill, effective listening, and decision-making for communication skills, identifying and analyzing issues for problem-solving, and efficient and effective working for self-management are the most preferred.

In addition, skills such as professionalism and leadership can be learned after starting a job. Mansura & Kashfia (2018) investigated the soft skills business graduates entering the labor market in Bangladesh should possess. They analyzed 3996 job postings on two major online job sites. Soft skills were identified as the most frequently

mentioned skills in the 415 entry-level job postings for business graduates. The preferred soft skills consist of verbal and written communication skills, interpersonal skills, ability to work under pressure, team spirit, analytical thinking ability, self-motivation, being result- and goal-oriented, leadership, problem-solving, and proactivity. Sławińska & Villani (2014) researched soft skills that employers demand within the scope of "The Learning Partnership of the Soft-Skills Project." The results show that employers desire people with good communication skills, strong work ethics, initiative, interpersonal skills, and problem-solving abilities. Additionally, teamwork and confidence are considered vital for success in the workplace.

The increasing demand for soft skills has increased the number of practices aimed at developing them. In many developing countries, soft skill development is integral to youth employment programs. World Bank (2006), implemented a "soft-skills training component" within the scope of the Entra 21 program in Latin America. Employers reported that participants selected from among their employees developed more soft skills for teamwork and taking responsibility than non-selected employees. Murgor (2017), implemented a training program that covered the soft skills required for self-employment of 320 graduates randomly selected from among 527 technical and vocational education and training graduates in Uasin Gishu, Kenya. Soft skills discussed in this training were time management, problem-solving, independent work, interpersonal skills, communication, decision-making, creativity, and adaptability. The sufficiency of the soft-skills training required for self-employment was also investigated using qualitative analysis, revealing that while time management was sufficient among the soft skills, adaptability was insufficient. Technical and vocational education and training graduates did not possess the soft skills required to be successful in self-employment. Soft skills such as problem-solving, independent work, interpersonal skills, and creativity had statistically significant effects. Such soft skills are not in the curriculum but are in

voluntary extracurricular curricula. Adding such soft skills to the curriculum will yield positive results, especially in countries with high unemployment, and cooperation with employers is necessary. Sheikh, Abdalkrim & Shehawy (2023), organized training for business administration students on the 24 soft skills deemed essential to be successful in business life through an experimental teaching method, such as a business simulation that consist of one-week workshop. Student feedback after the simulation revealed that the development of these skills was significantly affected.

Furthermore, Sebastião, Trapicos, Payan-Carreira & Rebelo (2023), interviewed eight HR managers and six employers about the technical and soft skills of different higher education programs within the scope of the Think4Jobs Project. They found that technical and soft skills should be coordinated, and motivation, creativity, interpersonal relationships, communication, entrepreneurship, and critical thinking are the soft skills important to educators and employers. Emanuel, Ricchiardi, Sanseverino & Ghislieri (2021), tested the effectiveness of soft skills in supporting the academic success of first-year students in an online course prepared to develop 12 soft skills at the University of Turin; their findings demonstrate the effectiveness of this method. Ramos-Monge, Fox & Garcia-Piquer (2023), determined the soft skills university students in Spain needed to be employable and successful in digital environments. Using natural language processing (NLP) techniques, they analyzed the writings of 226 students describing their experiences of failure in academic, personal, and professional settings. The students were found to have deficiencies in social intelligence, stress management, and self-intelligence skills.

Some studies have addressed the impact of developing soft skills through training programs on the employment market. Groh, Krishman, McKenzie & Vishwanath (2012), compared the effects of wage subsidy implementation and soft-skills training on women's employment in Jordan. The randomly selected participants were divided into four groups. For the first group, the employer

was provided a subsidy payment voucher equal to the minimum wage for up to six months, while for the second group, 45 hours of training was imparted on soft skills specified by the employers. For the third group, both practices were used, and for the fourth group, no application was made. The findings suggest that the wage subsidy increased employment by 40% in the short term, but most employment was unregistered, and the employment effect became statistically insignificant within four months after the payment voucher ended. Another finding was that the employment effects of participants outside the capital were permanent, but this situation reflected the effects of displacement. Soft-skills training had no average impact and little positive impact outside the capital city. Groh, Krishman, McKenzie & Vishwa (2016), provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of soft-skills training in employing young Jordanian women within the scope of "The Jordan New Opportunities for Women" project. The control group consisted of 748 women randomly selected to participate in a 45-hour soft-skills training course for 2-year community college graduates. The experimental group comprised 599 women. The training given to the control group addressed the soft skills (effective communication, writing skills, teamwork, time management, positive thinking and its use in business life, customer service, resume creation, and interview skills) that employers expect from candidates but believe to be inadequate. The employment follow-up surveys conducted in the 6th, 14th, and 27th months found that despite this training program being longer than other similar programs, and the course being conducted by a reputable provider, soft-skills training does not have any significant employment impact in the short and medium term. Literature on the effects of soft skills on employment has focused on either which soft skills are missing or necessary from the professionals' perspective or developing soft skills through various training practices and experimental methods. Applying these studies to different samples, such as sex, sector, race, and education level, has caused the results to differ. However, there is consensus in the literature that soft skills are considered in employability and continuity of employment.

Therefore, this study explores how the employability of the youth can be facilitated by improving the soft skills of young vocational school graduates entering the labor market and emphasizes the upskilling of youth. Research and Publication Ethics were followed in this study.

In the present study, we examined the impact of 14 soft skills on the employment of the graduates of Gaziantep University Vocational School of Social Sciences. Various aspects of this study contribute to existing literature. First, the study was designed such that questions were asked from HR experts through interviews and the graduates through surveys simultaneously. Thus, we revealed 14 soft skills that represent real needs. Second, we designed a 40-hour training curriculum with international cooperation. Third, we divided our sample into two groups (experimental group and control group) focusing on graduates of Gaziantep University Vocational School of Social Sciences. We implemented the training curriculum for only the experimental group that was selected randomly. Fourth, we applied employment measurements in both the control and experimental groups to understand the employment differences between the two groups. Further, we conducted a follow-up every two months for nine months, asking both groups whether they were employed.

Methodology

This study included two samples. The first sample, "Students," comprised 302 graduate students of different departments of the Social Sciences Vocational School at Gaziantep University, such as banking and insurance, child development, foreign trade, business administration, marketing, accounting, and taxation. Students were administered a questionnaire containing the following elements:[1] demographic data (gender, department) and data on soft skills that are mostly possessed by students (communication skills, flexibility, work ethic, stress management, decision making, positive attitude, problem-solving,

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[1] See Appendix

adaptability, proactivity, creativity, commitment, time management, responsibility, self-awareness, innovation, integrity, teamwork, reliability, empathy, and critical thinking). These soft skills were evaluated on a self-assessment five-point Likert Scale from 1 to 5.

The second sample, "Human Resource Managers," comprised 63 managers of individual companies selected homogeneously according to statistical regions in Turkey. The companies were from different fields (construction, tourism, technology, software, iron production, food, metallurgy, and education). Face-to-face qualitative interviews were conducted with the managers with pre-prepared questions. During the qualitative interview process, the managers answered the following questions regarding the new graduates preparing to enter the labor market: What soft skills do they consider? What are the most important soft skills? What soft skills are decisive in recruitment? What soft skills make new graduates competitive? Which soft skills should they possess? Which skills are the strongest or weakest? How can soft skills be developed? Which skills should be prioritized in training?

The collected data were processed in the SPSS statistical data processing program. All study participants provided informed consent, and the study design was approved by the appropriate ethics review board at Gaziantep University Social Sciences and Humanities Ethics Committee.

The basic methods used were descriptive statistics: arithmetic mean, mode, median, and standard deviation. After comparing the results recorded for the two samples, differences between the expectations of HR Managers and Students' soft skills were found. We identified the most desirable qualities (soft skills) that employers were looking for and that the unemployed/students should possess. With international cooperation, we designed a 40-hour informal training curriculum, consisting of 14 soft skills (communication, collaboration, creativity, stress management, personal distance, problem-solving,

time management, dedication, responsibility, harmony, proactiveness, respect, positive attitude, and critical thinking). Subsequently, applications were accepted from graduate students to participate in the soft-skills training. An experimental group was created by randomly selecting members from the applications received. The remaining group was referred to as the control group. The training curriculum was prepared for the experimental group and implemented within 10 days. This curriculum was conducted practically, attended by experts, and through various simulations.

Employment follow-up surveys were administered to both the control and experimental groups every two months, that is, four times after conducting the soft-skills training curriculum.[2] The employment rates for both groups were reported using four different measures.

Findings

Sample 1: Students

In the first sample, A total of 302 students from different departments participated in the study, 63.9% of them females. Table 1 presents the programs of study. Of the total number of respondents, the highest belonged to the Banking and Insurance program (25.2%), followed by the Business Management (14.9%) and Child Development Programs (12.9%). The positioning of certain soft skills in the sample is presented in Figure 2, which shows that the highest average value in the observed sample is Integrity (Mean=4.500), followed by Reliability (Mean = 4.4906) and Work Ethic (Mean = 4.4601). Positive Attitude (Mean = 3.8560), Critical Thinking (Mean = 3.9721), and Stress Management (Mean = 4.0822) have the lowest values in soft skills in the observed sample.

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[2] *The soft skills training curriculum was implemented in July 2023. Further, employment follow-up surveys were administered on October 2023, December 2023, February 2024, and April 2024.*

Table 1. Programs of study of the students in the sample

Department	Frequency	Percentage Share
Foreign Trade Program	33	10.9
Accounting and Tax Applications Program	32	10.6
Banking and Insurance Program	76	25.2
Child Development Program	39	12.9
Marketing Program	3	1.0
Office Management and Executive Assistance Program	28	9.3
Call Center Service Program	22	7.3
Securities and Capital Markets Program	14	4.6
E-Commerce and Marketing Program	10	3.3
Business Management Program	45	14.9
Total	302	100.0

skills are very important and essential to daily operations.

The HR managers who participated in the study confirmed which of the 20 soft skills in the survey were important for young people entering the job market. Figure 5 presents the related results. The median and mean values represent the respondents' answers. We found that for HR managers, the least important soft skills are positive attitude and creativity, while the most important soft skills are time management, responsibility, and proactivity.
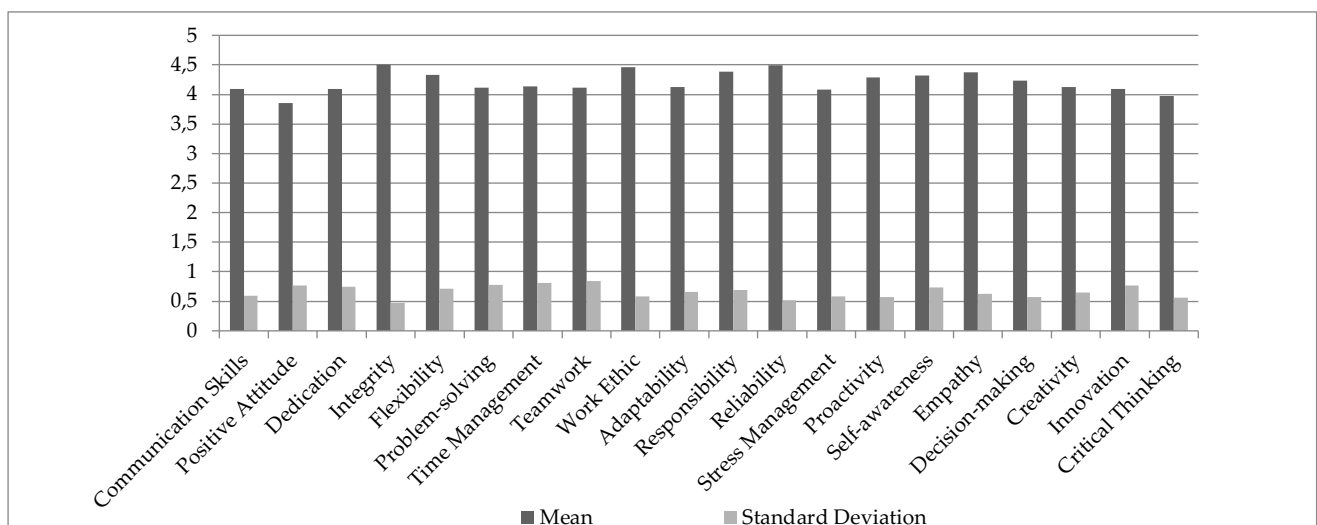
Figure 2. Soft skills in the sample – General

Sample 2: Human Resource (HR) Managers

In the second sample, we included 63 Human Resource (HR) Managers from various fields, with the companies operating in different sectors. Figure 3 shows that the oldest company in the sample was 43 years old, and the youngest company was less than one year old. The average age of the sample was 6.44; therefore, the sample mostly comprised companies less than 10 years old.

Figure 4 shows two companies with approximately 3,500 employees and 2,000 employees. However, the sample is dominated by companies with fewer than 500 employees. The average number of employees of the sample companies is 268. All companies believe that soft

The other soft skills important for young people are discipline, determination, respect, cooperation, honesty, hospitality, project management, data analytics, and management.

Table 2 presents HR managers' views on soft skills that help young people to be more competitive. The results revealed that the least important soft skill to increase young people's competitiveness is proactivity, followed by time management and creativity. Dedication and work ethic are important soft skills that help young people increase their competitiveness in the labor market in performing a certain job. Of the 63 companies in the sample, HR managers of only two (3.17%) found no mismatch between the soft skill level of new graduates preparing to enter the labor market and those expected from young people. All other managers (96.83%) believed that an evident mismatch required continuous work.
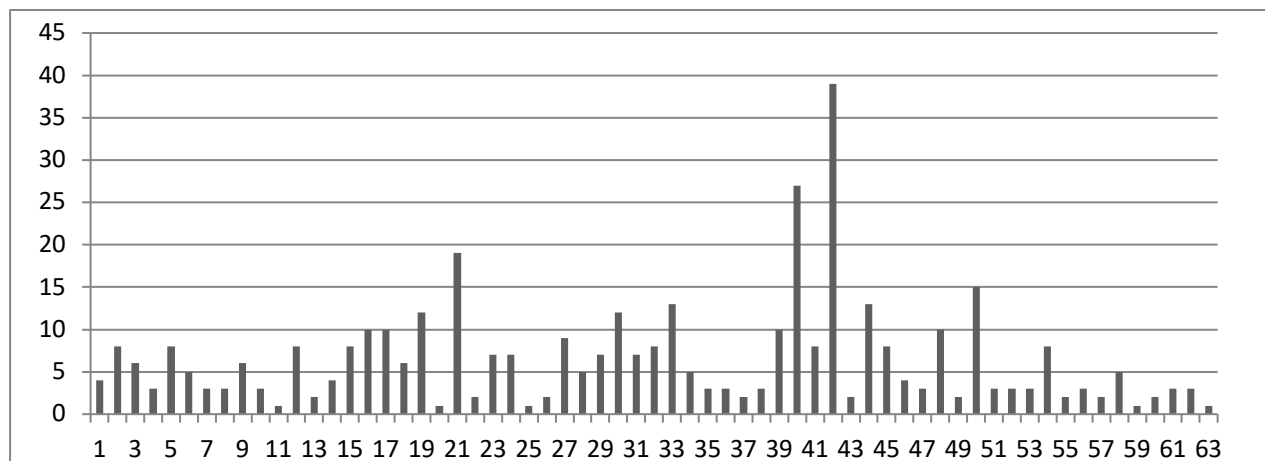
Figure 3. Age of the companies.
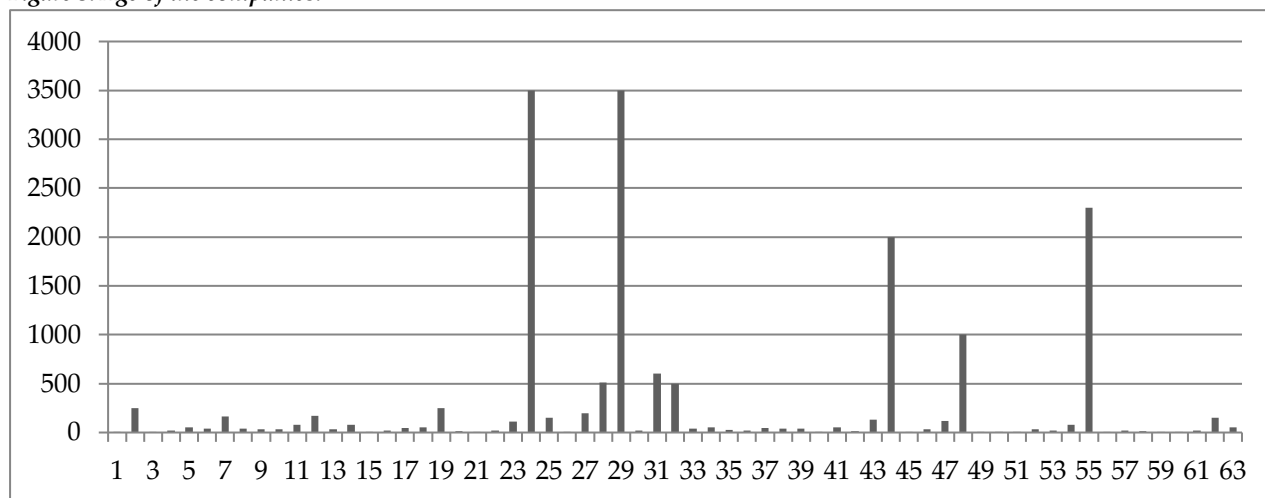
Figure 4. Number of employees

F*igure 5. Soft skills of young people that are important for HR managers*

In the research process, the managers were also asked, Which soft skills do you want new graduatespreparing to enter the labor market to have more of?" The answers are reported in Table 3. The results show that HR managers want students to have excellent adaptability and creativity when entering the labor market. Other desirable soft skills include problem-solving, teamwork, and work ethic. Moreover, the research results indicate that HR managers believe that young graduates are still insufficiently prepared for the labor market, and that they should work on their soft skills.

Table 2. Soft skills that help young people to be more competitive.

		Proactivity	Work Ethic	Dedication	Time Management	Creativity
N	Valid	63	63	63	63	63
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0

	Teamwork	Problem Solving	Creativity	Adaptability	Work Ethic
Mean	9.0317	11.1270	11.2857	9.4444	10.6984
Median	9.0000	12.0000	10.0000	7.0000	11.0000

Table 3. Soft skills that new graduates preparing to enter the labor market should have more of

		Teamwork	Problem Solving	Creativity	Adaptability	Work Ethic
N	Valid	63	63	63	63	63
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		8.7937	9.5873	10.2063	10.5556	8.8095
Median		7.0000	10.0000	10.0000	10.0000	8.0000

In addition, the study analyzed which soft skills are relatively weak or strong in young graduates preparing to enter the labor market; Table 4 presents the results. According to the HR managers, young people do not possess soft skills such as problem-solving, proactivity, and time management, but they have creativity and work ethic (the most common soft skills among young people).

Table 4. Soft skills that are relatively weak and strong in young graduates preparing to enter the labor market.

		Problem Solving	Proactivity	Creativity	Time Management	Work Ethic
N	Valid	63	63	63	63	63
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		8.1270	9.6190	10.8095	10.0000	10.4603
Median		7.0000	9.0000	12.0000	10.0000	10.0000

Given that young people often lack proficiency in certain soft skills, the question arises as to how to improve their skill levels. Some ways to improve soft skills in young people are learning foreign languages, following the business world, and participating in more projects, training, internships, and volunteering. Considering that training in soft skills is possible, this study attempted to determine the most desirable areas to organize a soft-skills training curriculum (Table 5). Soft-skills training in the areas of creativity, time management, and self-awareness is highly desirable, according to 96.83% of the HR managers in the sample.

Table 5. Organizing training and education in soft skills.

		Proactivity	Creativity	Time Management	Self-awareness	Work Ethic
N	Valid	63	63	63	63	63
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		9.2857	12.1429	11.4603	10.0317	9.5397
Median		8.0000	14.0000	12.0000	10.0000	10.0000

Table 6 shows the most important skills for young people to get a job from the manager's point of view. Communication skills are the most prioritized, while positive attitudes and proactivity are important as well. Time management and adaptability are relatively less important. Thus, HR managers expect the following skills from young people when they start working: following the rules at the workplace, security of company information, professionalism, respect, collaboration, and adaptation.

Table 6. The most important soft skills for young people to get a job.

		Adaptability	Communication	Positive Attitude	Proactivity	Time Management
N	Valid	63	63	63	63	63
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		7.9683	10.6508	9.1905	8.7778	8.0476
Median		8.0000	12.0000	9.0000	6.0000	1.0000

Comparison between Samples

In this section, we addressed the gap between reality (i.e., what qualities are possessed by the students) and expectations (i.e., what HR managers expect students [young people] to demonstrate as their soft skills). While the students explicitly showed a high average on the scale, such as soft skills, integrity, reliability, and work ethic, HR managers have slightly different expectations. Communication skills are extremely important for them and represent the most essential and valuable soft skills for young people in the labor market. Students with well-developed communication skills found employment the fastest. Second, creativity was found to be very

weak among the students, but it is highly valued by HR managers and must be improved. The third was problem-solving. Although not recorded in the Students sample as a soft skill, managers value this skill and would like students (new workers) to know how to solve problems. In addition to these three skills, students must have a positive attitude, developed adaptability, and dedication.

Examining the Difference Between the Groups

The follow-up analysis was divided into four stages according to the months when the analysis was conducted: October, December, February, and April. Each stage consisted of a control and an experimental group.

We investigated whether there was an increase in employment in each group. The respondents designated as the experimental group underwent a 40-hour training in soft skills, and the control group did not receive the training. The control group accounted for 48% of the respondents, while the experimental group accounted for 52%. Table 7 shows the employment trends in the control group. While the number of employed respondents was 6 in October, it was 1 each in December and February and 2 in April.

Table 7. Employment trend in the control group.

Month of analysis	Number of respondents who were employed	Percentage of new employees in the control group
October	+ 6	19.35%
December	+ 1	3.22%
February	+ 1	3.22%
April	+2	6.45%
Total	+10	32.24%

Table 8 shows the employment trends in the experimental group. While 10 respondents were employed in October, 6 were employed in December, followed by 1 in February and 2 in April.

Table 8. Employment trend in the experimental group.

Month of analysis	Number of respondents who were employed	Percentage of new employees in the experimental group
October	+ 10	30.30%
December	+ 6	18.18%
February	+ 1	3.03%

| April | + 2 | 6.06% |
| Total | +19 | 57.57% |

Next, we examined whether a statistically significant difference was recorded between the results of the control and experimental groups. Based on the following tests, we determined whether soft skills positively impacted young graduates. Table 9 contains basic information on the compared samples.

Table 9. Results of the comparison of the samples.

	EmploymentCG	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
EmploymentEG	.00	.2389	.4283	.0402
	1.00	.1000	.3162	.1000

We analyzed whether statistically significant differences existed between the control and experimental groups (Table 10). The F-statistic of the test was 6.072, and the significance level was 0.015 (>0.005); therefore, it was concluded that equal variances were not assumed. The T-statistic was 1.289, the number of degrees of freedom was 12.134, and the p-value was 0.002 (<0.005). Therefore, a statistically significant difference was found in the recorded samples and between the control and experimental groups, which manifested through employment. Thus, we can infer from the above analysis that the experimental group had higher employment. Training in soft skills benefits young people by giving them an advantage in the labor market and improving their chances of getting hired.

Conclusion

Turkey, a developing and high middle-income country, has a high youth unemployment rate and a fragile labor market structure, which makes the unemployment rate more sensitive to extraordinary events such as crises and pandemics, compared to the world average. Today, recruitment specialists or HR managers consider core or soft skills, and not technical skills, in the hiring process, due to the rapidly changing emerging labor market (Murgor, 2017; Vasanthakumari, 2019). Sufficient soft skills positively affect employability, success, and creative output (Wtas and Wats, 2009). Therefore,

this study examines the impact of soft skills on youth employment using experimental methods of inquiry, and emphasizes upskilling young vocational school graduates' soft skills to facilitate their entry into the labor market and achieve sustained employment.

Table 10. Results of the independent samples test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	p-value	t	df	p-value (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Standard Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Dfference Lower	Upper
EmploymentEG	Equal Variances not Assumed	6.072	.015	1.289	12.134	.002	.13894	.10781	-.09568	.37355

We used a quantitative analysis method to determine sufficient and insufficient soft skills for young graduates based on the Students sample. Students predominantly excelled in time management, responsibility, and proactivity, while they scored lowest in positive attitude, critical thinking, and stress management. These results contribute to current knowledge by demonstrating that soft skills must be developed for young graduates.

We also used a qualitative analysis method to examine the HR managers sample regarding the soft skills of newly graduated youth entering the labor market. The soft skills for young people that HR managers find the most important are time management, responsibility, and proactivity. Other important soft skills are discipline, determination, respect, cooperation, honesty, hospitality, project management, data analytics, and management skills. Dedication is another soft skill that helps young people become more competitive. In addition, managers demand that young people exhibit good adaptability and creativity. According to them, young people have weak problem-solving, proactivity, and time management skills but strong creative skills.

Some ways to improve soft skills in young people are learning foreign languages, following the business world, participating in more projects and training, internships, and volunteering. This study has shown that soft-skills training in the areas of creativity, time management, and self-awareness is highly desirable. The soft skills most needed are communication, a positive attitude, and proactivity. Some other things that HR managers find significant and expect from young people in their initial workplace are workplace rules, security of company information, professionalism, respect, collaboration, and adaptability. These results contribute to current knowledge by creating awareness among newly graduated young people preparing to enter the labor market.

We developed a curriculum that detected 14 soft skills based on samples using an informal education method with international collaboration. We divided the Students sample into two groups: control and experimental. We conducted a soft-skills training program for the experimental group and used experimental research methods to determine whether a difference existed between the control and experimental groups regarding employment rates. The results confirmed that developing soft skills for young graduates positively affects hiring and youth employment. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by emphasizing the relationship between the youth unemployment rate and soft skills.

Based on our findings, we recommend designing and applying training curricula to develop soft skills for young graduates in public institutions and companies. We also propose that practical lessons, which develop young undergraduate and vocational school students' soft skills, be added to the university curriculum and taught by specialists. In addition, team-based soft-skills projects in which students in

undergraduate/vocational schools participate both nationally and internationally should be undertaken. The improvement in skill and productivity will increase hiring and youth employment. Additionally, HR departments should design and implement soft-skills training programs for workers in public institutions or companies. All these measures will positively impact employment sustainability.

This study has a few limitations. First, our student sample was affiliated with a single institution to obtain a homogeneous sample for the results to be more consistent. Another limitation is that both samples are from Turkey. Future studies can consider samples from other countries or different institutions for an in-depth examination of the impact of soft skills on the labor market.

Glossary

Soft skill: A non-technical skill that describes how individuals work and interact with others.
Hard skill: A skill learned through education or hands-on experience. It is also known as technical skill.
Youth employment: Employment of individuals in the 15–24 age range.
Youth unemployment: Unemployment of individuals in the 15–24 age range.
Recruitment process: The process of actively seeking out, finding, and hiring candidates for a specific position or job.
Recruitment specialist: An individual who screens and interviews job applicants and matches candidates to suitable positions.
Labor market: A market where labor supply and labor demand meet.
HR Managers: Professionals who recruit, interview, and hire new staff in organizations.
Communication: The ability to clearly and effectively converse with others, set expectations, and collaborate on projects.
Positive attitude: The skill of being optimistic about situations, interactions, and oneself.
Dedication: The quality of being dedicated or committed to a task or purpose.

Integrity: The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.
Flexibility: The willingness to change or compromise.
Problem-solving: The skill of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues.
Time management: The skill of using time effectively or productively, especially at work.
Teamwork: The skill of working effectively and efficiently within a group.
Work ethic: The skill of approaching work in an ethical way.
Adaptability: The skill of being able to adjust to new conditions.
Responsibility: The skill of having a duty to deal with something or of having control over someone.
Reliability: The skill of being trustworthy or performing consistently well.
Stress management: The skill of coping with stress effectively.
Proactivity: The skill of taking initiative and anticipating future problems or needs.
Self-awareness: The skill of knowing one's own character and feelings.
Empathy: The skill of understanding and sharing the feelings of another.
Decision-making: The skill of making important decisions effectively.
Creativity: The skill of using imagination or original ideas to create something.
Innovation: The skill of producing a new method, idea, product, etc.
Critical thinking: The skill of objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Anger and Anger Expression Experience in Adolescents: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore adolescents' experiences of anger and anger expression in depth. Conducted between October 2023 and December 2024, this study was carried out using a qualitative research approach. Within the framework of the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) design, face-to-face and online individual interviews were conducted with 15 volunteer adolescents. The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, leading to the identification of four main themes: causes of anger, forms of anger expression, emotional and social responses following anger, and anger management and coping strategies. The research findings indicate that anger can have significant negative effects on adolescents' physical health, psychosocial development, and social relationships. Furthermore, it is emphasized that collaboration between families, teachers, and healthcare professionals is essential in ensuring the healthy expression and management of anger. This study may contribute to the development of supportive interventions for adolescent anger management. Strengthening anger regulation skills, increasing emotional awareness, and fostering effective coping mechanisms can help individuals manage anger in a healthier way. In this context, the research findings provide important insights for the development of educational and psychosocial support programs.

Keywords: *adolescent, anger, anger expression, interpretative phenomenological analysis*

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, adölesanların öfke ve öfke ifadesi deneyimlerini derinlemesine incelemektir. Çalışma, Ekim 2023 ile Aralık 2024 tarihleri arasında gerçekleştirilmiş olup, nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılarak yürütülmüştür. Yorumlayıcı fenomenolojik analiz (YFA) deseni çerçevesinde, 15 gönüllü adölesan ile yüz yüze ve çevrimiçi bireysel görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşmeler sonucunda elde edilen veriler, tematik analiz yöntemi ile incelenmiş ve dört ana tema belirlenmiştir: öfkenin nedenleri, öfke ifadesi biçimleri, öfke sonrası duygusal ve sosyal tepkiler ile öfke yönetimi ve başa çıkma stratejileri. Araştırma bulguları, öfkenin adölesanların fiziksel sağlığı, psikososyal gelişimi ve toplumsal ilişkileri üzerinde önemli olumsuz etkiler yaratabileceğini ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, öfkenin sağlıklı bir şekilde ifade edilmesi ve yönetilmesi sürecinde ailelerin, öğretmenlerin ve sağlık profesyonellerinin iş birliği içinde olması gerektiği vurgulanmaktadır. Çalışma, adölesan öfke yönetimine yönelik destekleyici müdahalelerin geliştirilmesine katkı sağlayabilir. Öfke düzenleme becerilerinin güçlendirilmesi, duygusal farkındalığın artırılması ve etkili başa çıkma mekanizmalarının kazandırılması, bireylerin öfke ile daha sağlıklı bir şekilde baş etmelerine yardımcı olabilir. Bu bağlamda, araştırma bulguları eğitim ve psikososyal destek programlarının geliştirilmesi açısından önemli ipuçları sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *adölesan, öfke, öfke ifadesi, yorumlayıcı fenomenolojik analiz*

Introduction

Adolescence is a period between childhood and adulthood characterized by physical, emotional, and psychological changes, and a search for identity. While some adolescents can cope with this challenging process with ease, others may experience difficulties in anger management, leading to the emergence of mental health issues (Lowth, 2015). Anger is one of the most potent vital emotions that arise in response to threats and are reflected in behaviors. Along with anger, a person may cope with their fears, but excessive and uncontrollable anger can impair their physical and cognitive health (Yadav, Yadav, & Sapkota, 2017).

Adolescents can experience intense feelings of anger due to hormonal changes, cognitive and neuropsychological changes, identity exploration, academic stress, changes in social relationships, lack of emotion regulation skills, conflicts with adults, the influence of social media, mental health issues (Moesarofah, 2024), and insecure attachment (Maalouf et al., 2022). Anger expression in adolescents can vary based on gender characteristics. For example, girls may express their anger by crying, yelling, or screaming, while boys may reflect their anger by fighting with others or physically harming others. (Anjanappa, Govindan, & Munivenkatappa, 2020b).

On the other hand, adolescents may exhibit behaviors such as sulking, ignoring, harming themselves and their surroundings (Anjanappa et al., 2020b), expressing anger verbally, or distancing themselves from the source of anger (Nasir & Abd Ghani, 2014). To cope with anger, adolescents may use strategies such as staying silent, watching television, going outside, playing with friends, eating, drinking water, washing their face, meditating, counting numbers (Anjanappa et al., 2020b), trying to stay calm, taking deep breaths, reminding themselves of the negative effects of anger, building self-confidence, or inviting the other party to a discussion (Nasir & Abd Ghani, 2014). When anger management is not achieved in adolescents, the risk of mental illness and suicide can increase (Daniel, Goldston, Erkanli, Franklin, & Mayfield, 2009; Weniger, Distelberg, & Vaswani,

2017). Therefore, effective management of anger is crucial.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy, problem-solving skills training, and communication skills training effectively reduce adolescent anger problems (Anjanappa, Govindan, & Munivenkatappa, 2020a). To resolve anger issues in adolescents, it is necessary to understand the causes that provoke their anger and to learn anger management strategies. School staff play a crucial role in identifying anger issues in adolescents. Teachers can take preventive measures to resolve conflicts by recognizing situations in the classroom that trigger students' anger and identifying their anger symptoms(Hymans, 2023). School health nurses can facilitate collaboration between children with anger issues, their teachers, and their families (Adana & Arslantaş, 2011) and take an active role in schools by cooperating with teachers in anger management programs (Anjanappa, Govindan, Munivenkatappa, & Bhaskarapillai, 2023). Therefore, increasing nurses' awareness of this issue is essential. Adolescents' expressions of anger may vary depending on cultural characteristics (Novin, Banerjee, & Rieffe, 2012).

This study examines the experiences of adolescents living in the eastern region of Turkey regarding anger and its expression. Our study is significant in demonstrating the impact of a specific region's sociocultural dynamics on adolescents' expression of anger. The study findings may provide scientific data for planning interventions related to anger management in adolescents.

Method

This study examined adolescents' experiences with anger and anger expression. It employed interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), a qualitative research method aimed at deeply understanding individuals' experiences (Larkin, Shaw, & Flowers, 2019). The study provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and interpreting adolescents' anger and expression experiences.

The research team and reflexivity

The research team consists of two researchers. The first researcher has completed a PhD in the field of mental health and psychiatric nursing and is currently working as a faculty member (assistant professor). The second researcher has worked for many years in pediatric nursing and is currently serving as a faculty member (assistant professor). Both the first and second authors have received training in qualitative research and have publications in international journals.

Study group

The criterion sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the study group. In this method, participants who meet predetermined important criteria are selected (Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Suri, 2011). In the study, adolescents who were thought to have experienced with anger and anger expression were selected as the study group.

Adolescents were reached and invited to participate through announcements shared on social media platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp. Participants were verbally informed that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that they could discontinue participation at any time without providing any explanation. Interview dates and times were arranged based on the adolescents' availability.

The criteria for participation in the study are as follows:
1. Residing in Eastern Turkey and speaking Turkish,
2. Being an adolescent aged between 13 and 18,
3. Expressing experience with anger and anger expression,
4. Actively using the WhatsApp application,
5. Voluntarily agreeing to participate in the study.

The exclusion criteria are as follows:
1. Having speech, language, or hearing impairments that could hinder effective communication,

A total of 15 adolescents participated in the study, and individual interviews were conducted with each of them. The interviews were conducted online via WhatsApp to ensure the participants could comfortably express their views.

Data collection

The research was conducted between October 2023 and December 2024 with adolescents living in the eastern provinces of Turkey. The study employed an in-depth individual interview method. The interviews were held in quiet rooms where adolescents could comfortably respond. The study group was formed from adolescents who met the specified criteria. Adolescents were invited through social media announcements and the researchers' personal connections. A total of 23 adolescents initially agreed to participate, but 8 adolescents later withdrew from the study. Before the research began, a preliminary interview lasting 23 minutes was conducted with one adolescent. In this interview, the clarity and appropriateness of the questions were tested, and the data collected was not included in the analysis. Saturation is one of the key aspects to consider when conducting qualitative research. In practice, the researcher must continue data collection until no new information can be obtained from participants (Mwita, 2022). Data saturation was reached when the data began to repeat, and the study was completed with 15 adolescents. The duration of the interviews ranged from 14 to 26 minutes, depending on the adolescents' responses, with the average interview time calculated as 20 minutes. The semi-structured interview form used in the study was prepared based on the literature and reviewed with the opinions of two experts. During the interviews, probing questions such as "Can you elaborate on this situation?" were used to encourage adolescents to detail their feelings and experiences (Table 1). The interviews were video-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. The research data were collected by the first researcher (HS).

Table 1. Interview guide

Sociodemographic Characteristics
At the beginning of the interview, adolescents were asked about sociodemographic information such as age, gender, and class.
In what situations do you get angry?
Can you describe an event recently that made you angry?
What do you do to control your anger?
How do you typically react when you are angry?
How do your angry moments affect your life, especially your relationships with family and friends?
How do you generally feel after expressing your anger?

Validity and Reliability of the Study

In order to maintain a high level of reliability in the study, the four main criteria of Lincoln and Guba (1985) were considered. To assess whether the credibility criteria were met, the findings obtained from the analysis of the interviews were shared with two adolescents with similar educational levels, and their approval was obtained. To achieve the transferability criterion, adolescents with experiences related to anger and anger expression were selected, as this characteristic ensures the identification of adolescents appropriate for the study's purpose. Purposive sampling was used to select adolescents who fit the study's requirements and research topic, and the adolescents were identified based on their previous experiences or knowledge of the subject. Detailed information about the research process was provided to meet the dependability criterion. In line with the confirmability criteria, direct quotes (descriptions) from adolescents were included in the study results before the analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The two researchers independently determined codes to increase internal reliability. To enhance internal validity, the research questions in the semi-structured interview form were reviewed by two experts with a doctorate degree in psychiatry nursing and pediatric nursing, and for the results, the views of an expert with doctorate degrees in psychiatry nursing were obtained (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data Analysis

The qualitative research data obtained in the content analysis of the study were analyzed in four stages:

*Transcription and Data Verification***:** Notes were taken by the researcher during the interviews, and video recordings were used. The obtained data were transcribed into written form. The video recordings were watched and listened to by two researchers, and the transcription was verified.

Coding the Data: The two researchers examined the collected information to determine what the adolescents' expressions conceptually meant. During the coding stage, qualitative data analysis was carried out according to the concepts identified, considering the study's purpose and conceptual framework.

Identifying Themes: Based on the codes identified in the study, themes were identified that allowed the data to be grouped under specific categories at a general level. When forming the themes, care was taken to ensure that similar concepts were grouped under the same theme so that they could form a meaningful whole.

Organizing and Defining Data According to Codes and Themes: During coding and identifying themes, direct quotes were taken from the adolescents' views, thoughts, and suggestions, which best emphasized their opinions without including the researchers' views or interpretations. These quotes were used to convert the codes into themes.

Ethical Considerations

This research was approved by the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Hakkari University, with the approval number 2023/112, dated 12.10.2023. Before the interviews, both verbal and written informed consent was obtained from the adolescents and their parents. Records and transcripts were stored on a password-protected device. The study was conducted in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration and National Research Committee ethical standards.

Results

The mean age of the adolescents who participated in the study was 16.8. Of the participants, 73.3% (n=11) were male, and 26.7% (n=4) were female. In terms of grade level, 20% (n=3) were in 11th grade, and 60% (n=9) were in 12th grade. Regarding education, 6.7% (n=1) were not currently attending school, and 6.7% (n=1) were graduates. When examining smoking behavior, 46.7% (n=7) of the participants smoked, while 53.3% (n=8) did not smoke.

The findings related to the adolescents' demographic characteristics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Sociodemographic Characteristics of Adolescents (n=15)

Participant No	Age	Gender	Grade	Smoking Status
Ö1	17	Male	12	
Ö2	17	Male	12	Exists
Ö3	17	Male	12	Exists
Ö4	17	Male	12	
Ö5	16	Male	11	Exists
Ö6	17	Male	12	
Ö7	17	Female	11	
Ö8	17	Male	-	Exists
Ö9	16	Male	11	
Ö10	16	Male	10	Exists
Ö11	17	Male	12	Exists
Ö12	17	Male	12	Exists
Ö13	17	Female	12	
Ö14	17	Female	Graduate	
Ö15	17	Female	12	

Four themes related to anger and anger expression experiences were identified in the adolescents who participated in our study (reasons for anger, anger expression, emotional reactions and social effects after anger, anger management, and coping strategies) (Table 3).

Theme 1: Causes of Anger

Sub-theme 1: Individual Sources of Anger

Adolescents associated their anger with individual causes such as daily life's chaos, challenges, responsibilities, feelings of failure, stress load, and mental or physical exhaustion.

Some expressions from adolescent individuals:

"Sometimes, for example, it happens when I can't find something for which I am looking. It happens to everyone; you put something somewhere and can't find it, making you angry. Let's say you get a low grade on a test; you get angry." (Ö1)

Table 3. Themes, sub-themes, and codes for adolescents (n=15)

Theme	Sub-Theme	Code
Causes of Anger	Individual Sources of Anger	• Daily life chaos • Life challenges and responsibilities • Feeling of failure Stress load • Mental and physical fatigue
	Social and Environmental Factors	• Unjust criticism and injustice • Lying • Things going wrong • Disagreements about sharing responsibilities • Angry reactions from people around (fights, violence) • Social habits and inclination towards violence • Damage to personal belongings
Expression of Anger	Emotional and Physical Expression of Anger	• Yelling and raising voice • Cursing and using foul language • Crying • Thoughts of physical violence • Self-harm
	Damage to Objects and Environment	• Breaking and throwing objects • Breaking doors and windows
Emotional Reactions and Social Effects After Anger	Emotions Experienced After Anger	• Regret • Sadness • Guilt • Calming down/relaxation • Self-reflection and learning
	Effects on Social Relationships	• Breakdown in family relationships • Breakdown in social relationships
Anger Management and Coping Strategies	Calming Methods	• Listening to music • Physical activity (walking) • Smoking
	Self-Regulation and Control Mechanisms	• Self-control • Thinking and evaluating • Self-talk (self-awareness) • Changing the environment
	Communication and Emotional Expression	• Clearly expressing feelings • Apologizing

"In daily life, now due to the stress in our lives, I mean, because of the difficulties in our lives, it's a bit stressful. Also, stress itself brings anger." (Ö9)

"I get very stressed because I get really tired of this. Sometimes crying is involved; that's why I get pretty stressed, usually." (Ö15)

Sub-theme 2: Social and Environmental Factors

Adolescents highlighted situations such as unjust criticism and injustice, lying, things going wrong, disagreements over sharing responsibilities, social habits, a tendency towards violence, and damage to personal belongings.

Some expressions from adolescent individuals:

"I am actually a person who is against fighting, but when I get really angry, I express my reaction by shouting, raising my voice." "I mean, here, when they get angry, it's always fighting, violence." (Ö3)

"I had a big argument there, it really got heated. That's why I encountered such an event. I mean, here, when you get angry, it's always fighting, violence. Constant fighting, constant fighting, they try to scare you." (Ö3)

"People around me, for example, when they get angry, they hit, they fight." (Ö4)

"My excuse is I get angry when they go out, we argue. Since all the responsibility was on me, I started interfering with everything, we argued about everything. That's why. When the argument is over, I actually calm down. After that, I think about what I did." (Ö7)

"For example, when someone criticizes you unfairly, I can't handle the unfairness." (Ö1)

"I get angry when someone lies, when something goes wrong, or when I can't do something." (Ö12)

"I really don't like people who mess with my phone, my closet, or take my personal belongings." (Ö4)

"For example, even a tiny thing, especially when something damages my personal belongings, it makes me angry." (Ö7)

Theme 2: Expression of Anger

Sub-theme 1: Emotional and Physical Expression of Anger

Adolescents usually express anger through shouting, raising their voices, swearing and using foul language, crying, thoughts of physical violence, and self-harm.

Some expressions from adolescent individuals:

"I shout, usually swear. I mean, sometimes it can escalate to physical contact. I shout, swear, use foul language. It escalates to physical contact." (Ö2)

"Usually, I shout, I cry. I show loud behavior, sometimes I shout, but I don't resort to violence." (Ö14)

"I think about hurting myself." (Ö6)

"I never tell myself to calm down at that time. I get angry about something by myself. For example, breaking or smashing something in the room calms me down more." (Ö7)

"I harm myself more. I don't physically harm the person in front of me." (Ö11)

"People in the area usually try to calm their anger by using foul language, I am sorry for the vulgarity, swearing, shouting, sometimes using foul words, things like that." (Ö1)

Sub-theme 2: Damaging Objects and the Environment

Adolescents reported behaviors such as breaking objects, smashing things, and breaking doors or windows as an expression of their anger.

Some expressions from adolescent individuals:

"I break doors and windows, but I don't harm a person." (Ö8)

"When I am very affected, I get the feeling of breaking or smashing things around me, it happens." (Ö10)

"Or when I argue with my friends, I can't stand, I also damage my belongings. I damage my belongings, I damage the walls. After damaging my things, I have a crisis and it's over." (Ö11)

Theme 3: Emotional Reactions and Social Effects After Anger

Sub-theme 1: Feelings Experienced After Anger

Adolescents usually experience feelings such as regret, sadness, guilt, relaxation, self-reflection, and learning a lesson after anger.

Some expressions from adolescent individuals:

"Then I generally feel a sense of regret." (Ö2)

"After the anger passes, I regret what I did." (Ö4)

"My reactions after anger are sadness. For example, after a fight at home, I go outside and don't talk to anyone for 1-2 days." (Ö8)

"After the exam, I felt a mixed feeling of sadness and anger. I had a release of anger and cried." (Ö14)

"Why did I do that, I should not have done it, I could have reacted normally. I like to learn a lesson." (Ö9)

"After shouting, I feel a little relieved, but later, after thinking about it, I feel a bit guilty." (Ö15)

"I sit somewhere alone, I stay by myself until I calm down. For example, I listen to music, I stay alone." (Ö1)

"Then I think to myself, I won't do such a thing again, and I calm myself down." (Ö9)

Sub-theme 2: Effects on Social Relationships

Adolescents reported effects on social relationships, which may manifest as disruption in family relationships and deterioration in social relations.

Some expressions from adolescent individuals:

"I mean, if I had an argument with my family, my relationship with them gets worse." (Ö13)

"Sometimes it negatively affects me, especially in the arguments with my family." (Ö14

"Yes, it affects my close circle of friends because sometimes, whether I like it or not, a friend makes a joke, and if I don't like it, I get angry suddenly." (Ö1)

Theme 4: Anger Management and Coping Strategies

Sub-theme 1: Calming Methods

Adolescents use methods such as listening to music, engaging in physical activities (e.g., walking), and smoking to calm down.

Some expressions from adolescent individuals:

"When I get angry, I usually smoke. I listen to music, I also go for a walk." (Ö2)

"When there's music and cigarettes, I automatically calm down. When I smoke, I calm down. I usually listen to music." (Ö3)

"I smoke, go to a quiet place. I go outside, wherever it is, and go to a quiet place." (Ö8)

"Usually, I smoke a cigarette to control myself or I prefer to be alone." (Ö10)

"I listen to music, I also go for a walk. That's how I calm down." (Ö2)

"Usually, I listen to music. When I have music and cigarettes, I automatically calm down, I understand." (Ö3)

Sub-theme 2: Self-Regulation and Control Mechanisms

Adolescents use strategies such as self-control, thinking and evaluating, self-talk to develop self-awareness, and changing the environment to distance themselves from the situation.

Some expressions from adolescent individuals:

"Before I get angry, I actually plan it in my mind, I draw it from top to bottom." (Ö9)

"There, after changing the environment, I cry a little, then think. I mean, you cry, then you think." (Ö15)

"I say to myself, I am glad I didn't do that physical violence." (Ö1)

"I move away from the environment. When I get angry, I smoke; this calms me down a little." (Ö12)

"If the person in front of me continues to react, I react back, but if they don't react, stay silent, I just leave the place." (Ö3)

"I shout and leave the environment. I generally move to a different environment. There, after changing the environment, I cry a little, then think." (Ö15)

"Usually, I smoke a cigarette or prefer to be alone to control myself. My reactions, I think to myself, 'How did I do that?' Sometimes I find myself right, I say 'I am glad I did it.'" (Ö10)

"I mean, I like being alone, I go somewhere, I stay alone, and talk to myself. In my mind, I wonder if I am right or wrong?" (Ö9)

"Then, after a fight at home, I went outside, came back, didn't talk to anyone for 1-2 days. Then it gets better on its own." (Ö8)

Sub-theme 3: Communication and Emotional Expression

Adolescents use strategies such as expressing their feelings openly and apologizing for communication and emotional expression.

Some expressions from adolescent individuals:

"Afterwards, I think about what I did, and then I usually realize I was wrong, and go apologize." (Ö7)

"If I can convey my feelings to the other person, I feel happy and they understand." (Ö12)

Discussion

This study investigated anger and anger expression in adolescents. As a result of the interviews, four themes related to the experience of anger and anger expression in adolescents were identified (causes of anger, anger expression, emotional reactions and social effects after anger, anger management and coping strategies).

It is reported that genetic and environmental factors, perceiving events as self-directed, low tolerance to frustration, things not going as expected, anxiety, physical and emotional problems, substance use, and having a bad day can be effective in adolescents experiencing anger (Yadav et al., 2017). In our study, it was determined that adolescents become angry due to personal reasons such as daily life confusion, responsibilities, feelings of failure, stress load, and mental and physical fatigue. Stress is shown as one of the most important causes of anger in adolescents (Björling & Singh, 2017). Adolescence is one of the critical periods of physical, mental, and psychosocial change (Akbaş & Yiğitoğlu, 2022; Lowth, 2015). Therefore, adolescents are believed to experience stress and fatigue due to their efforts in self-discovery and self-identity and that facing increased responsibilities leads to anger. On the other hand, adolescents stated that they become angry due to social and environmental reasons such as injustice, lying, things going wrong, disagreements about sharing responsibilities, angry reactions from people around them, social habits, and damage to personal belongings. Existing studies emphasize the importance of social causes in forming anger (Björling & Singh, 2017; Oolup, Brown, Nowicki, & Aziz, 2016). Social environment plays an important role in the personality development of adolescents. In our study, some adolescents talked about the behaviors of angry individuals around them. This may be a result of adolescents learning anger from their environment. According to social learning

theory, individuals learn anger and violent behaviors by observing them in their social environment. Especially children and adolescents are influenced by their parents' behaviors (Akbaş & Yiğitoğlu, 2022; Bandura, 2024). In our study, the fact that adolescents' reasons for anger are mostly based on social factors may indicate their sensitivity to environmental influences. Additionally, adolescents stated that anger in their region is often expressed through violence, fights, and negative words. Our findings show that adolescents express their anger by shouting, cursing, crying, considering physical violence, self-harming, or damaging objects (e.g., breaking doors and windows). This situation is thought to reflect the sociocultural characteristics of the region. Therefore, it is important to examine anger within a cultural context.

In our study, it was determined that adolescents expressed their anger by yelling, swearing, crying, considering physical violence, harming themselves, breaking things, and breaking doors and windows. There are various factors that influence how and when children express their anger. Anger expression can be affected by parental responses, parental attitudes, parents' coping strategies, mistreatment, punishment, personality traits, age, and gender (Kerr & Schneider, 2008). Younger children tend to externalize their anger more. As age increases, the expression of anger becomes less acceptable to the environment. On the other hand, it is reported that girls tend to be less angry or control their anger more (Kerr & Schneider, 2008). In the study by Björling and Singh, adolescents described anger not as a passive internal emotion but as an emotion that can result in aggressive behaviors directed toward themselves or their surroundings. (Björling & Singh, 2017). In another study, it was found that almost all adolescents experienced the feeling of anger, 7.1% of participants punched other people when they became angry, 25.1% damaged objects, 27.8% became verbally aggressive or swore, more than 50% expressed regret for expressing anger, and 44.7% wanted to apologize (Nasir & Abd Ghani, 2014). Similarly, in our study, some adolescents stated that they experienced feelings of

regret, sadness, guilt, calmness, self-questioning, and learning lessons after anger.

The excessive and uncontrolled expression of anger by adolescents can affect their physical and mental health (Yadav et al., 2017) and cause problems in their social relationships (Nasir & Abd Ghani, 2014). In our study, adolescents stated that they experienced deterioration in family and social relationships due to their reactions after anger. Therefore, to protect physical and psychosocial health, it is important to express anger appropriately and use healthy coping strategies.

In our study, adolescents stated that they used methods such as listening to music, physical activity, and smoking to cope with anger. These practices help adolescents relax by redirecting their attention. On the other hand, adolescents reported using self-regulation and control mechanisms such as self-control, reflecting on the event, talking to themselves, and changing the environment to cope with anger. Adolescents also mentioned trying to cope with anger by openly expressing their feelings and apologizing. In different studies, adolescents have been observed to use methods such as avoidance, distancing (Björling & Singh, 2017; Nasir & Abd Ghani, 2014), deep breathing, trying to stay calm, trying to understand the event (Nasir & Abd Ghani, 2014), harming themselves and others (Anjanappa et al., 2020b), watching television, going out, and playing with friends (Anjanappa et al., 2020b) as distracting activities.

Nurses are an important professional group providing physical and psychosocial care for adolescents in schools (Adana & Arslantaş, 2011). It is notable that a number of studies on anger expression and coping with anger in adolescents have been conducted by nurses (Adana & Arslantaş, 2011; Doğan & Çam, 2020; Lök, Bademli, & Canbaz, 2018). Since one-on-one interviews with adolescents were conducted in this study, the data obtained can provide current information for nurses in creating care plans. The results of the study can guide the planning of coping training for adolescents.

Conclusion

The findings of the study show that anger is an important issue among adolescents. The expression of anger in adolescents can have destructive effects, such as harm to oneself and others, and social relationships may be affected after anger. This situation can lead to the deterioration of adolescents' physical and psychosocial health, as well as lay the foundation for societal consequences due to the emergence of individuals without anger control. Therefore, anger management in adolescents is a multifaceted issue that needs to be addressed by family members, teachers, and health professionals. Anger expression and coping are learned in the family. At this point, it is important to evaluate both the adolescent and the family together. In order to prevent the negative outcomes of anger, it is suggested that nurses take an active role in schools to identify adolescents exhibiting aggressive behaviors, organize anger coping training in schools, cover stress and anger management topics in school curricula, encourage adolescents to adopt hobbies to express their anger appropriately, guide them to form positive friendships and raise societal awareness about anger expression.

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Conflict of interest

The Author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

All listed authors meet the authorship criteria and are in agreement with the content of the manuscript. Study design: HS, ZKŞ. Data collection: HS. Data analysis: HS, ZKŞ, Study supervision: HS, ZKŞ Manuscript writing: HS, ZKŞ Critical revisions for important intellectual content: HS, ZKŞ

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Limitations

The data of this research are limited to the statements of the adolescents who participated in the study, and the results cannot be generalized.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Journal of Society Research

Spatial Analysis of Leisure Experiences in the Context of Music Subcultures: The Case of Ankara

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Abstract

This study investigated the subcultural leisure experiences in metal music venues in Ankara, through an analysis of visitor reviews from the Google Maps application within the framework of Oldenburg's "third place" paradigm. The aim was to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of subcultural spaces in urban life and the dynamics of subcultural participation in the digital age. In this context, visitor reviews of the Always Rock Bar, Onaon Café, and Papaz Rock Bar were analyzed using conventional qualitative content analysis. The data were imported into MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024 and subjected to coding in accordance with the characteristics of the "third place" paradigm. The findings revealed how these venues act as central meeting points where subcultural identities are strengthened and social networks are built. This study provides valuable insights into the importance of these places for the formation and sustainability of subcultural communities and underlines the relevance of the "third place" paradigm in non-Western urban contexts. Further recommendations for future research include the investigation of similar phenomena in other cultural settings and the combination of digital data with traditional ethnographic methods.

Keywords: *Music subcultures, sociology of leisure, subcultural leisure, third place, user-generated content*

Öz

Bu çalışma kapsamında altkültürel boş zaman deneyimleri, Ankara'daki metal müzik mekânlarının Google Haritalar uygulamasında yer alan yorumları üzerinden, Oldenburg'un "üçüncü mekân" paradigması bağlamında incelenmiştir. Altkültürel mekânların kent yaşamındaki rolü ve dijital çağda altkültürel katılımın dinamikleri hakkında daha kapsamlı bir anlayış geliştirilmesi amacı doğrultusunda; Always Rock Bar, Onaon Café ve Papaz Rock Bar mekânlarının ziyaretçi yorumları, geleneksel niteliksel içerik çözümlemesi çerçevesinde analiz edilmiştir. Yorum verileri, MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024 programına aktarılmış ve "üçüncü mekân" kavramının özellikleri göz önünde bulundurularak tematik olarak kodlanmıştır. Bulgular, bu mekânların altkültürel kimliklerin pekiştirildiği ve toplumsal bağların inşa edildiği merkezi buluşma yerleri olarak işlev gördüğünü göstermiştir. Bu çalışma, altkültürel toplulukların oluşumu ve sürdürülebilirliği noktasında bu mekânların önemine dair önemli bilgiler sunmakta ve "üçüncü mekân" paradigmasının Batı dışı kentsel bağlamlarla uygunluğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Benzeri olguların daha farklı kültürel ortamlarda araştırılması ve dijital verilerin geleneksel etnografik yöntemlerle bir araya getirilerek kullanılması gelecekteki araştırmalar için sunulan öneriler arasında yer almaktadır

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Altkültürel boş zaman, boş zaman sosyolojisi, kullanıcı türevli içerik, müzik altkültürleri, üçüncü mekân*

Introduction

In an ever-increasingly globalized world, the study of subcultures emerges as one of the crucial areas of research that offers a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between identity, community, and urban spaces. The concept of subculture, which has its origins in the Chicago School of Sociology, was developed and widely disseminated by the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the 1970s. Influenced by the pioneering studies of Hall and Jefferson (1976) and Hebdige (1979), the CCCS approach conceptualized subcultures as self-consistent groups that resist dominant cultural norms through their distinctive styles and practices. This perspective emphasized the class-based structure and symbolic resistance potential of subcultures and framed participation in these groups as a form of resistance by working-class youth against hegemonic cultural structures (Clarke et al., 2014). More recently, subcultures have been recognized as more fluid and diverse communities shaped by shared interests and practices (Bennett, 2011). This perspective underscores the role of individual agency and consumption practices in shaping subcultural identities, rather than viewing them as static and class structures (Bennett, 1999). This shift in perspective reflects the impact of globalization, digital technologies, and changing consumption patterns on the formation and expression of subcultures.

Subcultures are currently regarded as dynamic entities that can transcend the conventional boundaries of class, space, and time, facilitating the formation of intricate networks of belonging and identity (Hodkinson, 2002). In this context, the metal music subculture is a highly continuous and globally widespread phenomenon (Brown, 2015). The flexibility of this subculture, which is characterized by its distinctive musical preferences, clothing style, and political stance, represents a significant and noteworthy aspect of its ability to adapt to a multitude of cultural contexts (Weinstein, 2000). Metal music, which originated in British and American working-class communities, has proliferated in diverse global contexts, including Brazil, Norway, and Saudi Arabia, becoming a per-vasive phenomenon (Weinstein, 2011). Metal subculture studies offer significant opportunities to explore the ways in which cultural forms are localized and reinterpreted in different parts of the world (Wallach & Levine, 2011; Weinstein, 2000). These studies highlight significant issues pertaining to cultural authenticity, the function of music in identity formation, and the interplay between subcultural practices and social, economic, and political structures (Bennett, 2000; Hodkinson, 2002; Kahn-Harris, 2007). Additionally, studies on metal subculture provide valuable insights into youth culture, leisure practices, and the evolving character of urban spaces in an increasingly interconnected world.

Leisure activities have a significant impact on the social and cultural structure of societies because they serve not only as a source of entertainment but also as a medium for identity development and community building (Rojek, 2005). Anchored in the transformative context of sociological thought, the sociology of leisure analyzes how social structures and processes influence its social, institutional, and historical-cultural dimensions, as demonstrated through the interactive relationships between individuals and social groups (Dorsey & Collier, 2018; Shim, 2004; Spracklen, 2013; Pronovost, 2000). As leisure encompasses a wide range of activities, from passive consumption to active participation, from individual experiences to social interactions, the sociology of leisure emerges as a research field that captures multidimensional social transformations through increasingly comprehensive analyses (Denovan & Macaskill, 2017; Güven, 2019; Mizuno, 2017; Stanfors & Jacobs, 2023). From the perspective of leisure, subcultural leisure activities offer valuable opportunities for individuals to express their distinctive identities and connect with peers who share similar dispositions (Riches, 2012). At this point, the sociology of leisure investigates how subcultures construct and express their collective identities, values, and social dynamics through shared leisure activities that diverge from mainstream cultural norms, while these practices simultaneously serve as crucial mediums for fostering group belonging and reflecting broader societal transformations (Sinclair & Dolan, 2015; Sinclair et al., 2019; Spracklen et al., 2016; Williams, 2011).

Consequently, examining subcultural formations that emerge through leisure activities enables us to comprehend the manner in which both the construction of subcultural identity and the sense of collective belonging are shaped.

The concept of "third place" as first introduced by Oldenburg (1999), provides a functional framework for understanding the social significance of leisure spaces. In the context of this spatial classification approach, the residential areas where individuals reside are conceptualized as the "first place" and the work environments where they engage in their professional activities are conceptualized as the "second place." In this context, "third places" located outside these spaces, which are considered as spatial elements of primary importance in the everyday life practices of individuals, have the functions of recreational spaces where leisure activities are carried out. Third places refer to informal public spaces such as cafes, bars, restaurants, parks, etc. that are essential for social interaction and the development of social relations outside of home and work (Oldenburg, 1999). These third places are distinguished by their accessibility, neutrality, and the opportunities they afford for meaningful dialogue and relationships between visitors (Jeffres et al., 2009). The sociology of leisure intersects with third places by examining how these informal public spaces function as essential social environments where individuals exercise their leisure choices and construct meaningful social relationships outside the domains of home and work, reflecting both individual agency and broader societal structures in the organization of leisure time (Oldenburg, 1999; Spracklen, 2013; Stebbins, 2018). Within this context, the significance of third places emerges in their capacity to provide individuals, who voluntarily congregate in these spaces, with opportunities to transcend the routinized practices of everyday life.

Music as a sociological phenomenon functions as both a reflection of social structures and a medium through which individuals articulate their social status and class affiliations while simultaneously shaping and being influenced by societal transformations (Önder, 2018). Sociological analysis of music entails examining its reciprocal effects in the social sphere, enabling inferences about so-

ciety through the study of music's language, meanings, and influence as it reflects the collective spirit of society (Esgin, 2012). From this point of view, the sociology of music examines the complex relationship between music and society by analyzing both the social components of music as an art form and its cultural patterns in relation to identity, gender, and everyday life practices, enabling interpretations of both the social conditions that shape music and the societal circumstances it reflects (Güven & Ergur, 2015). Therefore, the multidimensional nature of the interplay between music and society provides a fertile ground for sociological analysis of a wide range of issues, from everyday life practices to the dynamics of social change.

With the adoption of "scene" as a more nuanced analytical framework superseding "subculture" in the sociology of music, various underground and alternative music genres have increasingly become subjects of sociological inquiry since the early 2000s (Güven & Ergur, 2015). The concept of music scene designates the contexts in which clusters of producers, musicians, and fans collectively share their common musical tastes and distinguish themselves from others, offering a more flexible analytical framework than subculture for understanding music production and consumption (Peterson & Bennett, 2004). Research employing the scene perspective has distinguished itself through its non-hierarchical approach to musical preferences, comprehensive consideration of diverse dispositions among various actors in the musical sphere, and robust empirical methodology (Yılmaz, 2017). Building upon the foundational theoretical contributions of subculture studies, the scene perspective offers a more nuanced analytical framework for examining musical practices within broader sociocultural contexts.

The studies on metal music subculture have highlighted the importance of third places in the context of identity and community building (Snell & Hodgetts, 2007; Varas-Díaz et al., 2014). Kahn-Harris (2007), in his study on the global extreme metal scene, points out that local spaces are fundamental to the sustainability of the subculture by providing the required settings for performances, socializing, and reinforcing shared values. These spaces function as places where subculture members are able to express themselves more freely and

connect with others who share their passion for music (Riches, 2012; Snell & Hodgetts, 2007). Studies on non-Western societies have focused on exploring how metal subcultures position themselves in the cultural environments in which they exist. For example, Wallach (2011), in his study of metal communities in Southeast Asia, reveals how local interpretations of the genre interact with global metal music culture. In this context, it was asserted that studios play an instrumental role in facilitating cultural exchange and identity construction. Despite the paucity of research on the metal scene in Türkiye (Ata, 2019; Çerezcioğlu, 2013; Demirci, 2023; Gülmez, 2024), it is evident that spaces in cities like Ankara serve as a third place for this subculture.

In the context of subcultural leisure, third places assume significant importance, as they offer environments where subculture members can engage in activities that facilitate the formation of a shared sense of identity and belonging (Driver & Bennett, 2015). For instance, venues dedicated to specific music genres frequently serve as the focal point of subcultures, providing spaces for the collective celebration of both music genres and ideological stances (Weinstein, 2000). Characterized by its oppositional stance, the global metal music subculture demands spaces where people come together for cultural reproduction (Kahn-Harris, 2007). Ankara, the capital of Türkiye, offers a very convenient context for the investigation of subcultural leisure activities within the metal scene (Bayu & Özmen, 2017). The metal music venues of this city appear as the third places where enthusiasts come together, socialize, and have subcultural experiences. Among these venues, Always Rock Bar, Onaon Café, and Papaz Rock Bar are particularly prominent (Headbangers Travel Guide, n.d.). These venues function not only as a means of entertainment but also as a shelter in a socio-cultural environment where alternative identities are expressed and reinforced, especially in a socio-cultural environment where this subculture is not adopted (Ekşi Sözlük, n.d.).

Despite the significance of subcultural spaces, the number of studies examining their role as third places in leisure and community building is limited. The main problem of this study lies in the limited research on the roles regulars of metal music

venues in Ankara play in their everyday lives and their contributions to the subculture's structure. Prior research in this field has primarily concentrated on the Western context, with a notable absence of attention to the spatial dimensions of subcultural interaction and dynamics in diverse cultural settings (Williams, 2011). This study aims to address this gap by elucidating the themes and patterns in the content created by visitors about metal music venues in Ankara. In this respect, the objective is to reveal the perceptions and experiences of visitors regarding these third places within the context of a qualitative content analysis of Google Maps reviews. Visitor reviews offer a wealth of insightful data, reflecting the distinctive sentiments and perspectives of individuals who engage with these spaces (Vásquez, 2014). Consequently, it becomes feasible to investigate the manner in which these spaces influence subcultural leisure practices and contribute to the formation of identity and community.

The application of this study in the context of Ankara holds significance in multiple ways. Firstly, by focusing on the local manifestations of subcultural phenomena in non-Western societies, this research contributes to the existing literature on the diffusion and adaptation of subcultures across cultural contexts. This approach challenges the Western-centric perspective that is pervasive in subcultural studies, illuminating the intricate processes of cultural adaptation. Conversely, cultural studies frequently concentrate on subcultural spaces in cities that Istanbul frequently overshadows. This allows for the exploration of the diversity and mobility of subcultural environments in secondary cities. In this context, focusing on Ankara is crucial for a more comprehensive examination of Türkiye's cultural structure and the spatial dynamics of subculture construction processes. Analyzing these spaces as third places contributes to a more nuanced understanding of their role in terms of the development of subcultural identity, the establishment of social interactions, and the creation of a physical space for the local metal scene. This approach also allows us to explore how these spaces can function as alternative cultural production spaces within the urban fabric of Ankara.

Within the scope of the study, it is aimed to reveal the visitor experiences of Always Rock Bar, Onaon Café and Papaz Rock Bar by analyzing the content created by users in the Google Maps application, while also developing an understanding of how these spaces function as third places in terms of subcultural identity construction and social cohesion. As previously stated, this approach seeks to address the existing gap in the literature by employing digital data sources to examine subcultural leisure experiences in non-Western societies. From a methodological standpoint, this study demonstrates the potential of utilizing digital content as a valuable data source for subculture, leisure, and music research. Indeed, the analysis of reviews on online applications such as Google Maps makes it possible to explain multidimensional experiences that are extremely difficult to reveal through traditional ethnographic methods (Kozinets, 2015; Mkono & Tribe, 2017). Therefore, this study aims to address the following primary research questions:

- How do metal music venues in Ankara function as third places for subcultural leisure activities?
- How do the commonly encountered themes in Google Maps reviews of these venues express subcultural experiences?
- How do these spaces contribute to the formation and reproduction of subcultural identities in local metal music scenes?

In line with the aforementioned research questions, this study seeks to examine the subcultural leisure experiences associated with metal music venues in Ankara within the context of the "third place" paradigm. In this context, it is aimed to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of subcultural spaces in urban life and the dynamics of subcultural participation in the digital age.

Understanding the functions of these spaces as third places is crucial for exploring how subcultural communities utilize physical spaces for the sustainability of their leisure participation, especially in areas where similar subcultures may face social or cultural challenges (Baulch, 2007; LeVine, 2008). Focusing on the phenomenon of subcultural leisure, this study offers insights into how subcultural practices are experienced in urban spaces and

contributes to the development of our understanding of the concept of third place (Riches, 2012; Tuaillon Demésy, 2023). At this point, explaining the importance of third places in urban societies reveals their role in strengthening social bonds (Jeffres et al., 2009). On the other hand, with the increasing impact of digital platforms on perceptions of physical spaces, the analysis of online reviews provides valuable insights into the ways in which subcultural communities interact and make sense of these environments (Zukin et al., 2017). The interaction between digital and physical spaces creates new dynamics that contribute to the formation and sustainability of communities, making it an emerging research area in contemporary studies. Consequently, this study focuses on exploring the functions of metal music venues in Ankara as third places in the context of subcultural leisure and community building processes.

Methodology

A qualitative research design was used in this study, which examines subcultural leisure experiences in metal music venues in Ankara within the framework of Oldenburg's (1999) third place paradigm. In order to identify the prominent themes related to subcultural leisure experiences in Google Maps reviews, which is the primary data source of the study, qualitative content analysis was utilized. The qualitative approach was preferred since it allows the exploration of complex social phenomena and lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, this approach was chosen as it is compatible with the aim of the study to reveal the ways in which subcultural spaces function as a third place in the context of leisure. The 453 Google Maps reviews of Always Rock Bar (263), Onaon Café (131), and Papaz Rock Bar (59), three major metal music venues in Ankara, constitute the main data source of the study. The use of online reviews as a data source is supported by previous research that demonstrates the functionality of user-generated content in analyzing visitor/consumer experiences and perceptions (Zhang et al., 2010). Reviews of the venues were collected from the earliest (12/12/2016) available review to the end (08/10/2024) of the data collection period. Both

Turkish and English reviews were included in the study to ensure a broad perspective.

Data analysis was conducted within the framework of conventional qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Offering flexibility in terms of identifying patterns and themes in textual data, this approach was chosen since it is highly convenient for exploring subcultural leisure experiences in online reviews. The analysis process involved several steps, including importing the reviews into MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024, thoroughly reading the data, developing a coding framework considering the characteristics of Oldenburg's (1999) third place concept, systematically coding the reviews, identifying more overarching themes, and interpreting these themes in relation to the conceptual framework. The constant comparison method was used to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. In order to ensure consistency in the coding process, discrepancies in coding were resolved through negotiations (Miles et al., 2014). Although the reviews utilized in this study were publicly available, no personal information was included in the analysis and reporting of the results in order to protect the privacy of the users. On the other hand, it remains crucial to consider the limitations of using online reviews as a data source. At this point, it seems important to consider that reviews may not represent the experiences of all users, that commenting users may be biased, and that the authenticity of reviews cannot be fully verified. However, the inclusion of all reviews of these venues in the research enables multidimensional perspectives to be explored.

Findings and Discussion

Qualitative content analysis of online reviews in the Google Maps application was carried out in this study within the framework of explaining subcultural leisure experiences in the context of Oldenburg's "third space" paradigm, through the case of metal music venues in Ankara. Based on the systematic and inductive analysis of the online review data, the themes and categories formed regarding the subcultural leisure experiences of the visitors are presented below (**Figure 1.**):
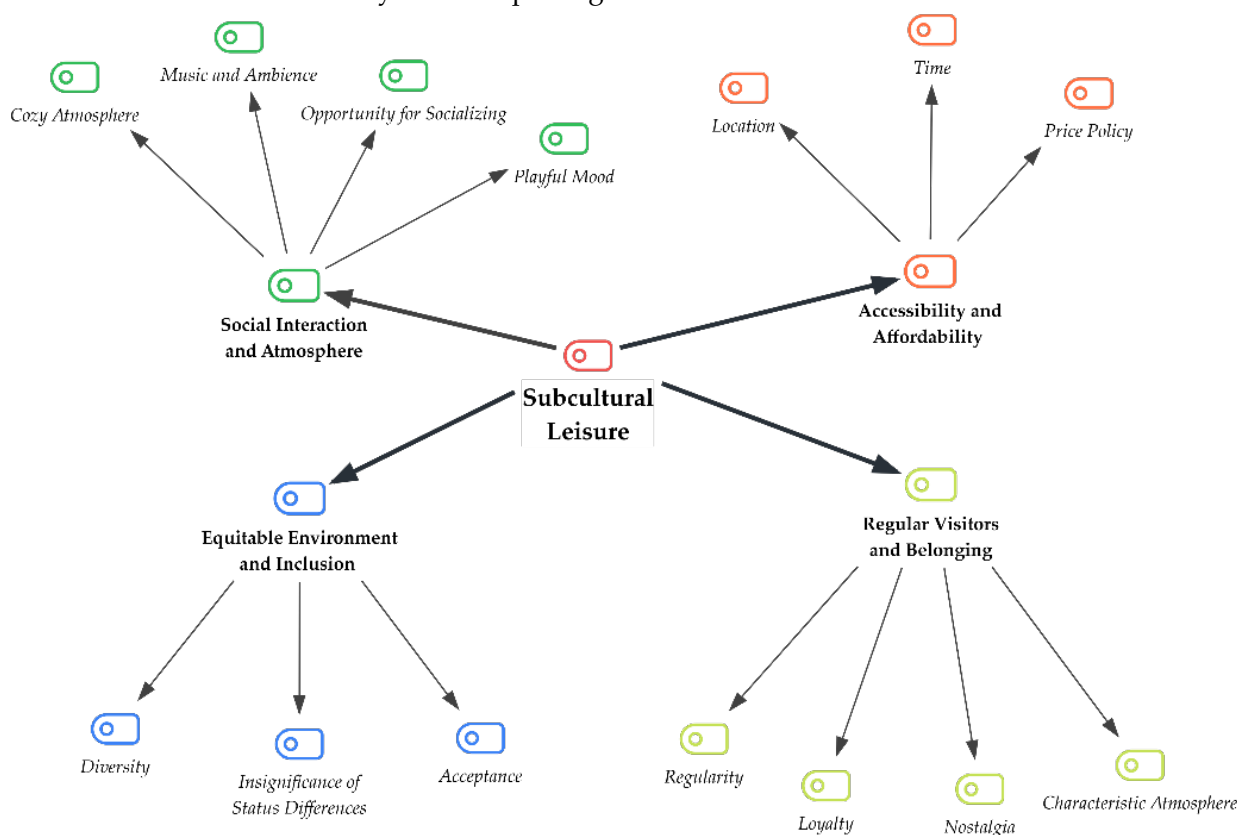

Figure 1. Themes and Categories of Subcultural Leisure Experiences

Social Interaction and Atmosphere

The categories of "cozy atmosphere" and "music and ambience", which are prominent in visitor reviews, clearly reveal the social interaction and atmosphere characteristics of the analyzed venues. The features emphasized by Oldenburg (1999) in the concept of third place, "feeling comfortable like home" and "the presence of regulars", explain the characteristic features of these venues. Reviews such as *"It is one of the sanctuaries of metal music in Ankara"*, *"If you are a fan of metal music, you will undoubtedly enjoy this place, as well as the friendly staff and excellent music"* and *"It is a place we love to go to"* reflect the intimate atmosphere of these venues. These venues, which are interpreted as meaningful leisure spaces for members of the subculture, are considered as hubs where subcultural identity is strengthened, as can be inferred from the review *"the heart of the metalheads in Ankara"*. Reviews like *"It is the only place where you can listen to metal music"*, *"The idea of a music box is great"* and *"There is rock and roll metal; what more can you ask for?"* emphasize the importance of venues for visitors in terms of musical experience by highlighting their unique atmosphere. As Rosenbaum et al. (2007) state, third places provide emotional and social benefits to their visitors; in this context, the above reviews reveal that these venues function as third places that offer both social interaction and authentic musical experience for the subcultural community.

The categories of "opportunity for socializing" and "playful mood" represent crucial experiential dimensions that reflect the third place character of these venues. The "potential for socialization and interaction", which Oldenburg and Brissett (1982) emphasize as the main characteristic of third places, shapes the nature of these spaces. In terms of socializing opportunities, the reviews, *"Whether you're alone or with friends, it's the place to go. Even if you go alone, you'll make friends here if you have the courage to talk to strangers"* and *"We went on the recommendation of friends; anyone who wants to listen to metal, chat with the people they love, and "drink ice cold beer" should try this bar"*, emphasize the supportive nature of these spaces for social interaction. As Steinkuehler and Williams (2006) emphasize, the neutral ground offered by third places is highly significant in terms of socialization opportunities. In the category of "playful mood", the reviews, *"It is one of the alternative places of entertainment... If you ever pass by, I suggest you stop there"* and *"It's a great place with its music and atmosphere. It always plays rock music; it has the atmosphere of a rock bar"* represent the positive atmosphere these venues offer in terms of leisure time utilization. These reviews indicate that these venues are crucial for the subcultural community, as they facilitate the formation of social bonds and provide enjoyable experiences. Moreover, it is seen that these venues are not only spaces for listening to music, but also environments that create positive emotions and a sense of community through social interaction.

The findings of the "social interaction and atmosphere" theme reveal how the venues in Ankara examined within the scope of the study function as third places that facilitate social interaction and offer a unique atmosphere for members of the subculture. While these venues embody Oldenburg's (1999) concept of third place by providing homelike comfort and hosting regular customers, they appear as leisure spaces where subcultural identities are reinforced through shared musical experiences and social bonds. Riches (2016) argues that metal music venues are emotional spaces where people engage in an emotional relationship with the world through physical interactions and subcultural identities. In this context, the analyzed spaces manifest their social dynamics by facilitating emotional and meaningful interactions among subculture members. The "neutral ground" (Oldenburg, 1999) atmosphere of these spaces creates an environment that enables the establishment of new relationships within the subcultural community through socialization opportunities provided by overcoming social barriers.

Local scenes foster richly textured interactions through their risk-free environments, where participants can simultaneously maintain visibility and anonymity while engaging in music-centered social affiliations within a concentrated mass of individuals shielded from broader societal scrutiny (Lee & Peterson, 2004). These spaces exhibit the

traits of "neo-tribal"[1] gathering places, fostering a sense of belonging and collective identity through shared musical tastes and cultural preferences (Bennett, 1999). Driver (2011) states that subcultural authenticity is constantly reproduced through the concretization of the knowledge learned in the subcultural context, at which point it is evident that the venues signify a meaning beyond listening to music and that they have a functional position in terms of subcultural sustainability through social interaction and shared experiences. Conclusively, the findings of this theme show that venues in Ankara play a key role in ensuring the continuity of subcultural cohesion and offer social interaction opportunities within the framework of an atmosphere in line with subcultural leisure needs.

Accessibility and Affordability

Visitors' reviews in the categories of "location" and "time" draw attention to the main features that strengthen the third place function of these venues. Oldenburg's (1999) criteria of "accessibility" and "regular visitor profile" for third places clarify the characteristic features of these places. In terms of their spatial features, the venues are reviewed as *"On Sakarya Street. Don't look for it downstairs, it's on the 3rd floor. No live music. Has its own style"*, *"One of the oldest places in Sakarya"* and *"Give up your prejudices and sit down and have a drink with a view of Konur Street. You won't regret it"*, by emphasizing their strategic location within the city. The reviews, *"The place that hasn't changed for years"*, *"Continued since 2017…"* and *"It has been like my home in Ankara for years. It always tells you that this is where you belong with its warmth, good taste in music, and the feeling of trust inside"* represent the sustainable experience that these venues offer to their visitors. These reviews highlight the accessibility and engagement opportunities that these venues offer to their visitors. As Waxman et al. (2007) emphasize, spatial continuity and familiar atmosphere play a critical role in creating a sense of community in third places. Based on visitor reviews, it is ap-

parent that these spaces function as consistently accessible leisure spaces for members of subcultures in urban life.

The reviews in the "price policy" category reveal the economic accessibility dimension of the venues. Oldenburg and Brissett's (1982) emphasis on the "democratic" nature of third places overlaps with the economic accessibility of these spaces. The reviews, *"It is one of the favorite places in Ankara with very reasonable prices. The staff is also very attentive "* and *"The prices are very good. Long Island was 40 liras. Great atmosphere for those who like rock music. For those who don't like rock music, the prices are great"* indicate that the venues offer affordable options. Similarly, reviews such as *"The prices are very reasonable and the music is great"*, *"It's a good quality bar that hasn't changed for years and is student-friendly"* and *"Very cheap, shabby atmosphere"* emphasize the budget-friendly aspects of these venues. These reviews highlight how these venues serve as inclusive social spaces, appealing to metal music fans from a variety of economic backgrounds through their price policies. The economic accessibility of these venues makes them social spaces that are regularly preferred, especially by the student population.

The findings of the "accessibility and affordability" theme, in which the physical and economic accessibility features of these venues are revealed, are broadly compatible with the characteristics of Oldenburg's (1999) concept of third place. Strategically located in Kızılay district of Ankara, around Sakarya Street and Konur Street, these venues offer aspects like spatial continuity and familiar atmosphere, which Waxman et al. (2007) argue are essential for strengthening community belonging in third places. The long-term preservation of the existence and character of these spaces contributes immensely to their role as sustainable leisure spaces for subcultural community members. In accordance with Oldenburg and Brissett's (1982) explanation of the "democratic" nature of third places, these venues follow a pricing policy that is accessible to different socio-economic groups, especially to the student population.

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[1] *Neo-tribes represent ephemeral social configurations founded on dynamic consumption patterns and momentary affective bonds, distinguished by their emphasis on shared sensibilities and experiences rather* than enduring commitments or ideological positions (Kahn-Harris, 2007).

The location of these spaces in the urban center of Ankara aligns with Oldenburg's (1999) important spatial factors for the sustainability of third places, thus supporting ongoing processes of participation and community building. The strategic location, stable history, and affordability of these spaces combine with Adu's (2024) elements of "accessible cultural spaces" to ensure the sustainability of cultural participation. Furthermore, Shank's (1994) investigation of the local music scene situates the urban location as a dynamic space where multiple musical narratives intersect and evolve simultaneously. Overall, the findings of this theme reveal that these venues, while preserving their subcultural authenticity, provide economic accessibility for members of the subculture and function as third places for leisure due to their strategic location.

Equitable Environment and Inclusion

Visitor reviews evaluated under the categories of "diversity" and "insignificance of status differences" reveal the characteristic features of the venues that foster social interaction. Oldenburg's (1999) "equalizing" and "inclusive" qualities for third places provide an explanation for the social interaction dynamics of these spaces. In the context of diversity, the review, *"I go there since 2009. Sometimes crowded and lively, sometimes solitary. Although the entrance part is a bit bad, the jukebox, the decoration of the walls, and the lights are very nice"* is a representative example for the openness of these venues to different visitor profiles. In terms of the insignificance of status differences, the review, *"I'm 30 years old; now we go in suits where we used to go in band t-shirts. So has our enjoyment decreased? Of course not; it's still the same quality, the same smiling faces, and the same quality music"* emphasizes the inclusive character of these venues regardless of social status. These reviews show that these venues offer an accessible socializing space for different social segments. According to Oldenburg (1999), third places are public spaces that enable their patrons to convene on equal terms, free from social status differences. In this context, it is clearly observed that the egalitarian and inclusive atmosphere of the analyzed venues plays an important

role in strengthening the social bonds of the subcultural community.

Reviews within the category of "acceptance" represent a further significant aspect that reinforces the third place function of these venues. Visitors perceive third places as "home-like" environments that satisfy their emotional needs, fostering stronger community ties (Alexander, 2019). At this point, the reviews, *"All in all, it's an awesome bar because the prices are cheaper than most others there, and you can go in even if you're by yourself because most bars in Ankara only let couples in"*, *"It's a perfect place where there is respect, love, and friendliness and where people feel peaceful and safe"* and *"The music is nice and the staff is friendly. It is a good place to hang out alone or with friends"* reveal the welcoming and embracing nature of the venues. As Oldenburg (2013) notes, the inclusive and safe atmosphere of third places supports community building and the strengthening of social bonds. These reviews demonstrate that these venues create an open and safe environment for visitors from different social groups. Visitor reviews reveal that the inclusive atmosphere of these spaces plays a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of the subcultural community and encouraging the participation of new members. In addition, the safe and comfortable environment offered by these venues serves as an essential ground for different social groups to meet and interact.

The findings of the "equitable environment and inclusiveness" theme are compatible with Oldenburg's (1999) framework of third places that minimize social distinctions and enable individuals from different segments to interact on equal terms, which Oldenburg (1999) describes as "leveling". The findings reveal that these venues are analogous to the spaces described by Williams and Hannerz (2014) as subcultural spaces, which eliminate traditional social barriers while at the same time preserving their unique character. The fact that these spaces are able to welcome people from various social strata, ranging from "casual" visitors to regulars, is in line with Alexander's (2019) view that third places offer not only entertainment options, but also function as "home-like" environments that fulfill emotional needs. This inclusive atmosphere and hospitable attitudes, particularly toward lone visitors, embody Oldenburg's (2013)

emphasis on community building and the strengthening of social bonds. At the same time, while preserving their subcultural authenticity, these venues also offer an environment that visitors can experience without feeling alienated, exemplifying what McLeod (2024) refers to as the adaptive nature of music[2]. Through its emphasis on inclusivity and cultural spaces, both physical and virtual, the scene framework illuminates the interconnected nature of participant relationships and collective memory-making (Lutz, 2022). Concisely, the findings of this theme reveal that the analyzed venues go beyond being just music venues and continue to exist as egalitarian and inclusive spaces where subcultural identity is exhibited.

Regular Visitors and Belonging

Visitor reviews evaluated under the categories of "regularity" and "loyalty" emphasize the features that reinforce the third place function of these venues. Oldenburg's (1999) description of third places as "the presence of regulars" is one of the main elements that shape the social fabric of these spaces. In the context of regularity, the reviews, *"We have been regulars for 10 years. I guess we will be here when we get old :) Always is our home; Mustafa Abi is our pioneer"* and *"I've been a regular for a year, the only rock bar in Ankara. Sometimes I even go there just to listen to the music"*, expose the long-term visitor loyalty to the venues. Regular customers in third places form social bonds that enhance their loyalty to these spaces (Rosenbaum, 2006). In terms of loyalty, reviews such as *"I visit every time I come to Ankara; this place is indispensable for me"* and *"I go every week; I have a friendship with the staff"* emphasize the unique meanings of these venues for regular visitors. These reviews indicate that these venues constitute more than simply entertainment venues for their regulars, as they are socializing spaces that create a strong sense of belonging. The strong bond between the venues and their regular customers clearly plays a major role in making these venues an indispensable part of everyday life for the members of the subcultural community.

Reviews in the categories of "nostalgia" and "characteristic atmosphere" reveal further significant aspects that reinforce the third place character of these venues. The characteristic atmosphere and continuous nature of third places play a critical role in the formation and strengthening of community identity (Calvert, 2019). In the context of nostalgia, the reviews, *"It is a pleasant place where you can feel Türkiye of 2006-2007. The prices are also very reasonable"* and *"I went 15 years ago; it seems like it hasn't changed at all. Only the music is sometimes loud"* emphasize the continuity and unchanging character of the places over time. In terms of the characteristic atmosphere, the reviews, *"It could be called an underground place that my friend took me to"* and *"It is a great place with its music and atmosphere. It's always playing rock music; it's like a rock bar"* demonstrate the unique atmosphere created by these venues. These reviews reveal that the venues offer their visitors a continuous and unique socializing experience. The nostalgic and characteristic atmosphere of the venues is perceived to be a determining factor in the continuity of the subcultural community and in gaining a differentiated identity in urban life. This atmosphere fortifies the visitors' emotional attachment and sense of belonging to the space, positioning these venues as a distinctive third place in urban life.

The findings of the "regular visitors and belonging" theme are consistent with Rosenbaum's (2006) emphasis on the importance of regular customers in building and sustaining the social fabric of third places. In this context, the findings reveal that the spatial interactions of persons defined by Oldenburg (1999) as "regulars" (those who visit the venues on a regular basis) build emotional attachment and community belonging. Similarly, Robinson and Spracklen's (2019) examination of local leisure spaces in Yorkshire Dales revealed how scene regulars cultivated a deepening sense of belonging as they transitioned from strangers to connected participants who shared musical insights and event information. The social bonds formed among regulars increase their loyalty to the venue and contribute to the development of a strong sense of belonging (Rosenbaum, 2006). Visitors' feedback

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[2] *Music as an adaptive system is a dynamic network of interconnected elements, including musicians, listeners, industry stakeholders, technology, economic structures, and cultural contexts (McLeod, 2024).*

highlights the special meaning of the venues for the regulars, showing that these venues are not only entertainment venues but also socializing spaces that strengthen their sense of loyalty, thus becoming an indispensable part of the daily lives of subculture members. Subculture members' expressions about the spaces reflect Bennett and Rogers' (2016) findings on how music venues foster belonging, while Emms (2018) emphasizes that similar venues have become an integral part of the participants' subcultural cohesion thanks to the nostalgic and emotional ties they create. The preservation of the unique qualities of these venues, which enable long-term regularity, reveals the integration of subcultural authenticity with the notion of sustainable community building in a highly compatible manner. This is consistent with Moss et al.'s (2023) emphasis on the role of third places in terms of both preserving subcultural identity and ensuring community evolution. Conclusively, the findings of this theme show that the analyzed venues assume a multifunctional role in terms of preserving subcultural memory and maintaining relationships within the community.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study conducted an in-depth investigation of subcultural leisure experiences in metal music venues in Ankara by analyzing and interpreting user reviews in the Google Maps application in the context of Oldenburg's (1999) "third place" paradigm. A lack of comprehensive understanding of the role of subcultural spaces in non-Western urban environments, particularly in terms of their contributions to identity formation and social cohesion within subcultural communities, formed the rationale for this research. It was aimed to uncover the role of metal music venues in Ankara as third places in facilitating and supporting subcultural leisure activities. By focusing on Always Rock Bar, Onaon Café, and Papaz Rock Bar, the local expressions of metal subculture in Ankara were exemplified. The findings emphasize the importance of these venues as central meeting places where subcultural identities and social networks are manifested, underlining the relevance of the "third place" paradigm in this context. Furthermore, this study offers valuable insights into the dynamics of

subcultures in urban spaces in non-Western contexts, contributing to a broader global understanding of subculture.

The qualitative content analysis of the user reviews revealed four key themes that highlight the multifunctional importance of these venues for the subcultural community. Firstly, the social interaction and unique atmosphere in these venues were found to contribute significantly to the formation, maintenance, and strengthening of subcultural identity. Visitors emphasized the friendly and open environment that allows them to connect with like-minded people, which not only strengthens community identity but also fosters new social bonds. Secondly, the findings revealed that the high accessibility and suitability of these venues due to their central location in Kızılay district and their affordable price structure significantly contribute to minimizing barriers to participation. This aligns with the characteristics of third places, according to Oldenburg, which are characterized by neutrality, openness, and the promotion of informal social interactions. Thirdly, the analysis showed that the venues promote an egalitarian environment and inclusion by negating social status differences and welcoming visitors regardless of their social background or individual characteristics.

Furthermore, the presence of regulars and the sense of loyalty derived from this also play a central role in the functionality of these venues as third places. Several visitors have reported longstanding patronage and a deep emotional connection to these venues, which supports the sustainability of these places as social meeting places. Relationships with other regulars and staff deepened the sense of belonging and contributed to transforming the venues into essential places for the subcultural community. Finally, the reviews emphasized the importance of nostalgia and the characteristic atmosphere of the venues, creating a sense of permanence and familiarity in an everchanging urban environment. The unchanging atmosphere over the years allows visitors to connect with the history and traditions of the subcultural community, fostering a sense of continuity and cohesion.

The scholarly contributions of this study are multifaceted and significant for the fields of sociology of leisure and music. In this context, the study expands the existing body of knowledge in these fields by demonstrating how metal music venues in Ankara function as third places and contribute to subcultural identity formation as well as social cohesion. Consequently, it enriches the existing body of literature on subcultures by emphasizing the importance of physical spaces for the maintenance and development of subcultural communities. Additionally, the study contributes to the advancement of the "third place" paradigm by demonstrating its applicability to subcultural leisure activities in the digital era and illustrating that third places remain central to social interactions and community building despite the advance of digitalization. It also highlights the role of user-generated digital data as a valuable source for researching social phenomena and capturing authentic and diverse perspectives from visitors.

Based on the findings of this study, there are several recommendations for future research in this area. Firstly, further studies should be conducted in different geographical and cultural contexts to examine the transferability of the findings and to identify possible cultural differences or similarities. In this context, studies in other cities or within other subcultures could help to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the role of third places in subcultural communities. Secondly, there is a suggestion to strive for methodological triangulation in similar studies by combining digital data with traditional ethnographic methods such as participant observation and qualitative interviews. This would enable a deeper understanding of subcultural dynamics and capture the complexity of interactions and experiences among subculture members more comprehensively. Thirdly, the interaction between digital and physical spaces should be further investigated, especially with regard to the impact of digitalization on subcultural participation, identity formation, and community building issues, which are essential in an increasingly networked world. Furthermore, while the utilization of online reviews as a data source necessitates caution due to potential social influence and selection biases inherent in online review systems, future research should remain aware of these limitations and

employ methodological diversification to present a more comprehensive and valid picture of subcultural phenomena.

In conclusion, this study has impressively demonstrated the central importance of music venues in Ankara as third places for subcultural leisure and community building. It provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics of subcultural spaces in urban environments and creates a sound basis for further research in this significant and fascinating area. The insights gained emphatically underline the need to recognize, support, and protect subcultural spaces as an integral part of urban life and cultural diversity. Besides being relevant for the understanding of subcultures from the perspective of the sociology of leisure and music, these findings also contribute to enriching the social discourse on cultural diversity, social inclusion, and the importance of informal social spaces in contemporary urban environments.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Journal of Society Research

The Effect of Parents' Childhood Life Experiences on Their Motivation and Interest in Buying Toys for Their Children

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Abstract

The social context perspective suggests that individuals' present experiences are shaped by their past experiences through various sociopsychological, sociocultural and comparative approaches. From a social psychological and cultural standpoint, the differentiation arising from parents' childhood experiences, family structures, communication styles, social environment and the sociodemographic characteristics of their formative years can be analyzed to understand its impact on their motivation and interest in purchasing toys for their children. When examining parents' purchasing behaviors for their children, it is evident that they often make decisions based on their personal preferences. Consequently, within the framework of consumer behavior models, analyzing parents' childhood experiences and their influence on purchasing motivations, perceptions, and attitudes toward toys provides deeper insights into how their toy-buying motivations evolve. To address this, a mixed-method research design was employed. In the first stage, in-depth interviews with 60 parents were conducted using structured questions. In the subsequent quantitative stage, 221 parents were surveyed to explore the relationship between their childhood experiences, parenting styles and motivations for purchasing toys. The qualitative findings highlighted key concepts such as play, toys and family communication, emphasizing the importance of psychological sub-dimensions in consumer behavior models. Furthermore, the study revealed that parental styles significantly influence their motivation to buy toys for their children. Given these findings, future studies could benefit from expanding the sample size and integrating psychological and cross-cultural methodologies to deepen the understanding of intergenerational consumer behaviors. Investigations into psychology-based dimensions, neuroscientific perspectives, and cross-cultural analyses are particularly recommended to further expand the understanding of this phenomenon.

Keywords: *Parenting styles, toy, life experiences, purchase motivations*

Öz

Sosyal bağlam perspektifi, sosyopsikolojik, sosyokültürel ve karşılaştırmalı olarak birçok farklı yaklaşımda, insanların mevcut yaşam deneyimlerinin daha önceki yaşam deneyimlerinden etkilenebileceğini ileri sürmektedir. Sosyal psikoloji ve kültürel bağlamda ele alındığında, ebeveynlerin kendi çocukluklarına ilişkin yaşam deneyimlerinin, aile yapıları ve aile içi iletişim tarzlarının, sosyal çevrelerinin, o döneme ait sosyodemografik özelliklerin, bugünün ebeveynleri olarak çocuklarına yönelik oyuncak satın alma motivasyonları ve oyuncak satın almaya yönelik ilgilenimleri üzerinde yarattığı farklılaşmayı anlamlandırmak mümkün olabilecektir. Ebeveynlerin çocuklarına yönelik ürün satın alma davranışları incelendiğinde, kendi tercihlerine göre alışveriş yaptıkları gözlemlenmiş; bu nedenle tüketici davranış modeli çerçevesinde, ebeveynlerin oyuncağa yönelik algı ve tutumlarını etkileyen satın alma motivasyonlarında farklılık gösteren kendi çocukluk dönemi yaşam deneyimlerinin açıklanması, oyuncağa yönelik ilgilenimlerinin değişimini inceleyebilmeyi sağlayacaktır. Bu nedenle; karma bir araştırma modeli tasarlanmış olup, ilk aşamada, 60 ebeveyn ile yapılandırılmış sorular çerçevesinde derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Teorik model çerçevesinde, 221 ebeveyn ile anket yapılarak ebeveynlerinin ebeveynlik tarzının oyuncak satın alma motivasyonlarıyla ilişkisi ortaya koyulmuştur. Derinlemesine görüşmelerde, oyun, oyuncak ve aile içi iletişim odaklı konularda öne çıkan kavramlar, tüketici davranış modellerinin psikolojik alt boyutlarının ele alınmasına işaret etmektedir. Diğer yandan, ebeveynlerinin ebeveynlik tarzlarının, çocuklarına oyuncak satın alma motivasyonlarını anlamlı yönde etkilediği görülmüştür. Araştırma, ebeveynlerin demografik farklılıklarının yanı sıra, psikoloji temelli konular özelinde, nörobilimsel yaklaşımlar çerçevesinde ve farklı kültürler üzerinde daha geniş örneklem gruplarıyla gerek nitel gerekse nicel çalışmalarla geliştirilmelidir

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Ebeveynlik tarzları, oyuncak, yaşam deneyimleri, satın alma motivasyonları*

Introduction

Bowen (1978), in his book *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, introduced the concept of self-differentiation and emphasized that childhood experiences are transmitted not only through shared emotions, thoughts and experiences but also via parental transmission. He highlighted that sociodemographic characteristics, peer and social group relations, parental relationships, reference group effects and other environmental factors play a significant role in this process. Furthermore, intergenerational interaction theories hold an important place in this experiential framework with the emotions transferred being as critical as the experiences themselves (Bowen, 1978).

Researchers define the process of self-formation and identity construction as psychological well-being achieved through integration and adaptation to the external world. They have examined the relationship between parenting styles and adolescents' identity development, revealing the influence of factors such as family socioeconomic status, the ages of both children and parents, ethnicity, gender, personality traits, lifestyle, communication skills and emotional states, all of which can mediate this relationship (Skowron et al., 2009).

Parenting styles have been analyzed from various theoretical perspectives across disciplines. In psychological studies, parenting, described as a complex and challenging process (Kerr et al., 2010), not only impacts a child's development and behavioral patterns but also facilitates intergenerational interaction (Clarke et al., 2005; Gera & Kaur, 2015). Studies focusing on culture, socialization, and learning theories have explored parents' beliefs and value systems, family communication models, approaches to child-rearing and behavioral models, elaborating on how different parenting styles influence children across various age groups (Padilla - Walker et al., 2007; Ventura & Birch, 2008).

From the Erickson's perspective, identity development has been associated with learning motivations (Bukšnytė & Pukelytė, 2009), self-

esteem (Kutkienė, 2008), and gender roles (Malinauskienė et al., 2010). However, studies conducted in Lithuania highlight that contradictory findings regarding the relationship between parenting styles and identity formation stem from the lack of attention to personality traits and gaps in research. These findings indicate the need for developing theoretical models, examining mediating factors related to personality traits and addressing connections across different processes.

In these context, this study aims to explore how the childhood experiences of today's parents—including their own parental styles as well as sociopsychological and demographic factors—shape their motivations to purchase toys for their children.

Literature Review
Parents' Childhood Life Experiences

Researches in social psychology and educational sciences conceptualize parenting as a bidirectional interaction process that ensures the survival and development of children. Within this interaction, behaviors exhibited since infancy have been observed to significantly influence the parent-child relationship and behavioral development (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Consequently, the perceptions and opinions of adults, as well as children and adolescents, regarding parenting styles often reflect their own parenting styles, providing insights into their approaches to parenting (Marsh et al., 2005).

Childhood life experiences encompass the totality of events and changes individuals encounter during their developmental stages, alongside demographic factors, personality traits and sociopsychological and cultural influences that shape their sensitivity to these experiences (Schönpflug, 2001). These experiences reflect the sociopsychological, sociocultural and ecological environments of their parents during the early stages of life, in addition to physiological characteristics. Beyond genetic factors, personality tra-

its, self-identity, self-efficacy perceptions, attitudes and behaviors that develop over the lifespan are profoundly shaped by these life experiences.

Psychological and sociological research has extensively examined the effects of family, social and reference groups on development. Within this context, parental behaviors and parenting styles have been identified as key determinants of early childhood experiences, the socialization of children as consumers and their transition to adulthood (Belk, 1988; Noble & Walker, 1997; Altan-Aytun et al., 2013).

Research on the influence of childhood experiences on purchasing behaviors and decision-making processes highlights a variety of direct and indirect factors. These include the family's socioeconomic level (Harkness et al., 2000; Kağıtçıbaşı, 2000), the child's personality traits (Grusec, 2002), age (Ayvalıoğlu, 1987; Çileli & Tezer, 1998; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990, 2000; Rokeach, 1973), birth order (Harris, 1998; Schultz & Schultz, 2007), gender (Grusec, 2002) and parental characteristics such as gender (Güngör & Bornstein, 2010), involvement in the child's academic activities (Bandura, 1986; Grusec, 2002), education level (Schönpflug, 2001), attachment styles and family communication patterns (Grusec, 2002; Bretherton et al., 1997). Additionally, factors such as cultural and social class characteristics (Grusec, 2002) and parental occupations (Kohn, 1977) also play a role.

In the process of a child's socialization as a consumer, their interactions with family relationships, peers, teachers, educators and environmental factors aligned with their developmental stage significantly influence their periodic sensitivity to consumer-related experiences (Grusec, 2002; Schönpflug, 2001). While many studies focus on the effects of infancy and early childhood (preschool years) and parental attitudes, others emphasize the role of identity formation during adolescence, late adolescence and adulthood (Vollebergh et al., 2001).

Parenting styles, which underpin social identity construction, cultural value transmission and social group influences, provide a develop-
mental foundation for determining an individual's social and psychological positioning. These styles reflect cultural accumulation as a worldview influencing behaviors (Mannheim, 1952; Becker, 1992) and facilitate the internalization of attitudes and behaviors during the shaping process (Kohlberg & Kramer, 1969).

A study conducted with German families and their children aged 14 to 19 observed that mothers' attitudes and behaviors played a significant role in transferring and reinforcing social values until the children's transition to adolescence. In contrast, fathers' behavioral models became more influential during the later stages of adolescence (Schönpflug, 2001).

In their study, *Socialization and Attribution: Actual versus Perceived Similarity among Parents and Youth*, Acock and Bengtson (1980) argued that adolescents who require warmth and support from their parents tend to exhibit behaviors aligned with their parents' guidance later in life. Conversely, Miller and Glass (1989), in their study titled *Parent-Child Attitude Similarity across the Life Course*, demonstrated that the claim suggesting children's attitudes and behaviors gradually diverge from their parents as they transition into adulthood is not supported by empirical evidence.

Broody et al. (1994), in their six-year longitudinal study titled *Family Processes during Adolescence as Predictors of Parent-Young Adult Attitude Similarity: A Six-Year Longitudinal Analysis*, examined two cohorts: adolescents aged 11 to 16 in 1981 and young adults aged 17 to 22 in 1987. Their findings highlighted the differential effects of mothers and fathers on their children's behaviors, emphasizing that mothers exerted a stronger influence during early adolescence.

In a study exploring the impact of generational differences on the differentiation of cultural tendencies among young individuals aged 12 to 24 transitioning from adolescence to adulthood, Vollebergh et al. (2001) noted that, while children increasingly distance themselves from their parents' social influences as they age, this does

not imply that they abandon or become desensitized to the values instilled during their upbringing.

Cultural and psychology-focused studies conducted in Turkey have examined topics such as the transmission of parental values, children's adoption of cultural orientations, the effects of gender perceptions on behavioral differences, self-esteem and individualization. These studies have highlighted that the father's behavioral influence is particularly significant and more pronounced among boys during the later stages of adolescence (Göregenli, 1995; Haktanır & Baran, 1998; Aygün & İmamoğlu, 2002; Eryavuz, 2006; Güngör, 2008; Güngör & Bornstein, 2010).

Parenting Styles

Family relationships and parental attitudes are central to the formation of an individual's perceptions, beliefs and values about themselves and the world. Parent-child relationships- particularly mother-child interactions and family attitudes during infancy and early childhood play a significant role in the socialization process of children as consumers. These processes are described as mechanisms of internalization within the framework of learning theory (Hoffman, 1975). Studies have highlighted that parenting styles not only influence relationships, decisions and developmental processes during childhood and adolescence but also shape an individual's attitudes, behaviors and thoughts in adulthood (Bowlby, 1980).

In the 1960s, Baumrind developed the *Parenting Styles Theory*, which categorized parenting approaches into three groups: authoritarian, explanatory authoritarian-democratic (authoritative) and permissive. This theory analyzed the parent-child relationship within a behavioral framework, focusing on family rules and communication- oriented child- rearing practices. Baumrind's work opened new research avenues by examining the attitudes of mothers and fathers separately regarding the physiological, psychological and social needs of their children. Later, Maccoby and Martin (1983), in their study *Socialization in the Context of the Family: Parent-child Interaction*, expanded Baumrind's model to include four parenting styles: explanatory/authoritarian, authoritarian, permissive/coddling, and permissive/neglectful. They evaluated these styles based on two fundamental dimensions: responsiveness and demandingness.

Authoritarian parents, characterized by a high locus of control, often disregard their children's wishes, expectations, and emotional needs. These parents tend to select products that they deem beneficial and budget-friendly, excluding their children from the purchasing decision-making process (Carlson & Grossbart, 1988). Conversely, democratic parents involve their children in decisions, consult with them, and grant them a degree of autonomy. A study conducted with Indian families revealed that 30 million children aged 4 to 14 significantly influenced their parents' purchasing decisions due to the democratic parenting style prevalent in these households (Rajan & Subramanian, 2007).

Ward and Wackman (1974) emphasized that factors such as the closeness of the mother-child relationship, the child's birth order and family characteristics -including family structure and household size- affect children's consumer behavior. They further observed that mothers approving their children's purchase requests considered both the child's age and birth order. Children aged 11 to 12 were perceived as competent decision-makers and democratic parents trusted the older child's maturity, considering them more effective consumers than their younger siblings (Ward & Wackman, 1974).

Parents' Toy Purchasing Behaviors and Purchase Motivations

Building upon the previous discussions on parental styles, this section explores how these factors translate into actual consumer behaviors. Bedford (2021) highlighted that toys are increasingly being purchased with a hedonic attitude, serving as tools for family interaction and com-

munication rather than merely as birthday, report card or reward gifts. The study also emphasized that the importance of toys for children has grown significantly in recent years. Research examining parents' toy purchasing behaviors indicates that parents continue to shop for their children despite economic fluctuations (Wong et al., 2021; Bedford, 2021). Al Kurdi (2017) explored the factors influencing parents' toy buying behaviors and emphasized that while the most significant criteria include the child's age and gender, understanding the underlying rationale behind these purchases is equally important. Similarly, Richards (2023) found that parents often view the age ranges recommended for toys with skepticism and base their purchasing decisions on the specific characteristics and needs of their children.

In the 1950s, Gips examined toy preferences for hospitalized children and observed a preference for skill-oriented toys that were engaging and required attention and focus. Subsequent studies have focused on various factors influencing mothers' purchasing decisions (Wells, 1988), the age of children (Ward, 1972), family decision-making roles (Ward & Wackman, 1974), the impact of children's gender on decision-making processes (Mehrotra & Torges, 1977) and the influence of mothers' social roles on children's preferences and purchasing tendencies (McNeal, 1969). McNeal (1969) also presented findings on how parents involve their children in decision-making processes and their toy preferences, specifically within the contexts of gender and age-related factors.

Between the 1960s and 1980s, within the framework of consumer socialization theories, self and identity construction and gender-focused studies, researchers examined several topics. These included the effect of child gender on parental toy choices (Goldberg, 1963; Rheingold & Cook, 1975; O'Brien & Huston, 1985), the influence of child gender on nursery preparation by parents (Rheingold & Cook, 1975; Eisenberg et al., 1987) and the role of advertising in shaping the purchasing behaviors of children and parents (Pecora, 2009). By the 1990s, studies began

addressing the impact of children on family decision-making roles, the adoption of technology, digitalization and gamification, and shifts in the perception of toys and games.

Research on parents' motivations for purchasing toys reveals diverse dynamics within the decision-making process. Kushlev, Dunn and Ashton-James (2012) emphasized that while parents are the primary purchasers of toys, their decisions are influenced by their parents, their environment, and particularly their children. Similarly, Al Kurdi (2017) explored how children influence their mothers during the toy purchasing process, providing insights into the factors shaping these decisions.

Studies investigating the factors influencing parents' toy purchase decisions (Eisenberg et al., 1987; Hogan, 2007; Clarke, 2010; Al Kurdi, 2017; Ding et al., 2024) have highlighted various attributes. Functional features of toys, such as being educational or instructive, long-lasting, safe, and versatile, as well as reflecting price and quality perceptions, are frequently emphasized. Emotional features, on the other hand, include nostalgic factors, perceived brand similarities, family roles and communication models. Within the framework of social needs, factors such as gender roles (stereotypes), materialistic attitudes, trust in brands, advertisements, identity-related aspects and preferences for popular brands have also been explored.

While several studies focus on topics such as toy purchase decision-making within families, the observation and realization of purchase decision roles, the influence of children across different age groups on family decision-making processes, and the socialization and consumer behavior of children, some areas remain underexplored. These include family styles, parenting styles, intergenerational interactions, and the role of caregivers, which require further in-depth research (Freeman, 2007; Clarke & McAuley, 2010). Slöberg and Sköld (2021) emphasized that when children participate in the purchasing process through advertisements, parental influ-

ence on purchasing motivation becomes a critical factor, necessitating consideration of the many variables related to this process.

A review of the literature reveals numerous factors influencing parents' toy preferences. These include the child's age and gender (Chase, 1992), the parent's gender and age (Malone & Landers, 2001), intergenerational interaction (Wood et al., 2002), number of children in the household, education level, and income. Additionally, purchase motives such as safety, educational features, creativity (Stagnitti et al., 1997), durability and longevity (Thompson et al., 1995), quality, flexibility and multifunctionality (Caldera et al., 1989) are significant. Other factors include the toy's physical attractiveness for the child (Servin et al., 1999), the child's attention span (Priya, Kanti, & Sharma, 2010) and the parent's sense of connection or nostalgic pleasure (Fisher- Thompson, 1993; Fallon & Harris, 2001). Also ethnicity (Lam & Leman, 2003), the child's preferences (Rheingold & Cook, 1975), packaging information (Curri et al., 2003), cost considerations (temporary and effort-related costs), toy category or type (Christensen & Stockdale, 1991) and the influence of social groups (Campenni, 1999; Robertson & Rossiter, 1976) play a role.

Method

Theoretical Framework

The social context theory, which asserts that individuals' behaviors are strongly influenced by their social, cultural, and environmental contexts, suggests that consumer behaviors are shaped not only by individual characteristics but also by past experiences, family structures, and social norms (Belk, 1988). In particular, parents' purchasing motivations are significantly influenced by the family dynamics they experienced during childhood, which also play a key role in shaping their parenting styles (Schönpflug, 2001). For instance, parents raised in authoritarian family environments may adopt a more

pragmatic approach to addressing their children's consumption needs, whereas those raised in democratic family settings are more likely to consider their children's opinions (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

According to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which emphasizes that individual purchasing behaviors are determined by attitudes and intentions, the likelihood of a behavior occurring is shaped by the individual's attitudes toward that behavior and the influence of social norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In the context of parenting, social norms and values transmitted since childhood influence parents' motivations to purchase for their children. Over time, these transmitted values and norms become integral to their own attitudes. It has been suggested, for example, that democratic parents are inclined to purchase toys that support their children's creative skills, a tendency shaped by both individual attitudes and the influence of social norms (Rajan & Subramanian, 2007). Thus, within TRA, the constructs of attitude and intention provide the psychological foundation for parents' consumption decisions concerning their children.

Similarly, Festinger (1957), through the Cognitive Consistency Theory, argues that individuals tend to seek alignment between their attitudes and behaviors. This theory is used to explain the alignment between parents' values and experiences from childhood and their current parenting behaviors. For instance, parents who experienced deprivation during their own childhood may attempt to reconcile their past experiences by purchasing everything their children desire, thereby achieving cognitive alignment (Kushlev et al., 2012). Likewise, authoritarian parents may exhibit controlled and rational purchasing decisions consistent with their own value systems.

When the social context perspective, Theory of Reasoned Action, and Cognitive Consistency Theory are considered together, it becomes evident that parenting styles are shaped by values and norms formed during childhood, and these structures directly influence parents' motiva-

tions to purchase toys. This theoretical framework provides a comprehensive lens to explore the complex relationship between parents' past experiences and their current consumer behaviors.

Research Model and Research Problem

Like all consumers, parents' purchase motivations and interest levels significantly influence their consumption behaviors. In the context of toy purchasing decisions, various factors have been observed to play a role, including life experiences such as socialization processes as consumers from childhood, parenting styles of their own parents, family structures, environmental characteristics, and the process experiences referred to as the liminal transition period by Noble and Walker (1997).

Drawing on lifelong experiences and accumulated knowledge, individuals construct future projections for themselves and behave accordingly (Urmak, 2022). From the perspective of the social context theory, which emphasizes the importance of broader societal factors in shaping consumer behavior, it becomes essential to analyze the complex dynamics influencing parents' purchasing decisions. This can be achieved by examining the interplay between their past and present experiences in greater depth. Such an approach provides insights into how and to what extent childhood experiences shape the purchasing habits of contemporary parents, as well as the factors contributing to variations in these behaviors.

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the influence of today's parents' childhood life experiences on their motivations to purchase toys for their own children, focusing on their parental styles and the sociodemographic characteristics of the period in which they were raised. To achieve this aim, the research model was developed based on a comprehensive literature review and approved under the decision numbered 2986396 by the Istanbul University Social

and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee during its meeting on October 7, 2024. The model is presented in Figure 1.
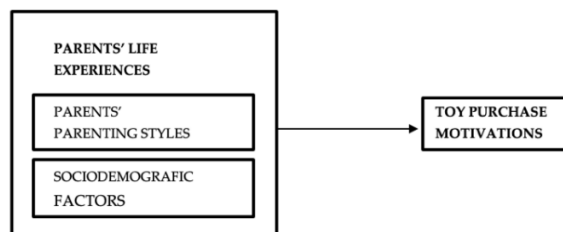
Figure 1. Research Model

The literature review indicates that parenting styles, as part of childhood life experiences, significantly influence purchase motivations through intergenerational interaction. Within this framework, the hypotheses developed to examine the impact of parental styles on their motivation to purchase toys for their children are as follows:

H1: Parents' parenting styles positively affect parents' motivation to purchase toys for their children.

H2: Parents' authoritarian parenting style positively affects parents' motivation to purchase toys for their children.

H3: Parents' democratic parenting style positively affects parents' motivation to purchase toys for their children.

H4: Parents' permissive parenting style positively affects parents' motivation to purchase toys for their children.

Population and Sample

The sample for this study comprised parents with at least one child. Specifically, the sample included parents who had at least one child aged 2–10, who had the opportunity to be raised by their parents -either in the same or separate households- until the age of 15, which is generally considered the threshold for adulthood. These parents were also required to have a significant influence on toy purchasing decisions for their children, as outlined in the research methodology. Inclusion in the study was confirmed through verbal declarations.

Due to the broad scope of the research population, reaching the entire population was impractical. Consequently, a representative sample was determined to ensure efficiency and reliability in the findings. The selection of parents was conducted using a random sampling method.

Data Collection Tool

Since the research required an in-depth examination of childhood experiences, a mixed-method approach was employed, incorporating both exploratory and quantitative analyses. To achieve this, in-depth interviews were conducted to establish a framework for understanding parents' perceptions of play and toys. Additionally, data were collected using a questionnaire designed with scales to measure the variables of the theoretical model.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with parents who had been raised by their parents—either in the same or separate households—until the age of 15, which is considered the upper limit of the young adulthood period. This classification was based on the framework established by Noble and Walker (1997), who applied Belk's (1988) concept of the "extended self" and Van Gennep's (1960) theoretical framework of "liminal transitions" (life changes experienced during childhood) to interpret contemporary consumption behaviors.

One of the instruments used in this research was the Parental Authority Questionnaire developed by Buri (1991), a self-report scale designed to assess Baumrind's three parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative (democratic), and permissive. The scale evaluates parenting behaviors during the respondent's childhood from an adult perspective. Developed as a self-assessment tool, the five-point Likert-type scale comprises 30 items, with 10 items dedicated to each of the three sub-dimensions of parenting styles. These dimensions are structured around authority, warmth, disciplinary practices, demands, expectations, and control behaviors as outlined in Baumrind's (1966) theory.

To measure consumer motivations, the study employed the Consumer Motivation Scale (CMS) developed by Barbopoulos and Johansson (2017). This 34-item scale was specifically designed to account for psychological factors underlying purchase motivations, including hedonic and moral values, emotional adaptability, and information acquisition. The authors emphasized the importance of considering multi-contextual elements and personality traits, addressing limitations of prior scales that generalized consumer behavior models.

The data collection process began with exploratory semi-structured online interviews involving 60 parents, designed to capture the meanings they attributed to their experiences. These interviews, conducted using a semi-structured interview form, were selected for their suitability in exploratory research (Karasar, 1999) and aimed to explore parents' diverse perspectives on play and toys while identifying commonalities and differences. Subsequently, a total of 287 online questionnaires were collected between October and November 2024. After excluding 66 questionnaires due to missing information that could affect the research outcomes, 221 valid questionnaires were included in the analysis.

Findings

In the data analysis process, first, 60 participant parents who participated in the preliminary research process were asked open-ended questions to understand their perceptions of play and toys, descriptive characteristics of childhood, family communication and attitudes during childhood, and current family communication and attitudes with their own children. The summary participant table for the in-depth interviews conducted for the exploratory preliminary analysis is shared.

Among the research participants, 26 were male and 34 were female, with males coded as "E" and females as "K." Prior to the interviews, informed consent was obtained, and double confirmation was sought to ensure that participants had not experienced traumatic losses during

childhood. This was verified using the questions: "Did you spend your childhood until the age of 15 with your parents, even if they were separated?" and "Did you experience the loss of a parent or family member during your childhood?" Participants were informed, as stated in the consent form, that they could terminate the interview at any point. Additionally, they were assured that support could be provided by Dr. Sultan Turan Eroğlu, a psychiatrist and faculty member at Biruni University Hospital, if needed.

Table 1. Demographic Findings of the In-depth Interviews

Variable	Group	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	34	56,4
	Male	26	43,6
	Total	60	100
Age	18-25		
	26-35	14	23,3
	36-45	27	45
	46-55	19	31,7
	56 and above		
	Total	60	100
Family Structure in Childhood	Traditional (extended) family	23	38,3
	Nuclear Family	26	43,6
	Other	11	18,1
	Total	60	100
Household Income in Childhood	Lower Income	7	11,9
	Middle Income	42	70
	Upper Income	11	18,1
	Total	60	100
Number of Children	1 child	20	33,4
	2 children	19	31,6
	3 children	17	28,4
	4 children	4	6,6
	Total	60	100
Current Family Structure	Traditional (extended) family	4	6,6
	Nuclear Family	46	76,8
	Other	10	16,6
	Total	60	100
Current Household Income	Lower Income	4	6,6
	Middle Income	29	48,4
	Upper Income	27	45
	Total	60	100

As shown in Table 1, 11 participants reported living separately from their parents at times due to circumstances such as civil service duties or out-of-town work obligations.

The table illustrates the changes between childhood family structures and current family structures. E13, a 46-year-old father of four, described how his perception of the traditional family structure has evolved:

"When I was a child, we lived in a huge house in Adana. The house was big, but there was no space for me because 12 people lived there. My mom, dad, grandmother, grandfather, the five of us—kids, my aunt-in-law, and her children. It was a lot of fun in its own way, but I think not having my own private space back then has influenced my boundaries today. Now, the entire house is designed specifically for the kids. So they don't feel the same way I did... But as you can imagine, I still feel like there's no space for me. I don't want overnight guests outside of our family either."

In contrast, K27, a 37-year-old mother of three, shared her experience:

"When I was a child, we were expatriates. We were always alone. My mom and dad were working, and there were no friends, relatives, or family around us. I always envied crowded families and tables with lots of laughter. Now I realize that one longs for what one cannot have, but this is a handicap. It is also difficult to find a balance between what you are used to, what you adapt to, and what you envy. For example, today's children don't make pots out of clay or toys out of stone like we did. They want what is ready-made. In trying to make sure they don't feel deprived, you end up draining yourself to provide the same standards for each of them."

These statements indicate that changes in family structures are closely connected to personality traits and various sociopsychological factors.

In addressing the effect of the number of children on parents' motivation to purchase toys, open-ended questions explored topics such as the frequency of playing with their parents, the frequency of toy purchases during their childhood, their frequency of purchasing toys for their own children, their play frequency with their children, and family purchasing decision processes in relation to their childhood experiences.

K18, a 32-year-old mother of two, reflected on her childhood and current toy-purchasing behaviors:

"We were four siblings; I am the third. My father was a civil servant, and my mother was a housewife. We had a toy basket. We all played with the same 3–5 toys in it. For once in my life, I had a new toy, special for me. My uncle brought me a doll back from Lisbon. I couldn't bear to play with it; I kept it in its transparent box and grew up looking at it. What do you think happened when I gave it to my 5-year-old daughter? In two days, her arms and legs were separated, her hair was a mess. I felt sorry for my own childhood that I couldn't play to the fullest. That's probably why I buy my kids everything they want so they don't experience that sense of deprivation."

The participant parents' childhood family structures and intra-family communication processes exhibited unique characteristics. Among those raised in traditional (extended) or nuclear families, 53 participants noted that their mothers did not work, their fathers were the sole earners, and toys were purchased only on special occasions after basic household needs were met.

K29, a 42-year-old who grew up in a nuclear family with civil servant parents, reflected on her childhood experiences:

"My mom and dad didn't work long hours, but since no one was home when I got back, our neighbor Ayşe (who was also my friend's mom) would take care of us. Every day, she'd have cakes, cookies, and juice ready. She would chat with us. Maybe it wasn't a game, but she'd do trivia quizzes, subtly helping us review what we'd learned. My mother, on the other hand, was tired when she came home. After dinner, she would sit in the living room with my father. To be honest, for years, I promised myself that I would give all my attention to my son so as not to be like my mother. But today, I also work with the hustle and bustle of Istanbul, and I don't have the energy to play with him. Maybe that's why I go home every day with a new toy so that he can keep himself entertained."

E12, a 39-year-old father of two who grew up in a traditional family where his mother was a housewife and his father was a doctor, shared the connection between his childhood and current life experiences:

"My mother wasn't working. My grandmother lived with us and couldn't walk. How could she play with me when my mom was taking care of her as well as the housework? My dad was a local doctor, constantly busy day and night. There were no toy stores or big malls back then. Even if there were, what would we have bought? I grew up in the treetops, making slingshots, stone dams, cardboard cars. If a child has curiosity in him, he will find a way, he will create. Looking at my own kids now, I understand this even better. Their mom doesn't work, and all her attention is on them, but all they care about is unboxing new stuff! Something new is fun for two days, and by the third, it's trash. Still, it's their mother's decision—she keeps building a house on the ruins they leave behind."

E12 highlighted differences in purchasing motivations, varying levels of individual interest, family decision-making processes, and the interaction between environmental factors and periodic characteristics.

Participant parents commonly emphasized that during their childhood, parents did not involve children in decision-making processes, describing this as "normal" for that time. Among those participants, E17, a father of three, shared:

"In our childhood, kids were just kids. We played ball in the streets, ate bread with tomato paste, and went to school. Forget about asking for toys—we lived dreaming of the bicycle we might get as a report card gift. Depression, sulking—those concepts are things we're learning about now. For the toys we didn't have, we rush to ensure our kids don't feel deprived. Today, we've even reached a point where we can't serve a meal without asking the kids first..."

K23, the mother of a boy, commented on family decision-making processes:

"Every period has different characteristics. Even if my parents didn't listen to me at that time, I try to hear my son's needs. It's debatable how much we can implement it, but if I ignore it, I will lose my son in today's world. That doesn't mean he holds all the power. It's just that he's incredibly important to me, and I want him to understand that."

All participants defined play as "fun," but their definitions of toys varied. E4, a 37-year-old father of a boy, described toys as:

"A toy is merely a companion to play. If you want to have fun, stones can be toys, as can wood or mud.

Table 2. Number of Repeated Words Related to Toy Perception in In- depth Interviews

Toy Perception	Repeat Frequency	Toy Properties Affecting Perception	Repeat Frequency	Toy Selection Criteria	Repeat Frequency	Definitions of Game Playing Frequency	Repeat Frequency
Recreational vehicle	37	It's fun	45	Qualities that may be of interest to the child (factors such as age, gender, social interaction characteristics are effective)	44	Always	7
Educational	32	Intriguing Colorful, multi-part, attention-demanding	43	Supporting development	36	Frequently	5
Gift	29		36	Robustness and reliability	32	Sometimes	19
Distraction	20	Price	36	Being educational - instructive	32	Rarely	21
Like a teacher	16	Robustness	32	Brand Name	27	Nothing.	3
Childish	13	Quality Naturalnessreliability	29	Price	25	Difficult to define	5
Tool for gaming	8		26				

What matters is not teaching through standardized, pre-packaged means."

K34, a 32-year-old mother of twin girls, offered a contrasting perspective:

"The most fundamental feature of a toy is its educational value. Especially in large families, where managing time efficiently is crucial, reliable, high-quality, branded toys allow us to make the most of our time with peace of mind."

During the in-depth interviews, recurring themes regarding toy descriptions and characteristics, along with key indicators of the playing frequency and preferences of the 60 participant parents, are summarized in Table 2.

In the exploratory research, the demographic characteristics of the 221 participants who completed the questionnaire -designed based on the theoretical model developed in accordance with the literature review- are presented in Table 3. These characteristics are categorized by age, gender, marital status, occupation, education level and income group.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Variable	Group	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	18-25	20	9
	26-35	72	32,6
Age	36-45	82	37,1
	46-55	39	17,6
	56 and above	8	3,6
	Total	221	100
	Woman	113	51,1
Gender	Male	108	48,9
	Total	221	100
Marital	Married	205	92,8
Status	Single	16	7,2
	Total	221	100
Profession	Public Official	54	24,4
	Private Sector	116	52,5
	Housewife	14	6,3
	Self-employment	14	6,3
	Retired	10	4,5
	Other	13	5,9
	Total	221	100
Education	Primary education	24	10,8
Status	High School	25	11,3
	Undergraduate	115	25,8
	Postgraduate	18	52,0
	Total	221	100
	Lower Income	4	1,8
Income	Middle Income	15	8,6
Group	Upper Income	202	91,4
	Total	221	100

The analysis of the survey data for this research was conducted using the SPSS 27 program. Initially, reliability analyses were performed for the Parenting Authority Questionnaire and the Consumer Purchase Motivation scales included in the questionnaire.

Table 4. Table of Reliability Coefficient Values of the Parenting Authority Questionnaire Scale

Scale and Subscales	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Parenting Style Scale	0,818
Authoritarian Parenting Dimension	0,856
Democratic Parenting Dimension	0,808
Permissive Parenting Dimension	0,740

An examination of Table 4 reveals the reliability coefficients for the Parenting Authority Questionnaire scale and its sub-dimensions. According to Hair et al. (2010), a reliability coefficient value of 0.70 is considered acceptable for ensuring the internal consistency of a scale, while values as low as 0.60 may be deemed acceptable in the context of exploratory research.

Table 5. Table of Reliability Coefficient Values for Consumer Purchase Motivation Scale (Holistic Approach)

Scale and Subscales	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Consumer Purchase Motivation Scale	0,846

An examination of Table 5 indicates that the reliability coefficient for the Consumer Purchase Motivation scale, evaluated holistically, is at an acceptable level for the research. Büyüköztürk et al. (2020) emphasize that skewness and kurtosis values for the normal distribution of data should fall within the range of ±1.96. The results of the normality tests applied to assess the conformity of the data to a normal distribution are presented in the tables.

An analysis of the findings in Tables 6 and 7 shows that the skewness and kurtosis values for the scales used in the research are within the acceptable range of ±1.96, indicating that the scales satisfy the normality assumption. Following the confirmation of data normality, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to evaluate the construct validity and discriminant properties of the scales.

Table 6. Normality Statistics of the Parenting Scale

Variables	Skewness Coefficient	Kurtosis Coefficient
Authoritarianism Dimension	-0,155	0,595
Democratization Dimension	-0,015	0,450
Permissiveness Dimension	-0,171	0,545

Table 7. Normality Statistics of Consumer Purchase Motivation Scale

Variables	Skewness Coefficient	Kurtosis Coefficient
Value for Money Dimension	-0,999	1,493
Quality Dimension	-0,560	0,817
Safety Dimension	-1,087	1,186
Harmony Dimension	-0,343	0,516
Comfort Size	-0,327	0,543
Ethical Values Dimension	-0,860	1,054
Social Acceptance Dimension	-0,048	1,050

The "Principal Component Method" was applied to determine the factor structure of the Parenting Authority Questionnaire scale, with the results presented in Table 8. The KMO value (0.919) exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50 and Bartlett's test yielded a significant p-value (0.000), indicating suitability for factor analysis. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, the scale explains 54.93% of the total variance and is divided into three dimensions, consistent with its original version. The "authoritarian parenting" dimension, consisting of 14 items, accounts for 32.31% of the total variance. The "democratic parenting" dimension, comprising 11 items, explains 15.50% of the total variance, while the "permissive parenting" dimension, with 3 items, contributes 6.27% of the total variance.

Due to low factor loadings, the 10th item (0.324) and the 20th item (0.312) were removed from the scal, and subsequent analyses were conducted without these items.

The "Principal Component Method" was applied to determine the factor structure of the Consumer Purchase Motivations scale, and the results are presented in Table 9. The KMO value (0.910) exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, and Bartlett's test yielded a significant p-value (0.000), confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

Table 8. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Results of the Parenting Authority Questionnaire Scale

Statements	Authoritarian	Democratic	Permission
Parenting Style 1	0,734		
Parenting Style 4	0,683		
Parenting Style 5	0,769		
Parenting Style 6	0,719		
Parenting Style 11	0,795		
Parenting Style 14	0,743		
Parenting Style 15	0,836		
Parenting Style 19	0,704		
Parenting Style 22	0,529		
Parenting Style 23	0,803		
Parenting Style 24	0,762		
Parenting Style 26	0,747		
Parenting Style 27	0,762		
Parenting Style 30	0,627		
Parenting Style 2		0,577	
Parenting Style 3		0,717	
Parenting Style 7		0,658	
Parenting Style 8		0,744	
Parenting Style 9		0,738	
Parenting Style 12		0,723	
Parenting Style 16		0,681	
Parenting Style 17		0,559	
Parenting Style 18		0,685	
Parenting Style 25		0,722	
Parenting Style 29		0,727	
Parenting Style 13			0,615
Parenting Style 21			0,728
Parenting Style 28			0,728
Eigenvalue	3,47	1,729	1,451
Variance Explained (%)	32,31	15,50	6,27
Total Variance Explained (%)	54,093		
KMO: 0.919		**Bartlett's p:** 0,000	
Chi-Square 3728,141		**df:** 435	

The exploratory factor analysis revealed that the scale explains 87.43% of the total variance and is divided into seven dimensions, consistent with the theoretical model. The "value for money" dimension, consisting of 10 items, accounted for 34.46% of the total variance. The "quality" dimension, with 7 items, explained 24.50% of the total variance. The "safety" dimension, comprising 4 items, contributed 9.30% of the total variance. The "fit" dimension, also consisting of 4 items, explained 7.31% of the total variance. The "comfort" dimension, with 3 items, accounted for 4.75% of the total variance, while the "ethical values" dimension, also with 3 items, explained 2.72% of the total variance. Finally, the "social acceptance" dimension, comprising 3 items, contributed 2.34% of the total variance.

Table 9. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Results of Consumer Purchase Motivations (CPM) Scale

Statements	Getting Value for Money	Quality	Security	Harmony	Comfort	Ethical Values	Social Acceptance
CPM 13	1,000						
CPM 12	0,996						
CPM 11	0,996						
CPM 8	0,995						
CPM 14	0,995						
CPM 17	0,992						
CPM 15	0,980						
CPM 2	0,975						
CPM 4	0,971						
CPM 5	0,968						
CPM 22		0,974					
CPM 32		0,974					
CPM 24		0,972					
CPM 25		0,971					
CPM 19		0,971					
CPM 18		0,534					
CPM 23		0,490					
CPM 26							
CPM 28			0,915				
CPM 27			0,882				
CPM 26			0,836				
CPM 29			0,826				
CPM 34				0,926			
CPM 33				0,900			
CPM 31				0,807			
CPM 30				0,704			
CPM 16					0,966		
CPM 6					0,952		
CPM 9					0,952		
CPM 10						0,924	
CPM 1						0,776	
CPM 3						0,752	
CPM 7							0,932
CPM 20							0,463
CPM 21							0,383
Eigenvalue	3,47	1,729	1,451				
Variance Explained (%)	36,46	24,507	9,303	7,319	4,751	2,742	2,348
Total Variance Explained (%)	87,439						
KMO: 0.910	**Bartlett's p:** 0,000						
Chi- Square: 17496,141.	**df:** 528						

Pearson correlation analysis was performed to examine the overall relationship between the Parenting Authority Questionnaire scale -including its sub-dimensions of authoritarian parenting, democratic parenting, and permissive parenting- and the Consumer Purchase Motivations scale along with its sub-dimensions. Following this, simple linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the effect of these variables on consumer purchase motivations.

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis, which explored the relationship between parenting styles assessed through the parenting authority questionnaire (PAQ) and consumer purchase motivations (CPM) in a holistic manner, are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Pearson Correlation Analysis Results

Variable	Parenting Style	CPM
Parenting Style	1	
CPM	0,713**	1

**p<0,00

Table 10 demonstrates a strong positive correlation between parenting styles and consumer purchase motivations. Specifically, a positive and highly significant correlation was observed between parenting styles, as assessed by the Parenting Authority Questionnaire, and consumer purchase motivations (r = 0.713**).

To further explore these relationships, simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of parenting styles, as measured by the Parenting Authority Questionnaire, on consumer purchase motivations. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	R^2	Standardize B Coefficient	Beta	t	p
Parenting Styles	CPM	171,876	0,000	0,275	0,302	0,407	16,783	0,000
Authoritarian Parenting.	CPM	75,384	0,000	0,095	0,297	0,286	11,135	0,000
Democratic Parenting	CPM	66,126	0,000	0,071	0,275	0,267	10,284	0,000
Permissive Parenting.	CPM	72,132	0,000	0,105	0,309	0,316	9,908	0,000

An analysis of Table 12 shows that parenting styles, as measured by the Parenting Authority Questionnaire, have a significant effect on consumer purchase motivations based on the results of the simple linear regression analysis (β = 0.407, p = 0.000 ≤ 0.05). Parenting styles account for 27.5% of the variation in consumer purchase motivations. Therefore, the hypothesis "H1: Parents' parenting styles positively affect parents' motivation to purchase toys" is accepted.

The results of the simple linear regression analysis examining the effect of the "authoritarian parenting" sub-dimension on consumer purchase motivations indicate a significant relationship (β = 0.286, p = 0.000 ≤ 0.05). The authoritarian parenting sub-dimension explains 9.5% of the variation in consumer purchase motivations. Thus,

the hypothesis "H2: Parents' authoritarian parenting style positively affects parents' motivation to purchase toys" is accepted.

Similarly, the analysis of the "democratic parenting" sub-dimension reveals a significant effect on consumer purchase motivations (β = 0.267, p = 0.000 ≤ 0.05). This sub-dimension explains 7.1% of the variation in consumer purchase motivations. Accordingly, the hypothesis "H3: Parents' democratic parenting style positively affects parents' motivation to purchase toys" is accepted.

Finally, the results of the simple linear regression analysis for the "permissive parenting" sub-dimension demonstrate a significant effect on consumer purchase motivations (β = 0.316, p = 0.000 ≤ 0.05). The permissive parenting sub-dimension accounts for 10.5% of the variation in consumer purchase motivations. Consequently, the hypothesis "H4: Parents' permissive parenting style positively affects parents' motivation to purchase toys" is accepted.

Table 12. Summary Results of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Conclusion
H1: Parents' parenting styles positively affect parents' motivation to purchase toys for their children.	Accepted
H2: Parents' authoritarian style positively affects parents' motivation to purchase toys for their children.	Accepted
H3: Parents' democratic parenting style positively affects parents' motivation to purchase toys for their children.	Accepted
H4: Parents' permissive parenting style positively affects parents' motivation to purchase toys for their children.	Accepted

Discussion and Conclusion

This study offers an exploratory examination of how parental styles, shaped by their childhood experiences and sociodemographic factors, influence their motivations to purchase toys for their children. The findings align with existing theoretical frameworks, including the social context perspective, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Cognitive Consistency Theory, while also identifying critical gaps in the literature that warrant further exploration.

Parenting styles, a critical component of childhood experiences, serve as the foundation

for shaping parents' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. As Baumrind (1966) emphasized, parenting approaches -authoritarian, democratic, and permissive -significantly impact children's social and emotional development. This research extends these findings by demonstrating that parenting styles also influence consumer behavior, specifically toy purchasing motivations.

Research on parents' toy purchasing behaviors has largely been confined to factors influencing toy preferences, children's involvement in purchasing decisions, and the effects of those decisions. Although these studies, conducted across diverse contexts and cultures, have yielded varying results, there is a noticeable gap in addressing sociopsychological factors—such as parent-child relationships, parents' life experiences, and perceptions of toys—that influence the toy purchasing process. Common findings have highlighted shared purchase motivations and interest levels, yet deeper psychological and experiential factors remain under-researched.

A review of the existing literature reveals an absence of studies directly examining the relationship between parenting styles, childhood life experiences and toy purchasing behaviors, despite evidence suggesting indirect connections between parenting styles and factors such as interest, materialistic attitudes, and financial decisions. To address this gap, in-depth interviews were conducted with 60 parents to uncover the sociopsychological dimensions of their childhood life experiences, understand the perception of play and toys that begins to form in childhood and explore how these perceptions influence toy choices and purchasing behaviors.

The study's results show that authoritarian parenting is associated with pragmatic purchasing decisions focused on functionality and cost-effectiveness, as supported by Carlson and Grossbart (1988). These parents prioritize toys that align with their structured and disciplined approach to child-rearing, emphasizing utility over creativity. Democratic parents, on the other hand, display purchasing behaviors that support their children's developmental needs, favo-

ring toys that foster creativity and learning (Bedford, 2021). This aligns with the TRA framework, where attitudes and social norms collectively shape behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Permissive parenting, characterized by a more lenient approach, correlates with hedonistic and socially driven purchasing motivations, often influenced by children's desires and peer group pressures (Barbopoulos & Johansson, 2017).

Integrating findings from the Consumer Motivation Scale (CMS) suggests that broaderctors -beyond immediate utility- play critical roles in toy purchasing decisions (Barbopoulos & Johansson, 2017). Regression analyses from the study indice effect of all parenting styles on consumer purchase motivations, with permissive parenting accounting for 10.5% of the variation (β=0.316, p=0.000). The democratic style accounted for 7.1% of the variation (β=0.267, p=0.000), while authoritarian parenting 5% (β=0.286, p=0.000), further validating the hypotheses.

Studies show that authoritarian parents prioritize functional and cost-effective toys. Carlson and Grossbart (1988) report that authoritarian parents emphasize toys' utility and durabilitycratic parenting correlates with toys that encourage creativity and align with children's interests. Rajan and Subramanian (2007) demonstrated that democratic parenting increases children's influence on purchasing decisions, as seen in 30 million Indian households. Peto involve hedonistic or peer-driven motivations. Barbopoulos and Johansson (2017) highlighted a preference for toys fulfilling social validation needs under this parenting style. Sociodemographic Influence factors like income, education level, and family structure significantly influence purchasing behaviors. Parents in higher income brackets prioritize brand reputation and quality, as reported by Servin et al. (1999) and Caldera et al. (1989). A study by Stagnitti et al. (1997) is often dictate toy selections, with boys receiving toys that promote physical activity and girls receiving toys that encourage nurturing behaviors.

The in-depth interviews provided participants with an opportunity to share their perso-

nal narratives, framed by their emotions, thoughts, and behavioral models (Anagün, 2013). These narratives enriched the exploratory aspect of the study. The interviews revealed that sociopsychological and sociodemographic factors—beyond traditional gender roles in toy purchasing—affect perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. The findings emphasize the need for larger, multidisciplinary studies using experimental and observational qualitative and quantitative methods to develop a more comprehensive understanding of toy purchasing behaviors.

The sociopsychological dimensions of childhood experiences -including parent-child relationships, cultural norms, and past deprivation- play a significant role in shaping parents' current consumer behaviors. For example, Festinger's (1957) Cognitive Consistency Theory explains how parents reconcile past deprivation by compensating for it through their purchasing behaviors. This study found that parents who experienced scarcity during childhood tend to overcompensate by purchasing more toys for their children, a finding echoed in Kushlev et al.'s (2012) work on emotional compensation in parenting.

To further support the theoretical framework of the study, a structured questionnaire was administered to 221 parents. The findings affirm that parenting styles influence not only childhood relationships, decisions, and developmental processes but also shape attitudes, behaviors, and thoughts in adulthood (Bowlby, 1980). The research demonstrated that different parenting styles significantly affect parents' motivations to purchase toys for their children in a holistic manner.

Additionally, the findings emphasize the intergenerational transmission of values and consumer behaviors. Schönpflug (2001) highlighted that parental socialization processes significantly influence the formation of consumer identity in children, a phenomenon observed in this research. Parents' own childhood experiences, particularly those related to family communication and material provision, directly affect their perceptions of toys and their purchasing motivations.

While previous research has examined factors such as children's involvement in purchasing decisions and the effects of toy preferences (Rajan & Subramanian, 2007), this study highlights the need to delve deeper into the psychological and experiential factors driving toy purchasing behavior. The limited focus on sociopsychological influences—such as parental attitudes toward play and the symbolic meaning of toys—leaves a significant gap in understanding the holistic drivers of consumer behavior. This study contributes to addressing this gap by providing insights into how parents' childhood experiences and parenting styles interact to shape their purchasing decisions.

The findings underscore the need for multidisciplinary approaches to studying toy purchasing behaviors. Integrating psychology, neuroscience, anthropology, and educational sciences can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the cognitive and emotional drivers of consumer behavior. For example, future research could explore the neurological underpinnings of decision-making processes related to toy purchases, as suggested by the generational transmission of behavioral models (Schönpflug, 2001).

Moreover, expanding the sample to include diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts would enhance the generalizability of findings. Cross-cultural studies could reveal how different parenting styles and social norms influence toy purchasing motivations, providing valuable insights for global consumer research. Additionally, incorporating experimental designs and longitudinal studies could help establish causal relationships between parenting styles, childhood experiences, and consumer behaviors.

This research highlights the intricate relationship between parenting styles, childhood experiences, and toy purchasing motivations. By integrating theoretical frameworks such as the social context perspective, TRA, and Cognitive Consistency Theory, the study provides a robust

foundation for understanding the sociopsychological factors influencing consumer behavior. The findings emphasize the critical role of parenting styles in shaping not only children's developmental outcomes but also parents' own attitudes and behaviors as consumers. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, leveraging interdisciplinary approaches to uncover the complexities of consumer motivations and their roots in early life experiences.

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OPUS▶

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Subjective Well-Being According to Gender in The Light of TUIK Data

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Abstract

The concept of subjective well-being is used to quantify the level of satisfaction that individuals experience with their lives. The happiness and satisfaction of individuals within a society serve as an indicator of the social well-being of that society. This information provides a basis for guidance for policymakers. Furthermore, global rankings that incorporate subjective well-being, such as happiness reports conducted globally, are instrumental in illustrating how a country is perceived from an external perspective. A number of factors have been identified as determinants of private well-being, including gender, marital status, level of education, social relations, level of health, sense of security, individual freedoms, income level, employment status, career progression and the quality of the environment. Subjective well-being exhibits considerable variation between different societies and between genders within the same society. It is crucial for policymakers who are committed to enhancing social subjective well-being to gain an understanding of the discrepancies between genders. The social roles ascribed to genders influence their perception of life, their preferences and lifestyle. It is therefore crucial for researchers and policy makers engaged in the field of subjective well-being to gain an understanding of the impact of gender on this phenomenon. The objective of this study is utilize structural equation modelling to elucidate the causal relationships between variables and their effects on subjective well-being in women and men, employing data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat). It was established that women are able to differentiate between their professional and personal lives, while men are not. Additionally, it was discovered that women are influenced by transportation within the scope of public services, while this variable is not statistically significant for men.

Keywords: *Subjective well-being, social welfare, gender, life satisfaction research*

Öz

Öznel iyi oluş, bireylerin yaşamlarından ne kadar memnun olduklarını ölçen bir kavramdır. Toplumda bireylerin kendilerini mutlu ve tatmin olmuş hissetmeleri toplumsal refahın bir göstergesidir. Bu bilgiler politika yapıcılar için bir rehber niteliğindedir. Dünyada yapılan mutluluk raporları gibi öznel iyi oluşu dikkate alan küresel sıralamalarda bir ülkenin dışarıdan nasıl algılandığını göstermesi açısındanda önemlidir. Cinsiyet, medeni durum, eğitim düzeyi, sosyal ilişkiler, sağlık düzeyi, güvenlik duygusu, bireysel özgürlükler, gelir düzeyi, iş sahibi olmak, kariyer sahibi olmak ve yaşanan çevrenin kalitesi gibi faktörler özel refahın belirleyicileri arasında sayılmaktadır. Öznel iyi oluş toplumlar arasında farklılık gösterdiği gibi aynı toplumda yaşayan cinsiyetler arasında da farklılık göstermektedir. Toplumsal Öznel iyi oluşu artırmayı önemseyen politika yapıcıların cinsiyetler arasındaki farklılaşmaları da anlamaları önemlidir. Cinsiyetlere atanan toplumsal roller onların hayat algılarını, yaşam terihlerini ve yaşama şekillerini biçimlendirmektedir. Bu yüzden öznel iyi oluş üzerine çalışmak isteyen araştırmacı ya da politika yapıcıların cinsiyetler üzerindeki etkisini de kavramaları önem arz eder. Bu çalışmanın amacı TUIK verileri ışığında nedensel ilişkilerde kullanılan yapısal eşitlik modellemesinden yararlanılmış, kadın ve erkeklerdeki öznel iyi oluşu etkileyen değişkenler ve etkileri elde edilmiştir. Kadınların çalışma ve özel hayatları arasında ayrım yapabilirken, erkeklerin bu ayrımı yapamadığı, kadınların kamu hizmetleri kapsamında ulaşımdan etkilenirken, erkeklerde bu değişkenin önemli olmadığı tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Öznel iyi oluş, toplumsal refah, cinsiyet, yaşam memnuniyeti araştırması*

Introduction

Although happiness is defined as a state of subjective well-being (SWB) in positive psychology (Diener, 2007), SWB is understood to refer to the subjective evaluations individuals make about their own lives. This evaluation consists of elements such as general life satisfaction, happiness level, and the balance of positive and negative emotions. The general satisfaction a person feels with their life includes the frequency and intensity of positive emotions such as happiness, joy, and hope, and negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, and sadness. The term SWB is used to describe the quality of life, which can be defined as the life satisfaction of the individual, which is a combination of physiological, psychological, social, and environmental factors. It takes into account not only personal experiences and emotional states but also external factors.

The SWB of an individual is influenced by a several factors, including the strength of their relationships with family, friends, and wider social environment, economic status, physical and mental health and successes in business or personal life. Studies on SWB have been conducted across a range of disciplines, including philosophy, economics, sociology and psychology, as well as in fields such as public health and human ecology (Das et al., 2020).

While life satisfaction is typically regarded as a subjective indicator of well-being encompassing positive and negative emotions (Diener, 2007), happiness is also associated with quality of life, well-being, and satisfaction with life (Petrovič et al., 2021). One of the important primary objectives of public policy is to ensure that individual can continue their lives. One of the principal objectives of economic and fiscal policies is to enhance the well-being of individuals and promote greater life satisfaction (Ulutürk Akman, 2021). The concept of well-being has been accepted as the key to creating and sustaining healthy and productive societies. In this regard, a considerable number of countries employ subjective indicators to gain insight into how individuals perceive and experience their lives variables that reflect well-being such as income, education, life expectancy, etc. (Das et al.,

2020). A high quality of life is a fundamental component of an individual's SWB. In addition, factors such as health, security, individual freedom, income, and unemployment are also considered to be determinants of private well-being (OECD, 2012). Kangal (2013) evaluated SWB under the headings of age, income, gender, marriage, education, and personality (including characteristics such as self-esteem, extraversion, optimism, etc.), while Cárcaba et al. (2022) examined it under the headings of material conditions (income, wealth, housing), quality of life (health, social connections), socio-demographic (gender, age, marital status, and immigration). Das et al. (2020) grouped the determinants under seven categories (basic demographics, socioeconomic status, health - functionality, personality, social support, religion - culture, and geography – infrastructure).

Some academic studies have investigated the impact of gender on psychological factors such as happiness, and life satisfaction (Alfalah & Alganem, 2020; Chui & Wong, 2016; Joshanloo, 2018; Joshanloo & Jovanović, 2020; Milovanska-Farrington & Farrington, 2022). Chui and Wong (2016) stated that women (despite gender equality) show lower satisfaction than men due to social roles, and expectations and social support networks tend to improve women's overall feelings of satisfaction. Upon examination of gender differences in life satisfaction, it has been shown that there are large similarities between the genders. However, women (due to the influence of various social, cultural, and psychological factors) generally report higher life satisfaction than men (Joshanloo & Jovanović, 2020).

Şengül and Lopcu (2020) stated in their SWB studies on the Turkish sample that age has an inverted U feature, SWB's first decreasing, and then increasing with age, and that this situation does not show a difference between genders. In general, being married has a positive effect on SWB (Kangal, 2013). Şengül and Lopcu (2020) stated that while being married increases SWB in women, they could not find a significant change in men. Furthermore, they found that SWB decreases in widows, and divorced people, regardless of gender. The majority of studies have concentrated on individual determinants, such as demographic characteristics. Among these, income has been the

most intriguing element. It is posited that income is a significant factor in enhancing SWB by fulfilling the basic need for subsistence (Fang et al., 2024). In addition to the income that individuals have, different financial assets, and debts (Jantsch et al., 2024), and their careers also affect SWB.

Traditional gender roles often impose care and household responsibilities on women. This affects women's work-life balance and career advancement. While care (Selvaraja & Baskaran, 2023), and housework (West & Zimmerman, 1987) are seen as part of women's identity, the reason why men are seen as the primary source of income is due to social norms (Özdemir, 2019). Milovanska-Farrington and Farrington (2022) stated that men perceive their career success as central as a pivotal aspect of their overall well-being, Gerson (2010) posited that women generally see work as a means to achieve a goal (supporting the family) rather than as the center of their identity, which enables women to create clearer boundaries between their work, and personal lives. Engaging in activities for a variety of purposes (work, education, leisure, entertainment, etc.) not only facilitates social interaction but also contributes to an individual's physical, and emotional well-being (Chidambaram, 2022). The quality of social relationships is a significant determinant of SWB. Social relationships play an important role in determining SWB. Various academic studies have emphasized the importance of social relationships in improving happiness, life satisfaction, and emotional well-being. Interaction, and socialization with family, and friends have positive effects on SWB (Arrondo et al., 2021), Social support (friends, family, teachers, neighbors, etc.) provides individuals with generally positive experiences and can improve a person's overall happiness level, and positive life qualities (Xiang et al., 2020). Diener and Seligman (2002) demonstrated that individuals with robust and encouraging social networks tend to report greater levels of happiness, and life satisfaction.

The provision of institutional services, which encompass the direct services offered to citizens by public institutions, and organizations, plays a pivotal role in enhancing social welfare, and the quality of life of individuals. These services address fundamental requirements such as health, education, security and infrastructure, while promoting social justice, and social equality. Institutional services regulate the relations of citizens with the state. Such services enhance public trust and reinforce social cohesion. Jovanović (2016) posited that institutional trust (in government, the justice system, the health system, the education system, the media, etc.) is an important predictor of the quality of life of SWB. As Namazi (2022) posits, women's happiness is contingent upon some variables, including education, health, community support, family life, and services that enhance social relationships. Therefore, the type of service received may cause different levels of satisfaction, and perceived happiness between genders.

Health satisfaction is important for the overall well-being of both men and women (Milovanska-Farrington & Farrington, 2022). Academic studies confirm that individuals who are satisfied with the quality, accessibility, and responsiveness of healthcare tend to report higher levels of life satisfaction, and happiness. Lee et al. (2024) demonstrated that patients' SWB is influenced by their treatment experience, with positive effects leading to enhanced life satisfaction, and happiness. Studies have shown that long waiting times in hospitals (Alrasheedi et al., 2019; Anderson et al., 2007), and short time spent with the doctor are associated with lower satisfaction (Anderson et al., 2007). The implementation of patient-centered approaches within healthcare services has been demonstrated to enhance patient satisfaction. This leads to higher SWB, as the individuals feel more empowered, and understood (Liang & Howard, 2023).

Ma et al.(2024) mentioned that the concept of governance quality, which includes both social functioning, and public administration concepts, is the effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and fairness of institutions, and processes. Furthermore, it is stated that this has an impact not only on the orderly management of public services, and the rule of law but also on the SWB of individuals indirectly. Trust in the justice system is at the forefront for both genders as a strong predictor of SWB. Tyler (2006) demonstrated that individuals who perceive the legal system as fair, and impartial exhibit higher levels of life satisfaction. This trust can be defined as the perception of justice, equal treatment, and transparent decision-making in legal proceedings. When people feel that they have

been wronged or that the justice system is biased, their SWB decreases. Şengül and Lopcu (2020) found that economic status, social rights, and government transparency issues are associated with increased life satisfaction in men, and only government transparency is associated with higher life satisfaction in women. Social security systems support social welfare in terms of social insurance, retirement insurance, employment security, health security and livelihood benefits, etc. In particular, support for disadvantaged groups increases SWB (Li & He, 2022).

A sense of personal security is one of the fundamental human needs. The lack of this factor has been linked to increased stress and anxiety levels. This has a detrimental impact on SWB. Inglehart et al. (2008) discovered that individuals who feel secure in their surroundings (Boda & Medve-Bálint, 2017), who have confidence in the police force, and who believe that law enforcement is fair and effective, report higher levels of life satisfaction. Cheng and Smyth (2015) discovered that being a crime victim and having an acquaintance who is a crime victim in China has a detrimental impact on happiness, whereas residing in a secure neighborhood has a beneficial effect on happiness. Kirst et al.(2015) demonstrated that exposure to violence or crime results in a reduction in life satisfaction, as fear, and insecurity become constant stress factors.

In addition to its immediate impact on individuals, education has indirect benefits, including better employment opportunities, income, health, and social connections (WorldBank, 2018). There is a broad consensus that it also indirectly enhances life satisfaction (Araki, 2022; Helliwell et al., 2020). Araki (2022) posited that education at the individual level will increase satisfaction among individuals who become highly qualified persons in society through a meritocratic process. Möwisch et al.(2021) also stated that highly educated individuals have a positive relationship with SWB and that these individuals have higher SWB even when they are unemployed or retired. Şengül and Lopcu (2020) stated that increasing the level of education increases SWB in both genders, while Qin et al. (2024) stated that women with longer education generally reach higher incomes or better employment, and this has positive effects on their happiness through physical, and mental health.

Environmental factors are also a significant determinant of individual life satisfaction (Das et al., 2020). SWB is a reflection of the quality of life in terms of the environment, health, and social relations (Diener & Tay, 2015). There is a positive association between the quality of the environment and SWB. One of the negative features of urban life is noise pollution. Noise pollution negatively affects general well-being, physical health, mental health, SWB (Rüger et al., 2023), and life satisfaction (Arrondo et al., 2021). Zhang et al.(2022) demonstrated that economic growth studies enhance the income level of residents, and have a positive impact on their SWB. However, environmental issues (air pollution) resulting from economic growth have a detrimental effect on SWB. It is established that air pollution has adverse effects on human health, including an increased risk of asthma, heart attacks, lung, breast, and kidney cancer (Ming et al., 2022). Rüger et al.(2023) stated that urban environments with higher pollution levels tend to reduce SWB. However, cities with well-maintained urban infrastructure including public transportation, and green spaces can mitigate these effects. Das et al. (2022) In their study examining the satisfaction of Minnesota urban residents with basic social-ecological-infrastructural relations, found that the main variables associated with SWB were home heating, and cooling, public transportation, neighborhood green spaces, income, health, family relations, and social relations. In terms of access to infrastructure, women generally contribute more to the increase in SWB than men. Alarcón-García et al. (2022) found that women and men use roads, sidewalks, street lights, public toilets, sports centers, housing, daycare, and childcare facilities differently. They stated that this situation is due to the roles assigned to gender.

Living in an unsafe area negatively affects SWB. Housing is typically regarded as the primary determinant of quality of life, and well-being (Arrondo et al., 2021). Rüger et al.(2023) stated that the appearance of individuals' living environments (neighborhood, housing quality) and the level of care of the place they live in, as well as the quality of housing, are linked to individuals' SWB, and even have an impact on physical health.

SWB is difficult to make a universal definition because it consists of different components such as

life satisfaction, emotional states, and happiness, and individuals' perceptions of happiness or life satisfaction vary according to age, gender, culture, and social norms. Given that SWB can be studied in several different disciplines, including psychology, sociology, economics, and health (Das et al., 2020), it is challenging to arrive at a consensus on the definition of SWB and on the most appropriate measurement tools. The examination of the relationships between SWB, and gender is of importance when considering the factors affecting general life satisfaction, and emotional states. This is due to the fact that an understanding of these relationships is crucial for the development of effective policies, and interventions. The TurkStat life satisfaction survey is considered a good data source for researchers because it is among the comprehensive studies applied to a wide area of Turkey. This study aims to elucidate the differences, and causal relationships between genders, and the factors affecting the concept of happiness, and life satisfaction variables of individuals in Turkey, namely subjective well-being. Within the scope this study, it was aimed to examine the effects of six hypotheses created to examine the relationships between SWB, and gender; satisfaction with working life (H1), satisfaction with personal life (H2), satisfaction with institutional services received (H3), satisfaction with social relations (H4), satisfaction with environmental services (H5), and housing satisfaction (H6) on SWB.

Method

This research employs a quantitative relational study methodology, utilizing data from the 2022 TurkStat life satisfaction survey. The data set was obtained through official correspondence with TurkStat (2022), and ethical permission was not sought. In this study, which was conducted with the participation of 9,841 individuals, the YASAM_MEMNUNIYET variable (rated on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating the lowest level of happiness, and 10 indicating the highest level of happiness) was used to assess the degree of happiness, while the satisfaction scale variables (ADLI, AKRABA, ARKADAS, ASAYIS, EGITI) were used to assess overall satisfaction with various aspects of life. The EGITIM, ELKNIK_KAM, GELIR, GN_SAG, IS, IS_TRFK_ZMN, KAZANC, KISISEL_BKM, KOMSU, KONUT, SAGLIK, SEMT, SOS_HAYAT, SU_KALITE, TEMIZLIK, ULASIM, YESIL_ALAN), and MUTLULUK variables were reverse coded so that 1 Very - 5 Not at all represents satisfaction/unhappiness.

As 29% of the participants omitted the EVLILIK variable, which pertains to their satisfaction with their marriage, this variable was excluded from the study. The remaining missing data were interpolated using the appropriate method. In the case of a large sample size, it is typically assumed that the underlying population is normally distributed, even if it does not perfectly align with a normal distribution. The primary rationale for this phenomenon is the Central Limit Theorem, which posits that as the sample size increases, the sample mean will tend to approach a normal distribution, irrespective of the initial distribution of the population (Montgomery & Runger, 2010; Wackerly et al., 2008). It was established that the kurtosis (kurtosis, and skewness) values of the variables included in the study, ELKNIK-KAM, ASAYIS, KOMSU, AKRABA, KONUT, SEMT, were not within the confidence limits of -1.5, +1.5. However, in accordance with the central limit theorem, it was assumed that the variables to be employed in the study exhibited a normal distribution, given the considerable sample sizes of male, and female participants.

In this study, models were constructed based on the results of factor analysis conducted separately for women, and men. The SEM, which adopted a confirmatory approach, enabled the examination of the goodness of fit statistics, thus determining the adequacy of the model, and establishing whether the six hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6) were supported. R program is used for this study.

Analysis Method

The relationships between the satisfaction scale variables, specifically happiness, and life satisfaction, were investigated using structural equation models (SEM). SEM is a preferred analysis method due to its efficacy in testing the assumed causal relationships, and latent structures between variables. SEM is a multivariate technique that employs a series of advanced multivariate analyses (Everitt

& Hothorn, 2011) to elucidate the relationships between observed variables (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004) Furthermore, it enables researchers to assess intricate relationships between variables, both directly, and indirectly (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012) It is an analytical process comprising parameter identification, and estimation, model fit assessment (Mueller & Hancock, 2018). Once the models have been obtained, the goodness of fit statistics are employed to assess the degree of compatibility between the designed model, and reality, thereby revealing the construct validity of the model. There are numerous fit statistics, including the Chi-Squared test ($\chi2$), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), the Comparative Fit Index (AGFI), the Relative Fit Index (RFI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), the Comparative Goodness of Fit Index (CFI), and the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) (Bagozzi et al., 1991). At least four of these statistics are expected to be provided by researchers for a model.

Results

The study comprises 52% male and 48% female participants. Upon examination of the ages of the participants, it becomes evident that 20% are between the ages of 28, and 37, 22% are between the ages of 38, and 47, and 18% are between the ages of 48, and 57. Additionally, 30.2% of the participants have completed primary school, while 15.9% have completed secondary school. The majority of participants (70.8%) are married, while 55% did not engage in any paid or unpaid employment during the previous week. Upon examination of the reasons for this, it became evident that 50.8% were occupied with domestic tasks, primarily related to childcare, the care of elderly individuals, and the assistance of patients. Notably, 99% of these individuals were women. The vast majority of employed participants (71.9%) are paid or salaried, while 79.6% of these employees work in the public sector. 24% of participants think that the cost of living, 15% poverty, and 11% education are among the important problems of the country. In response to the question of what contributes to their happiness, 69.5% of participants indicated that their health is a significant factor. Similarly, when asked

who contributes to their happiness, 66.8% of participants cited their entire family (74% of men and 64% of women answered "family", while 21% of women and 10% of men answered "my children"). Upon inquiry as to the extent of happiness experienced when considering one's life in its entirety (HAPPINESS), 44.1% of the participants indicated a state of happiness, while 21% asserted that their level of life satisfaction exceeded the average (rating of six (6)). While 81% of the male, and 84% of the female participants were registered with the SGK, 93% of the male, and 55% of the female participants were registered with the SGK on their own behalf. Additionally, 32% of the female participants were registered with the SGK through their spouses.

Upon examination of Cronbach alpha values to assess the internal consistency of the variables to be utilized in the study, it was observed that the value was 0.80 for women and 0.83 for men. As a consequence of the factor analysis, variables with extraction values below 0.40 were excluded from the subsequent analysis. The total variance explained by the six factors identified in the Principal Component Analysis, and Varimax rotation method for women was 60.40%, while the total variance explained by the five factors identified in the same method for men was 59.64%. The factors and factor loading values belonging to gender are presented in Table 1.

The factor analysis revealed that, in both genders, the variables of education received (EDUCATION), individual's health (HEALTH), and satisfaction with public services provided electronically (ELKNIK_KAM) were the variables extracted in common from the factor analysis (extraction <0.4). In the male cohort, the variables of monthly income (KAZANC), monthly household income (GELIR), social life (SOS_HAYAT), time allocated to themselves (KISISEL_BKM), and time spent commuting (IS_TRFK_ZMN), job satisfaction (IS) a more nuanced pattern of factor allocation, with these variables distributed across two factors: "PERSONAL", and "WORKING LIFE." The variables of education (EGITI), health (GN_SAG), social security services (SGK), security (ASAYIS), and justice (ADLI) are grouped under the heading of CORPORATE SERVICES.

Table 1. Factor values and SEM loadings

MALE	Factor loading	SEM loading		FEMALE	Factor loading	SEM loading	
KAZANC	0,78	0,61	PERSONAL				PERSONAL
GELIR	0,76	0,72		GELIR	0,69	0,62	
SOS_HAYAT	0,71	0,73		SOS_HAYAT	0,84	0,83	
KISISEL_BKM	0,67	0,71		KISISEL_BKM	0,78	0,75	
IS_TRFK_ZMN	0,56	0,48		IS_TRFK_ZMN	0,63	0,49	WORKING LIFE
IS	0,56	0,47		IS	0,78	0,67	
				KAZANC	0,64	0,56	
				ISILISKI	0,65	0,50	
ADLI	0,79	0,73	CORPORATE SERVICES	ADLI	0,79	0,72	CORPORATE
ASAYIS	0,77	0,73		ASAYIS	0,74	0,69	
EGITI	0,75	0,71		EGITI	0,75	0,71	
GN_SAG	0,66	0,63		GN_SAG	0,63	0,62	
SGK	0,69	0,68		SGK	0,69	0,65	
				ULASIM	0,52	0,50	
ARKADAS	0,81	0,76	RELATIONSHIP	ARKADAS	0,82	0,72	RELATIONSHIP
KOMSU	0,77	0,75		KOMSU	0,75	0,70	
AKRABA	0,76	0,68		AKRABA	0,75	0,71	
ISILISKI	0,55	0,47					
YESIL_ALAN	0,75	0,77	ENVIRONMENT	YESIL_ALAN	0,77	0,75	ENVIRONMENT
TEMIZLIK	0,74	0,75		TEMIZLIK	0,77	0,73	
SU_KALITE	0,61	0,50		SU_KALITE	0,64	0,50	
SEMT	0,79	0,72	HOUSING	SEMT	0,81	0,75	HOUSING
KONUT	0,75	0,73		KONUT	0,81	0,71	

In addition to these, the ULASIM variable is also included in this factor, specifically concerning women. The variables representing the relationships established with friends (ARKADAS), neighbors (KOMSU), and relatives (AKRABA) are collectively designated as the 'RELATIONSHIP' factor. The variable of relationships at work (ISILISKI) is also included under this heading for men, whereas for women it is included under the title of working lives. The variables f green areas (YESIL_ALAN), cleanliness (TEMIZLIK), and the quality of drinking water (SU_KALITE), which represent the institutional services provided by individuals in their place of residence, were aggregated under a single factor (ENVIRONMENT) for both genders. Additionally, the satisfaction of individuals with their place of residence (DISTRICT or neighborhood), and housing (KONUT) was collected under the HOUSING factor. The results demonstrated that there was no statistically significant difference between the satisfaction scores of the variables employed in the study, specifically YASAM_ MEMNUNIYET, ARKADAS, GN_SAG, IS, ISILISKI KAZANC, KISISEL_BAKIM, and SOS_HAYAT, concerning gender ($p \geq 0.05$, independent-t test).

Table 2. Hypotheses

	FEMALE loading	t	MALE loading	t
H1:HOUSING →SWB	0,17	6,78*	0,01	0,38
H2:HIZMET→SWB	0,12	4,84*	0,23	10,11*
H3:RELATIONSHIP→SWB	0,06	2,51*	0,07	3,35*
H4:ENVIRONMENT→SWB	0,13	4,88*	0,12	5,33*
H5:WORKING LIFE→SWB	0,04	1,76		
H6:PERSONAL→SWB	0,56	22,93*	0,61	26,57*
MUTLULUK→SWB	0,74		0,78	
YASAM MEM→SWB	0,68	30,97*	0,68	33,78*

* Hypotheses found to be statistically significant (p < 0.05)

Table 3. Goodness of fit results

	NFI	NNFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA	X^2 / df
FEMALE	0.96	0.96	0.97	0.95	0.94	0.047	3,48
MALE	0.95	0.95	0.96	0.93	0.91	0.063	3,33

Upon examination of the SEM results, which were calculated using the Maximum Likelihood method, it became evident that the HOUSING, CORPORATE SERVICES, RELATIONSHIP, ENVIRONMENT, WORKING LIFE, and PERSONAL, it was found that the the HOUSING factors in men and the WORKING LIFE factors in women did not exhibit a statistically significant impact on SWB (Table 2). The model fit values for women and men, as presented in Table 3 those accepted by Schermelleh-Engel et al.(2003), and were evaluated per the acceptable goodness of fit indexes proposed by them. The ratio of χ2/df is calculated as 3.48, and 3.33, respectively, and is close to the suggested threshold of 3. Furthermore, the values of the NFI, NNFI, CFI, IFI, GFI, and AGFI variables are all greater than 0.9, and the RMSEA value is less than 0.08 (Table 3). These indicators are all within the acceptable range, thereby demonstrating the suitability of the research model.

Discussion and Conclusion

When comparing SWB between men, and women, researchers state that it should not be overlooked that genders derive happiness from different sources (Batz & Tay, 2018).

Jantsch et al.(2024) posited that income and disparate sources of income have a positive effect on individuals' SWB, whereas debt has the opposite effect. Blanchflower and Bryson (2024) posited that women tend to have lower expectations regarding income, and work life, and exhibit lower or negative SWB symptoms in the context of a patriarchal world. Arrondo et al. (2021) showed that unemployment causes a significant decrease in SWB, regardless of the income effect, and this situation is much more severe in men.

How men perceive the time they spend at work as part of their time is dependent on cultural norms, and gender expectations. Work is often seen as an extension of self-fulfillment, achievement, and personal growth, which in turn makes the boundaries between work, and leisure less distinct. For a significant proportion of men, work, and financial success are inextricably linked to their SWB, as these factors serve to reinforce their sense of identity. Research has demonstrated that men tend to derive greater satisfaction from their professional success, and financial stability. For many men, work, and financial success are closely linked to SWB because they support their sense of identity. Research findings indicate that men tend to derive greater satisfaction from their professional success, and financial stability. Connell (2005) posited that men frequently associate their self-esteem and social status with their professional success. He further asserted that earning a living and achieving success, especially through work, is a fundamental aspect of male identity. He stated that as work takes precedence over other aspects of life, such as family or leisure, work can cease to be about earning a living, and can become about meeting self-esteem, and social expectations. The extent to which men consider the time they spend at work to be part of their time is contingent upon the prevailing cultural norms, and gender expectations. Williams (2010) observed that in cultures where the perception of masculinity is closely tied to professional success, men tend to invest their time in activities that will advance their careers, and perceive work success as central to their identity. The concept of work is frequently perceived as an extension of self-fulfillment, success, and personal growth, which in turn renders the boundaries between work, and leisure less distinct.

The effects of work on women's SWB are complex. The level of job satisfaction is influenced some factors, including the ability to achieve a healthy work-life balance, the role of family in an individual's life, and the expectations placed upon them by society. Work, career development, and workplace support positively affect women's SWB. Women who have control over their work lives have higher life satisfaction (Cheng & Chan, 2008). Ernst Kossek and Ozeki (1998) discovered that women who experience difficulties in balancing their work, and personal lives tend to report lower levels of life satisfaction and higher levels of stress. The traditional attempts by women to balance multiple roles, including work, family, and child-rearing, have encouraged them to develop the ability to compartmentalize their lives. Eagly and Wood (2012) posited that societal expectations of women entail the management of work, and household responsibilities, which enables women to differentiate between the two domains. Ferreira and Esteves (2016) espoused a comparable perspective, suggesting that women are more inclined to compartmentalize their time between work, and personal life.

Our study's findings aligned with those of previous research, indicating that female participants could differentiate between their roles. In contrast, male participants demonstrated a lack of such differentiation. However, the hypothesis that women's working life has a statistical effect on SWB was not supported (H1). In contrast, it was determined that the personal factor was significant in the models for women, and men, and had the greatest effect on SWB. As stated by Blanchflower and Bryson (2024), women being good mothers, and housewives can replace men's work achievements. Although our study cannot provide definitive evidence as to why the effect of women's working life on SWB was statistically insignificant. However, it can be assumed that women do not perceive their working life as the central aspect of their lives, and

work to provide financial support to their families, as stated by the researchers.

In our study, in addition to the variables that stand out under the factor of services provided to citizens institutionally (GN_SAG, ADLI, ASAYIS, EGITI, SGK), it is evident that there is an additional transportation (ULASIM) emerged as a salient variable for women. Inequalities in access to healthcare have a detrimental impact on both the physical, and psychological health of individuals, leading to elevated stress levels. This results in a reduction in life satisfaction (Alegría et al., 2018). In particular, the inability of low-income or disadvantaged groups to meet their health needs results in these groups experiencing elevated stress levels, and a reduction in their well-being. In our study, although 69.5% of the participants stated that their health was an important factor in their happiness, the variable representing the individual health was excluded from the analysis. However, satisfaction with the general health services provided institutionally emerged as a prominent factor. Additionally, no statistically significant differences were observed between the satisfaction scores of the health variable according to gender, and with the impact factor values being highly similar. The provision of health services offers individuals the opportunity to live a long, and healthy life. In addition to nutrition, exercise, stress management, early diagnosis of diseases, and the implementation of preventative measures, the growth of health problems in individuals can be prevented. The quality of life of healthy individuals is enhanced, which in turn increases their productivity, and efficiency in the workforce. Such an increase not only allows the individual to contribute to their well-being but also to the country's economy.

Research shows that trust in security institutions, and a sense of security are crucial to an individual's overall happiness, and sense of life satisfaction. In the context of gender-based violence, women tend to report heightened concerns regarding their security. Ferraro (1996) discovered that women tend to exhibit lower levels of SWB in unsafe environments, particularly when they perceive that their security concerns are not adequately addressed. Alarcón-García et al.(2022) found that women with children benefit more from investments in public services, and particularly

value the presence of street lights more than sidewalks, and roads, while the opposite is true for men. This indicates that the underlying cause of this situation can be attributed to women's concerns about their security. In the present study, the variable of security was found to be of particular importance. It was observed that the levels of impact on security experienced by women were lower than those reported by men and that there was a statistically significant difference between the genders. The view of women towards security forces in Turkey may be because they are more anxious, and do not feel as safe as men regarding issues such as domestic violence, femicide, child abuse, and street harassment, which affect the socio-cultural structure, personal experiences, the role of security forces, and the general perception of security in society.

Ma et al.(2024) identified that governance quality concepts, including transparency, accountability, corruption prevention, rule of law, and social security maintenance, play a significant role in shaping individuals' subjective well-being. Cárcaba et al.(2022) posited that efficacious, and transparent local governments are conducive to enhanced individual SWB. Furthermore, they asserted that justice and the combating of corruption are directly correlated with increased trust, and satisfaction among citizens. Helliwell et al.(2020) stated that perceptions of injustice, corruption, or discrimination in the legal system are associated with heightened levels of dissatisfaction, and a reduction in subjective well-being. Soss and Weaver(2017) found that marginalized groups, including women, and racial minorities, tend to report lower levels of satisfaction with the justice system, which hurts their subjective well-being. It was asserted that these individuals are inclined to perceive the system as biased or discriminatory, particularly in domains such as family law, domestic violence, and employment discrimination. In our study, despite the equal impact of the factors on both genders, a statistically significant difference was identified between the two groups, with women reporting lower levels of satisfaction.

Social security systems in Turkey are managed by the SGK. The SGK is responsible for the protection of social security rights for employees, the pro-

vision of free or low-cost health services for employees, retirees, and family members, the guarantee of regular retirement salaries for employees upon retirement, and the promotion of economic independence. Furthermore, the SGK provides health, and income support to employees in the event of a work-related accident or occupational disease. In light of the aforementioned, it is evident that the SGK plays a pivotal role in the lives of Turkish citizens, offering them a sense of security against the social, and economic risks that may arise at any stage of their lives. Consequently, it has become a significant factor in the measurement of SWB for both women and men. A statistically significant difference was identified between the sexes, with women exhibiting lower levels of satisfaction. It may be posited that this situation is a consequence of the fact that, despite the greater number of women registered with SGK, 55% of these women are registered through their spouses, thereby precluding them from benefiting from all the rights afforded to an individual SGK holder.

In the study, while the variable of satisfaction with the participants' education was excluded from the factor analysis, the variable of satisfaction with institutional education emerged as a prominent factor. Educational institutions serve as crucial social environments, wherein individuals cultivate social capital, form friendships, and expand their social networks. These institutions facilitate social commitment, a sense of belonging, and community, thereby contributing to overall well-being. Furthermore, educational services play a significant role in enhancing SWB through their social, and economic benefits, which facilitate individual development. Although there is a statistically significant difference in the satisfaction scores for both genders, education is perceived as a factor that is closely associated with SWB. Qin et al.(2024) stated that women who receive long-term education feel secure thanks to employment and income, and thus become more active, and participatory individuals in life.

The ULASIM variable was encountered only in women. Önder(2020) stated that while men generally travel for a single purpose, women make multiple trips for different purposes (such as work, shopping, transporting children to school, courses, and events), and Ivarsson et al.(2023) stated that

this situation is due to household responsibilities, work schedules, and traditional gender norms. Önder(2020) that men use more private vehicles, while Ertoy Sarışık and Öcalır (2024) stated that women use more public transportation. Peters(2013) attributed this situation to women not having sufficient access to vehicles due to gender inequality. Işık and Koçak Oksev(2022) mentioned that although the number of women drivers continues to increase in Turkey, the car culture is still masculine, and therefore traffic is still a masculine area, and no sign driving and car culture is becoming feminized. It should not be surprising that in our study, the transportation variable representing public transportation came to the fore among women who have not yet gained a sufficient place for themselves in a masculine field.

Frequent interaction with friends, and family, which falls under the social relationships factor, is another factor that increases SWB. As Powdthavee (2008) posited, individuals who invest more time in their social networks tend to exhibit elevated levels of life satisfaction. Although social relationship patterns may differ between men, and women, their effects on SWB may also differ (Saha, 2024). Individuals in relationships consisting of family, relatives, and close friends generally produce similar feelings of solidarity because they have similar norms (Poikolainen & Honkanen, 2020). Strong family relationships provide emotional support, reduce stress in individuals, increase the sense of belonging, and security, and lead to higher life satisfaction (Saha, 2024). The strongest positive effects on well-being are associated with friendships that provide trust, emotional closeness, and mutual support (Demir & Özdemir, 2010). Helliwell and Barrington-Leigh (2010) stated that women tend to achieve more SWB than men in close relationships with family and friends. Gender-specific social norms may influence how men and women interact with their relatives. Women tend to interact frequently, and spend quality time with family, while men's financially oriented tendencies and cultural norms may discourage these interactions. Helliwell and Putnam(2004) stated that individuals who feel connected to their neighborhoods tend to report higher life satisfaction, which will promote a sense of community,

and mutual support for emotional well-being. Social connectedness is known to improve both mental, and physical well-being. Research shows that people living in socially connected neighborhoods report better health outcomes, both physically and mentally because they receive emotional, and practical support from their neighbors. In addition, relationships with neighbors have a significant impact on SWB because they contribute to an individual's sense of community, security, belonging, and social connectedness. Zangger (2023) posited that neighbors constitute an essential source of daily assistance, and support for individuals, particularly during crises, thereby mitigating adverse effects on SWB, and fortifying community bonds. Robinette et al.(2021) linked neighborhood cohesion (connectedness, and trust among neighbors) to several health behaviors, and physical health outcomes, such as reduced risk of depression, and disease, increased physical activity, and higher self-rated health. The findings of Hoogerbrugge and Burger (2018) indicate that both social interactions with neighbors and the perception of social cohesion within the neighborhood are significant predictors of residents' life satisfaction. Zangger and Bank(2024) found that strong neighborhood networks help mitigate the negative effects of crises such as COVID-19 by increasing trust, and positive relationships with neighbors increase individuals' life satisfaction.

In our study, while the variables of relative, friend, and neighbor were identified as significant factors in the formation of interpersonal relationships, the variable of relationships established in the context of professional interactions was also included in this list for male participants, and this variable was incorporated into the work-life factor for female participants. As previously stated, it can be posited that this phenomenon is a consequence of men's inability to differentiate between their various roles. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that men exert a greater influence than women on variables other than those of relatives. A review of the literature reveals that men are less likely to engage in family conversations than women. This is typically attributable to traditional gender roles that ascribe the expression of emotion, and the conduct of family communication to women. Nevertheless, men seek social support

from their families when the necessity arises. In the study, when respondents were asked to identify the source of their happiness, men were more likely to cite their families, whereas women were less likely to do so because 21% of women selected their children as their primary source of happiness. The evidence suggests that women have more diverse kinship ties within their networks than men (Moore, 1990). The quality of relationships established with colleagues has a significant impact on SWB, given that the workplace is a social environment where individuals spend a substantial proportion of their time. The experience of work-related stress is diminished, levels of happiness are elevated, and life satisfaction is enhanced in employees who perceive support from their colleagues, and who have positive relationships at work (Nielsen et al., 2017).

Rigolon et al.(2021) stated that in addition to deficiencies in social, health, and institutional services, inaccessibility to green spaces can affect individuals' life satisfaction, and lead to stress. High quality of life is one of the basic elements that increase an individual's SWB. (Sugiyama et al. (2008) discovered that environmental factors (access to parks, cycling, and walking trails, and green spaces) were positively correlated with the physical, and psychological well-being of Australian adults. In addition to living in a dirty, and unhealthy environment (Pan et al., 2024), poor water quality (Guardiola et al., 2013) can also make individuals more susceptible to infection, and disease. This can affect both physical, and mental health, and cause a decrease in SWB. Chang et al.(2020) stated that poor environmental quality negatively affects the quality of life through stress and insomnia and that public space satisfaction, and environmental quality increase the quality of life of individuals. In our study, it was determined that environmental effects (green space, cleanliness, and water) were effective on the SWB of individuals, that they had similar importance in genders, but that there were statistically significant differences between genders.

The concept of home can be defined as a living space where feelings of security, peace, and belonging are strengthened. Therefore, the quality of the home environment has a direct impact on individuals' health, happiness, and overall quality of

life. The neighborhood constitutes the setting in which individuals engage in the majority of their social interactions, and spend the majority of their time outside of the home. Therefore, the physical order and social structure of the neighborhood have an important impact on individuals' quality of life. Neighborhoods are also places where harmony with the environment is achieved. Ekici and Zengin Çelik(2022) mentioned that in neighborhood planning, the harmony of the physical, and social environment with each other increases individuals' satisfaction with the environment they live in, and improves their overall quality of life. Li et al.(2023) found that individuals' housing, and neighborhood characteristics have a positive effect on SWB, based on the concept of a sense of place, which defines people's connections with the place they live in. In our study, housing and neighborhood variables were brought together under the title of housing in both genders, but it was determined that the housing factor had no significant relationship with SWB in men. Gender roles may be more important than men in terms of security, social capital, childcare, and emotional needs. While it is important for women to feel safe, and at ease in these places where they provide for their families, and raise their children, it may not have an impact on the SWB of men who have a work-centric perception of life, although they do not find it devoid of value.

The differences between men, and women can be attributed to a combination of biological, and cultural factors. Due to various psychological, and social factors that shape men's perceptions of identity, success, and satisfaction, almost every issue that can benefit their work, and work-centered lives increases their subjective well-being. The situation is somewhat more complex for women. A woman's SWB is affected by where she positions herself. In women who prioritize their experiences of relationships, and social connections, issues such as strong family ties, friendship, community support, economic freedom, and physical, and mental health have a positive impact on their SWB. The formation of healthy societies is contingent upon the presence of healthy individuals. SWB is an important indicator that supports not only the happiness of individuals but also social welfare, economic efficiency, social peace, and sustainable

development. In the case of men, income, and career are important, personal factors that include working life are more effective than women, while in the case of women, housing, and environment are more effective on SWB, and personal factors that do not include working life are effective factors on SWB. By the aforementioned results, it can be posited that should policymakers in Turkey who are seeking to enhance the quality of life of their citizens give due consideration to these variables, an increase in SWB will ensue.

Conclusion

The differences between men and women are both biological and cultural. Due to various psychological and social factors that shape men's perceptions of identity, success, and satisfaction, almost every issue that can benefit their work and work-centered lives increases their SWB. This situation is a bit more complicated for women. A woman's SWB is affected by where she positions herself. In women who care more about their experiences in relationships and social connections, issues such as strong family ties, friendship, community support, economic freedom, and physical and mental health increase their subjective well-being. Healthy individuals ensure the formation of healthy societies. SWB is an important indicator that supports not only the happiness of individuals but also social welfare, economic efficiency, social peace, and sustainable development. In the case of men, income and career are important, personal factors that include working life are more effective than women, while in the case of women, housing and environment are more effective on SWB and personal factors that do not include working life are effective factors on SWB. In line with these results, if policymakers in Turkey who want to improve the quality of life of their citizens consider these variables, the SWB of citizens will increase.

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Journal of Society Research

A Critical Analysis of Displacement and Human Rights Violations in Films *

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Abstract

This paper aims to meta-synthesize films for future research on displacement and exposure to human rights violations in cinema. With a purposive sample of eleven films, the focus was on basic human rights violations and impoverishment caused by war-related displacement. The article provided spatial diversity through the thematization, and meta-synthesis of films produced on the topic in different countries. In the selected films, displaced people were often traumatized by material and emotional poverty and human rights violations. However, in most countries of migration, discourses on refugees have been developed with the claim that they cause unemployment and cheap labour. Therefore, the research explored not only the humanitarian injustices suffered by refugees but also whether the voices of non-refugee groups experiencing poverty and unemployment are heard. According to the findings, these films often focused on displaced people, with insufficient dialogue with local people, especially those living in poverty. In an assessment, it was observed that the selected films generally lacked a solidarity ground for refugee and non-refugee vulnerable social groups who are directly and indirectly subjected to human rights violations as a result of fleeing war.

Keywords: *War, human rights filmmaking, human rights violations, poverty, displaced people*

Öz

Bu çalışma, sinemada yerinden edilme ve insan hakları ihlallerine maruz kalma üzerine gelecekte yapılacak araştırmalar için filmleri meta-sentezlemeyi amaçlamıştır. On bir filmden oluşan amaca yönelik bir örneklemle, temel insan hakları ihlallerine ve savaşa bağlı yerinden edilmenin neden olduğu yoksullaşmaya odaklanılmıştır. Makale, farklı ülkelerde konuyla ilgili üretilen filmlerin temalaştırılması ve meta-sentezi yoluyla mekânsal çeşitlilik sağlamıştır. Seçilen filmlerde, yerinden edilmiş insanlar genellikle maddi ve duygusal yoksulluk ve insan hakları ihlalleri nedeniyle travmatize edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, çoğu göç ülkesinde mültecilerle ilgili söylemler, işsizliğe ve ucuz işgücüne neden oldukları iddiasıyla geliştirilmiştir. Bu nedenle araştırma, yalnızca mültecilerin maruz kaldığı insani adaletsizlikleri değil, aynı zamanda mülteci olmayan yoksulluk ve işsizlik deneyimi yaşayan grupların seslerinin duyulup duyulmadığını da araştırmıştır. Bulgulara göre, bu filmler genellikle yerinden edilmiş insanlara odaklanmış, yerel halkla, özellikle de yoksulluk içinde yaşayanlarla yeterince diyalog kurulmamıştır. Yapılan değerlendirmeye göre, seçilen filmlerin genellikle savaştan kaçmanın bir sonucu olarak doğrudan ve dolaylı olarak insan hakları ihlallerine maruz kalan mülteci ve mülteci olmayan hassas toplumsal gruplar için bir dayanışma zemininden uzak olduğu gözlemlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Savaş, insan hakları film yapımcılığı, insan hakları ihlalleri, yoksulluk, yerinden edilmiş insanlar*

Introduction

Deprivation of human rights is an essential issue of poverty, and the more people are exposed to human rights violations, the more impoverished they are. The greatest poverty is the deprivation of the right to life of individuals or their loved ones. The right to a safe, healthy, and dignified life is a necessity and not a luxury for anyone. Unfortunately, many wars, conflicts, and climate problems deprive people of their fundamental rights. In addition, local people, especially those who experience poverty, may also feel hatred towards displaced people due to their vulnerability to cheap labour and exploitation. However, exploitation, cheap labour and hazardous labour are global problems and require solidarity between groups subjected to rights violations instead of hatred. The study starts from the hypothesis that films do not adequately portray this lack of dialogue, empathy, and solidarity. It is unique and important because it expresses such a multifaceted perspective through meta-synthesis. The research questions are:

- Which human wrongs do displaced people face in films produced in different countries?
- Do local non-refugee segments who feel negatively affected by migration and experience poverty and unemployment express themselves in these films?

People displaced by war often face human trafficking, extreme poverty, and xenophobia as human rights violations in transit and destination countries. Furthermore, almost all age groups of refugees are affected by displacement, homelessness, hate speech, crimes, exploitation and abuse by human traffickers and employers, and inability to benefit from opportunities such as education, health, and social security. Refugee children and women are often the most vulnerable groups exposed to various forms of exploitation, such as sexual harassment and rape, begging, prostitution, and child and forced marriage. The victimization of children occasionally and their loss of life on the escape routes may lead to short-term pity literature discourses (Roncallo-Dow, Córdoba-Hernández, & Durán Camero 2019). However, discriminatory language, and hate speech predominate, especially in social media and various media organs (Wigger 2019, pp.261–65; Brian Knappenberger 2022; Kehya 2018). At the same time, there is discourse that low-income locals at the same class level as refugees are also negatively affected by unemployment and exploitation by forced migration.

Therefore, this study sets out with the need to look at the human wrongs experienced by refugees while not ignoring the non-refugee segments, especially those who experience poverty problems —such a rationale brings to mind the influence of the famous visual culture theorist Rogoff's representation policies and power relations on who is shown and who is not (2002). The method of meta-synthesizing the films will be explained in the next section, and a thematic synthesis and conclusions will be drawn regarding human rights. Before the findings, a conceptual framework on human rights filmmaking and human wrongs watching will be established.

Methodology

The study associates displaced people from different countries with human wrongs and analyses film samples, especially those with a multi-layered structure with judgmental sampling. This study attempts to make a meta-synthesis on films as an alternative to meta-synthesis research as literature reviews in previous scientific research. The selected films are suitable for categorizing the social problems of refugeeism, human rights violations, and poverty. Reading all these films, we come across common themes as a meta-synthesis.

According to the definition by Seyat Polat and Osman Ay, "Meta-synthesis studies are studies that aim to interpret and evaluate the qualitative findings of studies conducted in a specific field, to reveal similar and different aspects and to make new inferences"(2016, p.52). Meta-synthesis research enables thematization of qualitative research findings and the finding and synthesis of common themes. In order for the meta-synthesis to be done correctly, research questions are first asked, literature review is conducted with appropriate keywords, sources are evaluated, and appropriate ones are included, typical themes/sub-

themes are determined, similarities and differences are determined, findings are synthesized, inferences are made and reported (Polat & Ay 2016). In this study, films are considered a source of text and literature. Films were sampled using the search words' refugee,' 'displaced people,' 'human rights,' and 'poverty' as keywords only for people affected by displacement by war and conflicts in films. People other than war and non-conflict migration were not included in the research.

Bondas and Hall suggest that meta-synthesis studies should be limited to 10-12 purposively selected studies (Bondas and Hall 2007). Therefore, for this meta-synthesis study, eleven purposefully selected films are included in the sample, which are taken care to represent different geographies. The meta-synthesis of the paper on films makes this research article explorative, unique and original. The films selected for meta-synthesis here are tabulated chronologically below:

Films	Director-Year-Country
Baran	(Majid Majidi, 2001, IR)
Turtles can Fly	(Bahman Ghobadi, 2004, IQ, IR & FR)
Terraferma	(Emanuele Crialese, 2011, FR & IT)
4.1 Miles	(Daphne Matziaraki, 2016, GR)
Misafir (The Guest)	(Andaç Haznedaroğlu, 2017)
Daha (More)	(Onur Saylak, 2017, TR)
Exodus: Our Journey to Europe	(James Bluemel et.al., 2016-2018)
Capernaum	(Nadine Labaki, 2018, LB)
Afganistanbul	(Ulaş Tosun, 2018, TR)
Island of the Hungry Ghosts	(Gabrielle Brady, 2018, DE, GB & AU)
Aylan Bebek	(Ömer Sarıkaya, 2023, TR)

Human Rights Filmmaking-Human Wrongs Watching

The representation of human rights in films falls within the political film genre and can give filmmakers an activist mission by making human rights violations visible. Establishing a link between "human rights journalism," "human rights media," and "human rights filmmaking" is feasible. Concepts such as video activism (Harding 2001), participatory research method, militant research (Bookchin et al. 2013, p.64), the "cinema of the affected" or "cinema of duty" (Malik 1996, pp.203–4) and human rights film festivals cannot

be considered independent from the concepts of "human rights journalism" and "peace journalism (Lynch 2008; Hanitzsch 2007)." Especially since documentaries are fact-based productions, human rights intersect with journalism and filmmaking. Therefore, human rights journalism should be considered at the intersection of war, migration, human rights violations, and poverty in film meta-synthesis research.

According to Selvarajah, human rights journalism (HRJ) can provide a protective function and engage activists and human rights organizations. Opposing HRJ is human wrongs journalism (HWJ), and traditional journalistic methods (HWJ) need to be revised in war journalism for reasons such as censorship and agenda-setting rather than being preventive and protective (2020, 2021). Approaching refugees in wartime and post-war situations in the context of human rights journalism requires much national and international cooperation with its preventive and protective role. It requires going beyond politics, censorship, and destructive ideological perspectives to fulfil its protection role. Destructive ideologies such as racism, xenophobia, and exclusion are meant here.

As Kate Nash mentions, by resonating beyond news reports and NGO campaigns, human rights films potentially contribute to constructing deeper and broader human ideals (Nash 2022, p.29). The fact that the people of countries with higher current vulnerabilities than Western countries with higher economic prosperity have such views should not be considered only from deductive cultural and ideological perspectives. Despite cultures and discourses of hospitality in countries with existing economic vulnerabilities, such as Greece (Yalouri 2019, p.224), Lebanon, and Turkey, there are discussions about the fragility of states in dealing with traffickers, exploitative employers and the various forms of exploitation of children and women. On the other hand, popular discourses such as unemployment, cheap labour, causing social and cultural deterioration, increasing rents, produced with the perception of refugee-induced threats and the perception that states do not prevent them contradict the previous discussions. Films can mediate the problems experienced by public authorities, local people, and refugees.

There is a need for solidarity between local and refugee-affected people in dialogues that can decipher people and establishments that are the source of injustices, authorities that will provide better supervision and regulation, and institutional and individual responsibility development. Films should be circulated with rights-based understandings to articulate human wrongs on a large scale, generating emotions, knowledge, and action. Films can serve at least more peaceful—wartime and post-wartime—approaches that can help to intervene with more prejudicial phenomena such as hate speech and crimes. Films with their potential to generate emotion (Schiffer 2022, p.253; Soykan 2020, p.335) and sustainable empathy are perfect for this.

Attributing responsibility to the audience to intervene in violations is also possible. Nash explores how films screened at human rights film festivals contribute to human rights culture. In films about victims and perpetrators, the audience is invited to identify with the protagonist who advances a narrative of self-responsibility. Human rights films contribute to a culture of human rights through working on oneself to become a subject of human rights, which requires the advancement of a global community of citizens and institutions capable of securing human rights for all on a regular and routine basis (Nash 2018, p.393). Advancing citizens and organizations in the global community must consider the imaginary (Anderson 2016; Rorty 1992) and the distinctive nature of communities, identities, and cultures.

According to Livia Hinegardner, examining human rights media in terms of the space for action and organization can uncover much more profound aspects of social and political change through the media. Making and distributing human rights videos allows individuals to militate and become active participants. Changes in political culture are much more profound than changes in formal law. Social justice spaces for political films are equipped to make profound changes (Hinegardner 2009, pp.183–84). Nash criticizes humanitarianism in human rights films, which involve appeals to 'humanity' beyond the imagined community of the nation. On the other hand, humanitarianism is based on the value of 'saving strangers', and human rights are fundamentally concerned with justice (Nash 2022). In short, film productions based on human rights can lead to political and social change with active participation framing the solutions of the victims, not their victimization.

There is an urgent need for new, self-reflexive ways of exposing not only the tragic plight of refugees but also those (us) who enable this refugee situation by silently consenting to it (Yalouri 2019, p.234).[3] With responsibility we bear, the films should be a mediating arena, addressing not only the rights of refugees but also the voices of the affected local people, for example, people experiencing poverty and, if possible, the human rights defenders who face various problems in their interventions and the struggles of the states that are refugee countries in a multi-dimensional way. If it is necessary to ensure justice, the balance of representation of those subjected to human wrongs is also a matter that must be considered. An example of a film in which both the refugee and non-refugee sides are represented is Gianfranco Rosi's *Fuocoammare* (2016). Dudley Andrew gives the most recognizable depiction of the contact zone between Europeans and refugees. For doctors dealing with refugees who die daily, it can turn from a crisis into a routine. The 6,000 inhabitants of the island have not yet given up their way of life. However, every week, they have to imagine the impact on a child of the pain and panic that is happening just over the hill (Dudley 2022, p.36). The routinization of what is happening close by on a transit island also brings to mind Susan Sontag's (2004) concept of "image fatigue" of people at remote locations. Of course, witnessing suffering at close quarters elicits more intense emotionality, even at the risk of desensitization and routinization, but in both cases, most local people go about their ordinary daily lives.

Deniz Göktürk's questions about the Refuse Works Collective's (Artıkişler Kolektifi 2007) documentary, *Hakkari'den Ankara'ya Kağıtçılar (Scavengers from Hakkari to Ankara)*, raise some inspirations about the visual culture and sociology of human

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[3] I consider "us" more as privileged groups that the author refers to here.

rights, poverty, and migration. The author asks who can tell the stories of migrants suffering from poverty, what can be done with them and for them, and what kind of difference such films, videos and research can make. (Göktürk 2022, pp.158–59). These questions of representation are not new, but the story of each displaced individual is new, unique, and, at the same time, collective and raises questions that need to be answered repeatedly. As in the next stage of the article, this requires a filmic meta-synthesis.

The Critical Meta Synthesis of Films: Human Wrongs and Displacement

People fleeing war, famine, conflict, and violence are often impoverished. Certain films reveal that the extreme impoverishment of displaced people, who leave their possessions and lose or leave loved ones behind, can generate negative consequences, including delinquency, lack of educational opportunities, and forced early labour. The selected films are suitable for categorizing the social problems of refugeeism and poverty. We analyse the films under two sub-headings to reach a meta-synthesis: (1) films about the greatest poverty and deprivation of human life on crossing borders, and (2) the poverty of refugees who have managed to reach the destination or transit countries.[4]

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, low- and middle-income countries host 76 percent of the world's displaced people and people needing international protection. Also, 70 percent live in neighbouring countries (2023). It is no coincidence that many of the selected films' locations are among low- and middle-income and neighbouring countries of refugees.

The ones experiencing human wrongs on the escape

Displaced people who cannot flee to their destination countries experience the most profound poverty as a human wrong by losing their or loved ones' lives on escape routes. Examples of the films we will examine here are as follows: Onur

Saylak's *Daha* (2017), Daphne Matziaraki's short film *4.1 Miles* (2016), Gabrielle Brady's *Island of the Hungry Ghosts* (2018), *Exodus: Our Journey* to Europe (Bluemel 2016), and Ömer Sarıkaya's *Aylan Bebek (Sarıkaya 2023)*. The themes of these films are typical of the third article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the right to a safe life (1948).

Onur Saylak's *Daha* (2017) is a Turkish film on Syrian victims of forced migration who are exposed to abuse and mistreatment by human traffickers. According to 2022 statistics, Turkey is hosting the most considerable number of refugees, with 3.6 million people (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 2023). The socio-medical issues in *Daha* are the endangerment of the life safety of the Syrians, who are victims of war and face great tragedies in human trafficking, such as being kept and waiting for days in inhumane places, being harassed, being dragged into prostitution, being killed and being subjected to verbal and physical ill-treatment. These problems are presented to the audience through the eyes of the narrator of the film, the non-refugee Daha, who is entering adolescence. Daha matures early, like refugee children. He becomes cruel and turns into a criminal against refugees throughout the film. Many refugees serve the interests of human traffickers. The text "*The first tool used by a human being is another human being*" at the film's beginning is the premise and expresses that human beings are objectified like goods and commodities. In *Daha*, displaced people are exposed to highly unhealthy living conditions before they lose their lives and turn into inanimate objects. According to Semra Öztürk and Yonca Altındal, Ahad, one adult protagonist of the film, expresses his marginalizing thought by comparing Syrians to "insects" because they fled their homeland (2019, 190). Eren Yüksel evaluates the representation and spatial experiences of refugees in *Daha* based on Marc Augé's non-place (Augé 1995) and Giorgio Agamben's concepts of bare life and camp (Agamben 1998). The spatial experiences of refugees are determined by immobility and transience. Refugees living in underground warehouses or non-places are reduced to Agamben's "bare life" concept. In general, the choice of

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[4] *This article also approaches the similar poverty experienced by refugees and non-refugees equally in the context of human rights.*

"innocent children" and "vulnerable women" figures reveals the helpless or victim status of refugees (Yüksel 2019, p.228). Augé's "non-places" refer to places of passage, the waiting rooms of society, temporary spaces where life is suspended and devoid of agency, a temporality defined by waiting, and waiting areas are non-places and have no relevance to identity or history (Augé 1995). Giorgio Agamben first theorized the "bare life" definition concerning the concentration camps of World War II, referring to stateless refugees deprived of even minimal biological rights without state protection (Agamben 1998). In a world where wars do not end, these concepts developed by Agamben and Augé continue to be frequently referred to.

Daphne Matziaraki's non-fictional short film, *4.1 Miles* (2016), reflects the efforts of the coast guard teams to rescue a refugee boat on the Greek island of Lesbos and presents to the audience the horrors faced by migrants. The location is a touristic resort, Lesbos Island in Greece, which is a place that is often the subject of news of refugees stuffed into narrow boats and drowned by sinking. The film shows European migrant crisis rescues moments by Greek authorities–drowning at sea. The greatest poverty is the loss of life of a person or loved ones and the most significant moments of despair. On the one hand, the local people or tourists go about their everyday lives, such as having breakfast or dinner on the beach. For locals with purchasing power and tourists, eating on the seafront is pleasant. It is a struggle for survival for refugees who share the same time and geographical space. In Emanuele Crialese's *Terraferma* (Crialese 2011), a film centred on the locals of Linosa Island off the coast of Sicily, there is a relatively, similar representation and the tourist-refugee dialect (see a study for further discussion, Gün & Tekemen, 2021, p. 71). The fact that fuel for the body and soul can be bought with money and survival can be bought with money contrasts. It is contrary to each other that a nice lunch for body and soul and survival can be bought. At that moment, the refugees, who are struggling to survive, not drown at sea and not be deported, pay human traffickers, and for them, eating in a tourist restaurant is ultra-luxury. *4.1 Miles* is an exceptional non-fictional documentary about the European refugee crisis of 2015,

which tells the life and death moments of the zero zone of the case. It is one exception because the refugee news, which usually drowned in the Mediterranean Sea and turned from human identity to numbers, has become image and content fatigue. We frequently heard about refugees who died in overloaded boats in Turkey and Greece, especially during this period, through social and traditional media. Among these, "Aylan Kurdi," a 3-year-old baby who drowned in the sea and whose body washed up on the Turkish shores, caused international outrage and turned into a pity fury. However, according to Roncallo-Dow et al., the effect of this news was short-lived. We should question its sustainability in this sense (2019). Similarly, during the pilot research phase of a master's thesis, while there was intense hate speech in Turkish YouTube videos about refugees, the comments under the Aylan Kurdi video showed pity, and compassion for a small child (Kehya 2018).

The body of a three-year-old Syrian baby, Aylan Kurdi, washed up on the Aegean coast of Turkey, caused outrage in Europe in 2015. *Aylan Bebek* ('Aylan Baby' Sarıkaya, 2023) became one of the symbols of the 2015 refugee crisis. The discourse and cartoonish images of *Aylan Bebek* were reproduced on social media and remained in circulation for three to five days. Even if it has a short-term effect, showing the truth rather than remaining unresponsive is preferable. The Turkish film *Aylan Bebek*, directed by Ömer Sarıkaya and released in 2023, also starred Turkish Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu and Bülent Kuşoğlu, Deputy Chairman of the opposition Republican People's Party, featuring both professional and non-professional actors (such as politicians and refugees). This film criticizes human traffickers, the silence and blindness of the rest of the world and has the discourse that they left Turkish state organs alone in the struggle with human traffickers and the survival of refugees.

The documentary *Island of the Hungry Ghosts* (2018), shot on a remote Christmas Island by Gabrielle Brady, is about a trauma therapist working in a high-security detention centre. She has been traumatized by the stories of asylum seekers (Phillips 2018). The film is set in the Australian territory of Christmas Island, where the natural migration

of animals is divinely protected. On the contrary, the chaotic migration of humans is a living hell for refugees held in a detention centre on a paradise island. Such a life reveals the temporal hell of the film with its perpetual transience and slowness. Animals usually subject to anthropocentric discrimination are now protected, and displaced people are in "other" positions. According to one reviewer, Philip Hayward, *Island of Hungry Ghosts* takes advantage of the nature, history, and culture of the island's concentration camp or society. The film's setting thus conveys the experiences and emotional traumas of a group of internees and their therapists. As the therapy sessions, the film depicts the shared experiences of people who have been invisibilised by state power, incarceration, and silencing (Hayward 2019, p.189). *Island of Hungry Ghosts* differs from many of the other films in the sample. It is not about human rights violations by "locals" in various transit countries but rather about the state's invisible and inaudible state and removing their freedom of movement.

Exodus: Exodus, Our Journey to Europe (2016-2018) is a spatially diverse activist documentary series about the European Migration crisis, using the direct address interview style and refugees' own cameras. The *Exodus* series was filmed in thirty-one countries over three years. Therefore, the series itself is a geographical meta-synthesis. *Exodus, Our Journey to Europe* records the perilous journey of refugees to Europe. In her article, Bianca Briciu discusses the narrative and cinematic strategies used by the documentary series to develop viewers' empathy towards refugee experiences:

The film dismantles the stereotypes of refugees as low class, opportunistic and potentially dangerous by showing their multidimensional experiences of suffering, resilience and courage. It creates for spectators an intersubjective experience of connection with migrants through empathic concern. The *Exodus* series faces us with a difficult moral dilemma: the dilemma of changing the way we define nations, boundaries and human identity, the true dilemma of globalization (Briciu 2020, p.8).

In the selected films on escape and forced standby, one watches the dichotomy of refugees' poverty and captivity, contrasting nature's richness and the sea's metaphorical freedom. Such places may be a paradise for the privileged Self,

but for refugees, they are a hell of standby, absence, incarceration, and deprivation. In other words, it is possible to see the relative status of heaven's beauty and hell's ugliness in the world through the drama of refugees.

Poverty is a human wrong of the surviving refugees and local low-income people

Displaced people who manage to flee to their destination countries experience less poverty by surviving than those who cannot escape and die from an existential perspective. What makes them wealthier here is their survivability. However, the socioeconomic and cultural problems of refugees who can arrive in transit or destination countries are still a reason for them to experience poverty and encounter non-refugee locals experiencing poverty. Examples of the related films to be analysed are here: Majid Majidi's *Baran* (2001), Bahman Ghobadi's *Turtles Can Fly* (2004), Emanuele Crialese's film *Terraferma* (2011), Andaç Haznedaroğlu's *Misafir (The Guest)* (2017), Nadine Labaki's *Capernaum* (2018), and Ulaş Tosun's *Afganistanbul* (2018).

Since the 2000s, the issue of refugees in Iranian cinema has been dealt with because Iran has received intensive immigration due to the war in Afghanistan. In the film *Baran* (2001), in which a refugee woman disguised as a man works in construction sites, ethnic discrimination, lack of identity, illegal, low-paid and uninsured labour in unhealthy and dangerous workplaces are common problems, as observed in migration countries. Since they are employed illegally, the fear of continuous concealment is evident. As we will see from some other examples, non-professional actors without training were employed. Also, the film includes feeling annoyed and self-discourses on the grievances of non-refugee workers against the exploitation of Afghan workers as a low-cost labour force.

Turtles Can Fly (Bahman Ghobadi, 2004) depicts how war adversely affects children and their vulnerability in the face of war, portraying displacement in a closer geography and close past tense. The film was shot in a refugee camp on the Turkish-Iraqi border in 2003. The main problem of *Turtles Can Fly*, filmed before the American invasion,

is war. The problems that accompany this crisis-making trouble are gender, disability, sexual violence and death. Children's challenges and personalities differ. However, living in the face of death to survive is the most vital problem. Although non-refugee local people are not seen here except for commercial communications, there is a hierarchy between them, at least due to the living conditions in the tents. Unlike other films, children are closer to the death of war and minefields. However, even though it is a different type of death, death is death. It is only being killed very close to the war. The economic exploitation of refugee children costs their lives or bodily organs by collecting mines in the minefield.

Andaç Haznedaroğlu's *Misafir* tells the story of a girl trying to escape from the Syrian civil war to Europe and her struggles in a transit country. In this film, homelessness is one of the most critical social problems and a significant risk. 8-year-old Lena and her little brother have lost their whole family in their bombed-out house. Similarly, their neighbour Maryam lost her whole family. Their paths crossed during the escape, and Maryam protected Lena and her brother. In this film, the spatial characteristic of Turkey as a transit country for displaced individuals aiming for Europe stands out. In the words of Deniz Bayrakdar (2022, 194), "*Misafir* depicts where those migrants in Istanbul live in cheap basement flats, as transitional spaces, and shopping malls, as non-places of super-modernity." Therefore, as in the film *Daha*, there is a spatial similarity, and, in temporal terms, the transit before reaching the shores of the sea or the land border is one of the previous stages of the escape with a compulsory waiting process because Istanbul is not a city on the sea border to Europe.

In Emanuele Crialese's film *Terraferma* (2011), set on an Italian island, it is not the locals' perception of illegal immigrants as cheap labour and a cause of unemployment that leads to conflict but the prohibition of rescuing those who sink at sea. Due to the rules set by the state, fishermen are forbidden to take refugees on their boats. A fishing family at the central axis of the film has to choose between providing humanitarian aid on the one hand and watching refugees die on the other. When they rescue refugees and the state security

forces discover this, they are not allowed to use their boats by the state, which are their source of income. The local people here are not allowed, but their conscientious guest responsibility brings to mind the Finnish film *The Other Side of Hope* (Kaurismäki 2018). Similarly, this film is about being a refugee in Finland. Gültekin stated that even in Finland, which is associated with advanced democracy and social welfare, there are problems in the humane treatment of refugees. The author observes that states cannot respond to the humanitarian crisis of states' policies towards refugees, particularly those of the European Union member states. In this context, hope is not in political institutions but in solidarity between people (Gültekin, 2021, p.83). However, *Terraferma* (2011) differs regarding citizen-state interaction from *Misafir* (2017). According to Yüksel, the film *Misafir* presents an emotional discourse on the acceptance of refugees by the citizens of the nation-state. It creates a hierarchy between them–with the opposition of helping and being helped–and delegates the state policies to individuals (Yüksel, 2019, p. 248).

In *Capernaum*, the setting is Lebanon. Being a neighbouring country like Turkey makes Lebanon a vital refugee country. 11-year-old Zain's many economic, sociological, and medical problems in a highly low-income family with many children led to his inability to benefit from children's rights. In the film, Lebanon is a transit country as a mandatory stopover and place for human trafficking. According to Roula Seghaier, *Capernaum* absolves the upper classes from responsibility for the economic inequalities that nourish them and exempts the state from any criticism. The favourable portrayal of the state, especially concerning public security, enabled *Capernaum* to quickly pass through censorship measures. Rather than reflecting chaos, the film reproduces government propaganda, legitimises a kind of liberal impunity and depicts a liberal dystopia (Seghaier 2018, p.231). Seghaier's observations on the representation of the state are similar to Yüksel's comments (Yüksel 2019, p.248) on the film *Misafir* (2017), which delegates state policies to individuals. However, Seghaier criticizes the positive representation of the state. The English title of the film, "Guest," indirectly implies

a positive representation of the state. It is reminiscent of Yalouri's (2019, p.224) mention of the culture and discourse of hospitality in Greece, Turkey's neighbour, despite its current economic vulnerabilities.

In the Artıkişler collective's video *Afghanistanbul*, for refugees struggling to survive by selling what they collect from the garbage and sleeping on the beds that more privileged ones and people with the economic power to buy new mattresses throw away, there is the danger of trying to reach a destination country again and entering the networks of human traffickers. As in *Capernaum*, they do not have a passport and, therefore, do not have access to health services. As the interviewee said, "We are nothing here." Their invisibility recalls the depiction of refugees as ghosts on the borders (Saybaşılı 2011). All the people in front of the camera are men in *Afghanistanbul*, where illegality sets the stage for cheap labour, and local garbage collectors express their anger against the reduction of the market value of labour and the risk of losing their jobs due to the increasing supply of (cheap) labour. It is common for local people (Vogt Isaksen 2019) to see refugees/asylum seekers as individual and social threats due to their current unemployment problems and cheap labour, which is a vicious circle problem brought about by poverty. Including the opinions of vulnerable local people affected by this and who work in precarious jobs increases the objectivity criterion for the documentary. It is a source of first-hand experience when realistic interventions to the problems of those affected are needed. It should not be forgotten that people working precarious local jobs are also mostly internal migrants. In this film, the fact that the local people experiencing local economic difficulties are also given the right to speak provides a two-way communication. However, the local garbage collector's derogatory remarks about Afghan refugees, such as ignorant and uneducated, warrant criticism. If illiteracy is associated with not attending school, then most of the garbage collectors in Turkey are people who have not had the opportunity to access education. They do not focus on their own history of internal migration[5] and precariousness but on the new forced migrants or

newly displaced people in an angry and ad hominem way. The directors should add first-hand views on the globalization of precarity and whether it is a system problem, with questions that move away from an *ad hominem* perspective. Films in which refugees working illegally and unregistered and non-refugees working unregistered are not isolated and can produce ideas together can offer dialogue-based alternatives for today's transnational employment world based on labour exploitation.

Discussion

In the purposively selected eleven films, which we meta-synthesis through the representation of refugees on escape routes or in transit/target countries, the danger levels are primarily about fighting for life. We encounter intense infrastructural -socioeconomic, medical, and legal- problems that violate human rights and victimize the refugees, but dialogues with non-refugees who experience poverty are missing in almost all of the films. The context of migration is different here, but we should take Yalouri's findings about the use of mimetic representation for the future, considering visual oversaturation and image fatigue. On the other hand, "intellectuals from diverse backgrounds such as Sontag (2004), Kleinman and Kleinman (1997), and Judith Butler (2004), have argued that invisibility does not help victims of injustice or atrocities" (Yalouri 2019, p.227). Therefore, considering the ways to present images in detail is necessary. However, in many media and public discourses of migration countries, refugees and immigrants are subjected to a cultural reductionist distinction between them and us. Although the selected films in the sample almost do not portray cultural factors, their role in reducing violence through more in-depth analysis should be questioned. To help serve an intervention, we should keep in mind Sen's (2008) view that approaches to explaining violence should avoid isolationist programs only regarding socioeconomic inequalities and deprivation of human rights or culture. Therefore, we should pay attention to Amartya Sen's approach:

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[5] *Many large cities in Turkey have received internal migration since the 1950s, while in recent years, following the wars in Syria and Afghanistan, external migration has also led to significant population increases.*

Theories based on the culture of societies, among which the theory of the clash of civilizations is the most influential, attempt to explain violence by referring to antagonisms between collective identities. Theories of the political economy of power and inequality seek the sole cause of violence in economic factors. While each approach has some plausibility, both are inadequate on their own (Sen 2008, p.5).

The selected films for this paper are pro-refugee films and, therefore, have a similar mission to the "cinema of the affected" or "cinema of duty" (Malik 1996, pp.203–4) in the 1960s and 1970s in some European countries, such as England and Germany. Even though the type of migration was not the same then, it was the case that non-migrants or non-refugees adopted a mission and narrated the "victims" in Europe's first decades of migration. However, it should be noted that although the actors in the films are primarily refugees, a considerable number of the filmmakers and crew are non-refugees; the depictors of the victims are not the victims from the target or transit countries. Films made by filmmakers from countries that have experienced being a refugee country have at least the potential to move away from the Eurocentric humanitarian perspective.

These films depicting people affected by the aftermath and during the war should open up for discussion missions such as peace journalism, human rights journalism and media, peace filmmaking, and human rights filmmaking. A common point observed in the films is the emphasis on people's responsibilities and human wrong behaviours and attitudes rather than the responsibility to protect of states.[6] We should think of 'Human Wrongs Filmmaking' similarly to 'Human Wrongs Journalism' (Shaw 2012). In human wrongs journalism, censorship is an obstacle to an essential human right (Selvarajah 2021, 2020). Although not explicitly mentioned in the selected films, the absence or limited criticism of states should bring factors such as censorship and funding to mind (except, for example, *Island of Hungry Ghosts*).

Article three of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person"(see Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948). Violation of this article is a significant conflict for refugees in different world geographies. Then, it is necessary to discuss the issues with dimensions such as peace filmmaking, filmmaking about the responsibility to protect, and human rights filmmaking, which concerns safeguarding human rights and intervening in violations with international and local dynamics. There is a need to develop theories and models to serve human rights in producing, screening, and reproducing such films.

Conclusion

This article sought to meta-synthesize and broaden perspectives for future research on (non-)refugees' exposure to human rights violations in cinema. In a purposively sampled selection of eleven films, it focused on the representation of violations of the right to life in safety and freedom and the extreme poverty of people displaced by war. The effects of wartime and post-war forced migration constitute significant themes among the various traumatic facts of refugee people in the selected films. In the cinemas of different countries, displaced people are represented with similar suffering. Thus, typical sub-themes cannot be limited to a few geographies; culture should not limit perceptions towards refugees and migrants. Removing the here-and-now experiences of refugees from the vicious circle of war is impossible. The domino effect of human rights violations and living in a vicious circle are visible in these films. However, the causes and dynamics of the war that displaced them before and behind are generally invisible.

When the first research question, 'Which human wrongs do displaced people face in films produced in different countries?' was meta-synthesised, a thematization can be made as socio-psychological and physical life difficulties such as their life safety being in great danger, human trafficking and their commodification, the claustrophobic characteristics of escape areas for them at sea or on land, and their being far away from human rights. Poverty awaits the luckier surviving refugees when they arrive in the host country. The

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[6] Here, one can take exception to the film Hungry Ghosts Island, which deals with a refugee detention camp.

vicious cycle of poverty can be thematized as limited living space, working in dangerous, low-paid, precarious jobs, child labour, and rape of women and girls. Moreover, refugees are often exposed to false and stigmatized discourse in the media. Each of the stages of fleeing war is tragic in films. Looking at the places of escape from war, we see that the metaphors of paradise and hell on earth are based on a double standard of human rights for the privileged and non-privileged. For example, the Aegean Sea and coasts of Italy, Turkey and Greece (for example, Istanbul, Beirut, and Christmas islands) represent paradise for tourists and privileged local people with purchasing power in terms of having fun, resting, and enjoying the sun and sea in the films. For refugees, it is hell in dark, narrow, wet, and cold spaces, including death reality.

The second research question, 'Do local non-refugee segments who feel negatively affected by migration and experience poverty and unemployment express themselves in these films?' also led to the meta-synthesis. In a considerable number of the selected films, these groups are underrepresented. For economically vulnerable non-refugee locals, for example, it is sometimes a dangerous route of migration to better living conditions in Europe - even if it does not receive as much media coverage as refugee boat deaths. The tourist destinations in the films are more often inaccessible and expensive holiday destinations for low-income, vulnerable locals. In contrast to the speculative discourse in the media about refugees' unemployment and reduced wages, their voices are generally not heard in the films. For the non-privileged, disadvantaged and poverty-stricken locals, it should be possible to speak of relatively squeezed living conditions in material and moral terms.

In conclusion, holiday destinations, which are advertised as paradises on earth, serve the function of refreshment for tourists. For refugees, they are tantamount to facing death. Displaced people and vulnerable local people should have opportunities to express their "hellish conditions" in the media and films, which should depict the sociocultural facts to inform and sensitize the audience, including human rights organizations, national and international lawmakers, and practitioners. In addition, the expression and cooperation of local people who are not socioeconomically privileged and affected by the exploitation of cheap labour should also be included in the films, and the films should become an arena of mediation, reconciliation, and solidarity for different social groups exposed to human rights violations due to migration.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Transition Experiences of TADYA Women to Agroecological Living

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Abstract

This study was conducted using a qualitative research design to explore the experiences of women within the Tahtacıörencik Natural Life Collective (TADYA), located in the Güdül district of Ankara, as they transitioned to an agroecological way of life. Over the course of the research, participant observation was performed at various intervals, and in-depth interviews were conducted with six women. The transcribed interviews were then thematically analyzed using the Atlas.ti software. Based on the analysis, five key themes emerged: the economic empowerment of TADYA women and its broader ramifications; the transformation of the public sphere; a range of psycho-social changes; the role and influence of technology utilization; and, finally, styles of solidarity and conflict resolution within the collective. The findings shed light on the multifaceted impacts of agroecology on women's daily lives, emphasizing how these experiences can foster empowerment and catalyze broader social change. Overall, the results underscore the potential of agroecological practices to enhance women's agency, support collective collaboration, and drive a more inclusive social transformation.

Keywords: *Agroecology, rural women, women empowerment, eco-friendly living*

Öz

Bu çalışma, Ankara'nın Güdül ilçesinde yer alan Tahtacıörencik Doğal Yaşam Kolektifi (TADYA) üyesi kadınların agroekolojik yaşama geçiş süreçlerini ve deneyimlerini derinlemesine anlamak amacıyla tasarlanmıştır. Nitel araştırma deseni çerçevesinde, belirli zaman aralıklarında katılımcı gözlem yapılmış ve altı kadınla derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Elde edilen veriler, Atlas.ti programı kullanılarak tematik analiz yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Analiz sonucunda beş temel tema ortaya çıkmıştır: İlki, TADYA üyesi kadınların ekonomik açıdan güçlenmesi ve bu güçlenmenin çeşitli alanlara yansımalarıdır. İkincisi, kamusal alanın dönüşümünü ele almakta ve kadınların toplumsal katılım süreçlerine yeni boyutlar eklemektedir. Üçüncü tema, psiko-sosyal değişimleri içererek kadınların duygu, düşünce ve sosyal ilişkilerindeki dönüşümleri vurgulamaktadır. Dördüncü tema, teknoloji kullanımının kadınların günlük yaşamlarında yarattığı etkileri ve bunun yansımalarını kapsamaktadır. Son tema ise kolektif içerisinde deneyimlenen dayanışma ve olası çatışma stillerini irdelemektedir. Bu bulgular, agroekoloji yaklaşımının kadınlar üzerindeki çok yönlü etkisini ve kadınların güçlenme süreçlerine nasıl katkı sunduğunu gözler önüne sermekte; aynı zamanda toplumsal dönüşüm potansiyelini de ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Agroekoloji, kırsal kadın, kadın güçlenmesi, doğa dostu yaşam*

Introduction

This study explores how the agroecological lifestyle, introduced in 2013 in Tahtacıörencik village, has influenced the lives of participating women. Grounded in small-scale family farming, agroecology emphasizes eco-friendly practices, reduces economic inputs, decreases market dependency, and supports farmer autonomy.

This study highlights the principles of agroecology, discusses its social dimensions its relationship with gender dynamics. It focuses on the agroecological experiences of women in the Tahtacıörencik Natural Living Collective (TADYA), the first and only village-level agroecological initiative in Turkey. These experiences are analyzed through five key themes, informed by relevant literature. The study concludes by presenting findings and offering recommendations based on the findings.

Conceptual Framework

Agroecology, as both a scientific approach to eco-friendly food production and a social-political movement, has drawn significant attention from social scientists. This section examines its historical development, highlights its links to women's empowerment, and outlines the research questions and significance of this study.

The term "agroecology," introduced by Basil Bensin in the 1930s to describe eco-friendly crop production, now refers to a scientific discipline, social movement, and set of practices (Wezel et al., 2011). Although the term entered the academic literature in the 1930s, its historical roots lie in the agricultural knowledge and experiences of peasants and Indigenous communities worldwide. Agroecology is a liberating movement that enhances farmers' power and control over their production, fosters transformative social processes for the dissemination of agroecological practices, and ensures access to healthy, environmentally friendly food, thereby aiming for "food sovereignty" (Roset & Altieri, 2022).

Since 1992, agroecology has gained recognition within the FAO's framework, largely due to the efforts of La Via Campesina, the world's largest transnational social movement. As a science, agroecology takes a holistic approach to the ecology of entire food systems, addressing ecological, economic, and social dimensions. As a social movement, it emphasizes family farming, short supply chains, and solutions to challenges such as climate change, malnutrition, the right to food, and food sovereignty, while supporting rural development. As a set of practices, agroecology aims to enhance ecosystems by leveraging natural processes and fostering beneficial biological interactions and synergies among its components (Kır, 2021). In all these dimensions, agroecology integrates local and traditional knowledge with modern scientific understanding.

Today, the FAO recognizes food, health, natural resources, and livelihoods not as separate domains but as interconnected and complex processes. This comprehensive approach encompasses poverty reduction, natural resource conservation, climate change mitigation, biodiversity preservation, and sensitivity to human rights and social-environmental justice (FAO, 2024).

Vandana Shiva, a prominent figure in ecofeminism, asserts that agroecology has genuine feminist roots. She emphasizes that industrial monoculture reflects patriarchal thought in agriculture and that agroecology serves as a powerful tool to counteract this by promoting gender equality (Shiva, 1993). Additionally, studies have observed that peasant and women farmers often play the role of visible or invisible protagonists in agroecological transformation processes (Siliprandi, 2015; cited in Roset & Altieri, 2022, p. 76).

According to Peter Rosset and Miguel Altieri, leading figures in agroecology, women's adoption of agroecological lifestyles is often driven by their concern for "family health and nutrition" within the household. This concern leads them to eliminate the use of agrochemicals that pose risks to human health, ultimately fostering efforts to produce healthy food. In addition, Rosset and Altieri argue that industrial agriculture reinforces patriarchal control by concentrating responsibilities and income on the male head of the family. In contrast, agroecological practices redistribute roles among family members and

provide women with independent income sources. Cuba offers a compelling example of how agroecology can reduce patriarchal power and transform social and cultural life. (Roset & Altieri, 2022, p. 77).

Beyond Cuba, other successful examples include the Farmer-to-Farmer movement in Central America (Guatemala, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Honduras) and agroecological transformation initiatives in India and southern Brazil. In these cases, two key features stand out: the presence of organized social mobilization and the critical role of women's participation in advancing agroecological transformation (Cacho et al., 2021). From this perspective, the absence of field studies in Turkey that directly investigate the role of women within agroecological initiatives highlights the necessity of this research.

In Turkey, neoliberal agricultural policies, rooted in the 1980s, were shaped in line with the World Bank and European Union's liberalization agendas advocating for restructuring and privatization in agriculture, and their effects persist to this day. These neoliberal policies made farmers increasingly dependent on markets for agricultural inputs (such as seeds, agrochemicals, and fuel for mechanized farming) and forced them into heavy bank debts, leading to growing impoverishment among farmers (Keyder & Yenal, 2020).

In alignment with these neoliberal approaches, the Seed Law No. 5553, enacted in 2006 as part of the EU harmonization program, mandated the use of certified seeds and prohibited the sale and purchase of uncertified local seeds (Nizam & Yenal, 2020). This law further entrenched market dependency, particularly for small-scale family farmers, many of whom were forced to abandon their villages and migrate to cities as unskilled laborers. By 2017, the government adopted a radical shift in its seed policy, promoting the registration and widespread use of "local and national seeds." While this policy remains in effect today, during the intervening years, many heirloom seed varieties—once banned outright—were nearly forgotten in the chests of grandmothers (Göker, 2019). Currently, although national seed policies persist, government support

is directed primarily toward farmers registered in the official agricultural registry system who use certified local seeds (how these seeds are registered and reproduced remains a subject for further research) or imported seeds provided by private companies (Kurtege Sefer, 2022). Moreover, the enactment of Law No. 6360 in 2012 (Official Gazette, 2024), which reclassified many villages by stripping them of their legal entity status and converting them into neighbourhoods, has significantly increased the costs of farming and livestock production in these areas.

Considering all these processes, agroecology, which is based on small-scale family farming and aims to minimize agricultural input costs while empowering local farmers by increasing their control and authority over their own production (Özkaya & Özden, 2021), emerges as an alternative movement for Turkey. By providing a natural foundation for rural women to transition from being unpaid family labourers to gaining empowerment and autonomy, agroecology offers significant potential.

In this context, the study aims to understand how the lives of TADYA women members have transformed as they transitioned to an agroecological lifestyle. To achieve this aim, the following sub-questions were addressed:

- How has the economic life of women changed after joining TADYA, and how has this change influenced other aspects of their lives?
- How does the class distinction between a "new rural woman" and a TADYA member who has spent her entire life in rural environments manifest in terms of their agroecological transformation?
- How is women's solidarity built within TADYA, an agroecological initiative?

Studies addressing the situation of rural women in Turkey have recently focused on women's cooperatives, whose numbers have been rapidly increasing in line with the goals of sustainable development. These studies in the relevant literature primarily examine how women are affected economically, followed by psychological, social, organizational, and environmental dimensions (Vurkun Çavdar &

Atasü Topcuoğlu, 2023; Şahankaya et al., 2023). While most of these works emphasize women's empowerment, there are also studies that explore dynamics of solidarity, conflict, and exploitation within cooperatives (Kurtege Sefer, 2023). For this reason, it is crucial to understand how women are affected psychosocially, economically, and ecologically in TADYA, a collective that consciously chooses to operate as a collective rather than a cooperative.

This study aims to make two original contributions to the academic literature. First, it seeks to address the gap in the domestic literature by examining the connection between women and agroecology—a movement with feminist roots that has emerged not only as a form of agricultural production but also as a social movement. Second, it aims to fill the gap stemming from the lack of field studies exploring how the eco-friendly and environmentally conscious principles and criteria inherent in agroecology impact women.

Methodology

This study was designed to explore how the agroecological production activities carried out under the TADYA (Tahtacıörencik Natural Life) Collective in Tahtacıörencik Village, located in the Güdül District of rural Ankara, have influenced or transformed the lives of women participating in the collective. For this purpose, the research employs a qualitative approach using a phenomenological design.

Qualitative research is a methodology aimed at providing a detailed and in-depth description of individuals and cultures, uncovering the meanings people attribute to reality, as well as their understanding of events, processes, and perceptions (Kümbetoğlu, 2008, p.47). Phenomenological design, on the other hand, examines phenomena that individuals are aware of but often understand only superficially, aiming to reveal deeper meaning-making processes upon closer examination. It focuses on uncovering the ways in which individuals interpret their lived experiences, and the meanings embedded in those experiences (Creswell, 2013).

Details regarding the research field, the selection of the study group, and data analysis are provided below.

Research Field and Selection of the Study Group

In Tahtacıörencik Village, where small-scale agriculture is practiced, families have been transitioning from industrial agriculture to agroecological farming since 2010, encouraged by the Four Seasons Ecological Life Association. To facilitate the marketing of products from the village and the transfer of knowledge, the TADYA (Tahtacıörencik Natural Life) Collective was established in April 2013. Among the 18 families participating in TADYA, there are 26 adult members, 15 of whom are women. Two families have no prior connection to the village, relocated specifically to join TADYA's activities.

The study group is composed of:

1. Women who have lived in the village since birth and have never left (4 women).

2. Women who relocated to the village later as "new villagers," with no prior connection to the village (2 women).

These two socio-culturally distinct groups were selected to explore how agroecological living differs based on class-based dynamics (local villagers vs. new villagers).

The primary factor influencing the selection of the research field was TADYA's status as the first organized group in Turkey to adopt agroecological living, achieved at the village scale. Additionally, TADYA's ongoing effort to maintain its identity as a collective rather than transitioning into a cooperative was another significant consideration.

TADYA producers commit to offering only environmentally friendly products to consumers. The definition of "environmentally friendly products" is based on the agroecological production criteria of the Natural Food, Conscious Eating Network (DBB), which operates as a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS). These criteria ensure that no systemic chemical substances (pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, hormones, additives, etc.) are used at any stage of production and promote methods respectful of

both nature and human health (tahtaciorencik.org, TADYA Introduction Page, 2024).

In addition to its ecological principles, TADYA operates as a collective where every member has equal participation rights in decision-making and operational processes. Decisions are made through consensus, and in cases of disagreement, members are encouraged to persuade one another to reach a resolution. This egalitarian model stands in stark contrast to the hierarchical structure required for cooperatives, which are legally defined as "business enterprises" under Turkish law (T.C. Ministry of Customs and Trade, Directorate General of Cooperatives, 2012) and are subject to the taxation. For this reason, TADYA rejects transitioning into a cooperative.

Furthermore, aligned with agroecological principles, TADYA embraces a short supply chain, emphasizing direct, intermediary-free interaction between producers and consumers. This approach supports both its producers and "prosumers" economically, ecologically, and psychosocially, reinforcing its identity as a nature-friendly organization.

Data Collection and Participants

In-depth interviews were conducted with the selected women using a semi-structured questionnaire. Additionally, participant observation was carried out by living in the village with the families, particularly during the summer months when production activities are at their peak. The in-depth interviews were conducted between June and September 2023, while participant observation was carried out in August-September 2022 and August 2023.

After the completing the fieldwork and transcription processes, one "new villager" participant voluntarily requested to withdraw from the study. This request was respected, and the participant was removed from the sample. As a result, the number of participants decreased from 6 to 5 at the analysis stage.

The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participant	Age	Education Level	Marital Status	Local Or New Villagers
Participant 1	56	University	Single	New Villager
Participant 2	29	high school	Married	Local Villager
Participant 3	57	Primary School	Married	
Participant 4	57	Primary School	Married	Local Villager
Participant 5	60	Primary School	Widowed	Local Villager

Data Analysis

Interviews conducted with the semi-structured questionnaire were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed shortly thereafter. The interviews were typically held face-to-face at the participants' homes, gardens, or the village square park. In addition to audio recordings, notes were taken using pen and paper during the interviews. These notes were incorporated into the transcripts during the transcription process immediately following the interviews.

The duration of the interviews ranged from 40 minutes (the shortest) to approximately 90 minutes (the longest).

The transcribed interviews were reviewed alongside the audio recordings for accuracy and then uploaded to the Atlas.ti software for analysis. The analysis process employed *template analysis*, a subtype of thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 79). Template analysis provides the researcher with significant flexibility by allowing the identification of key themes early in the analysis process, either simultaneously with or prior to coding.

After completing the first level of coding (120 codes), axial coding (Neuman, 2006, p. 662) was used to create subthemes aligned with the five main themes identified at the outset of the analysis. Table 2 presents detailed information on the code groups, subthemes, and main themes.

Ethics

Approval for conducting the research was obtained from the Hacettepe University Ethics

Committee. The study was deemed ethically appropriate with the letter dated April 12, 2022, and numbered E-35853172-900-00002139555. At the beginning of the interviews, participants were provided with detailed information regarding the purpose and methodology of the study, as well as the intended use of the collected data. Consent was obtained through a "Informed Voluntary Participation Form." To ensure anonymity, participants' identities have not been disclosed in the study.

As previously mentioned, this study was conducted on a voluntary basis. After transcribing the audio recordings, one participant requested withdrawal. The request was respected, and her audio files and transcripts were permanently deleted.

Women and Its Reflections," "Transformation of Public Space," "Psycho-Social Changes," "Technology Use and Its Reflections," and "Fragility of Women's Solidarity." The first and fifth themes each include two sub-themes

Economic Empowerment of Women and Its Reflections

The first aspect examined to understand how the lives of TADYA women have transformed through adopting an agroecological lifestyle was the changes in their economic circumstances. Economic empowerment of women is a fundamental factor in achieving gender equality **and transforming other dimensions of women's** lives, such as their social lives, family dynamics,

Table 2. Main Themes, Sub-Themes, and Code Groups

MAIN THEMES	Economic Empowerment of Women and Its Reflections		Transformation of Public Space	Psycho-Social Changes	Technology Use and Its Reflections	Fragility of Women's Solidarity	
SUB-THEMES	1.Economic Development: Women's Economic Empowerment	2.Changes in Family Power Dynamics	Transformation of Public Space	Psycho-Social Changes	Technology Use and Its Reflections	1.Conflict: Causes and Resolutions	2.Circumstances Revealing Class Difference: Conflict Resolution
CODE GROUPS	1.TADYA and Economic Development	1.Spousal Income Management	1.Impact of Biodiversity in Agroecology on Markets	1.Consumer Satisfaction with Agroecological Products	1.Technology Use and Its Reflections	1.Internal Jealousies and Gossip in TADYA	1.The Adaptation Process of New Villagers in TADYA
	2.Impact of Biodiversity in Agroecology on Markets	2.Lending Practices	2.Consumer Satisfaction	2.Ecological Awareness and Individual Well-Being		2.Grouping Within TADYA	
	3.TADYA and Biodiversity	3.Decision-Making Processes in the Family	3.Relationship with Markets	3. Confidence		3.TADYA Principles and Communication Challenges	
	4.TADYA and Women's Empowerment	4.Division of Labor Between Spouses	4.Transformation of Spaces in Women's Empowerment at TADYA	4.Power of Socialization		4.Solidarity Among TADYA Women	
		5.Financial Management in Families		5.Reflections of Popularity			

Findings

The research findings are categorized into five main themes: **"Economic Empowerment of**

and relationships with their spouses.

In her study on rural development, women's labour, and the role of NGOs, Kurtege Sefer (2023) critiques the state's approach to sustainable development goals, which often views women as a

homogenous group and focuses solely on economic empowerment while ignoring the socio-economic and cultural contexts in which women exist. She warns that this approach risks reproducing traditional gender roles. In the case of TADYA, however, we observed that women's economic empowerment has shifted power dynamics within families in favour of women, increased their visibility in public spaces, and ultimately enhanced their psycho-social well-being. This transformation can be attributed to TADYA's adherence to agroecological principles as a collective and the compatibility of the village's socio-cultural structure with this transition.

As outlined in the introduction of this study, industrial agriculture often reinforces patriarchal mindsets in various ways, whereas agroecology aims to empower women and promote gender equality. Our findings indicate that similar processes are at work within TADYA. Although the TADYA women had differing levels of involvement in agriculture prior to joining the collective, all participants reported experiencing economic empowerment after becoming members of TADYA.

Women who had been engaged in agriculture before joining TADYA described how they had previously produced solely for their own household needs and earned no income from their efforts. However, with TADYA's establishment and the increasing demand over time, these women expanded their production and diversified their range of products. This shift aligned with the principles of agroecology, particularly its emphasis on biodiversity.

"For example, I used to grow just enough for myself… eggplants, cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, stuffed peppers, chili peppers, hot peppers. It was enough for my needs, for the winter stock, and for eating during the summer. After joining TADYA, I expanded the garden..." (Participant 4)

When reviewing the relevant literature, it becomes clear that women's economic empowerment is frequently pursued through women's cooperatives. However, Nizam and Yenal (2020) illustrate in their study how women

from the village of Gödence in Seferihisar achieved economic empowerment by producing and selling goods made from heirloom Karakılçık wheat in local markets. Much like the processes observed in TADYA, the women in Gödence were involved in every stage of production, from seed to final product. Additionally, drawing on the traditional knowledge of women over the age of 50, recipes were developed, and the resulting products were sold directly in producer markets without intermediaries (pp. 17–18).

Changes in Power Dynamics Within the Family

The economic empowerment of TADYA women, and for many, their attainment of financial independence, has brought significant changes to family roles and spousal relationships. One of the most striking examples of this shift is women lending money to their husbands. Prior to joining TADYA, these women were entirely dependent on their spouses for financial needs, having to ask them for money for every expense. However, with the economic independence they gained through TADYA, many women reported that their husbands now occasionally ask them for loans.

"Yes, for example, most women used to depend entirely on their husbands financially, but now they've started earning their own income. My sister-in-law, for instance, says: 'My husband asks me for a loan now. But I lend him the money and make sure I get it back the same way I gave it.'" (Participant 2)

In some TADYA families, the management of household finances has shifted entirely to the women. Before TADYA, the family's income was controlled through the husband's bank account. However, with TADYA, a bank account was opened in the woman's name, and she began managing all the income through that account. Women who previously had to ask their husbands for money for every expense have now reversed the dynamic entirely, taking on the role of allocating allowances to their husbands. This shift demonstrates how TADYA has effectively reversed power dynamics between spouses, highlighting agroecology's potential to challenge

patriarchal dominance. In our case, it underscores agroecology as a significant tool for empowering women and diminishing male authority.

As highlighted earlier, studies on women's empowerment in Turkey predominantly focus on women's cooperatives, whereas TADYA stands out as a unique example due to its collective structure. Nevertheless, a review of existing research, such as the systematic analysis by Vurkun Çavdar and Atasü Topcuoğlu (2023) examining 15 studies on women's cooperatives in Turkey, reveals that most studies agree women experience economic empowerment through these initiatives. Furthermore, this economic empowerment improves women's psychological, social, organizational, and environmental domains (pp. 58–60). Additional research on rural women's empowerment, such as studies by Akgül (2022), Kasap & Eroğlu (2021), and Gümüşoğlu (2012), also demonstrates that economic empowerment enhances women's respect and status within the family, particularly in the eyes of their husbands. What sets TADYA apart from these examples, however, is that women's increased respect within the household extends further—culminating in their full control over financial management within the family.

Transformation of Public Space

The private-public space dichotomy, a key topic in discussions on women's empowerment, remains significant for feminist movements, particularly since the 1980s (Dinçer, 2023). One of the most notable reflections of TADYA women's empowerment is evident in their use of the village coffeehouse, historically the most important public space in the village and one previously reserved exclusively for men.

Today, the coffeehouse has transformed into a space where TADYA women can freely enter and participate. It has become a venue where women and men come together to discuss issues related to TADYA, share ideas on national agricultural policies, and host agroecology training sessions. This shift illustrates the significant social changes driven by the empowerment of TADYA women.

"The women in our village now go into the coffeehouse (village coffee) and sit down. In the past, they couldn't sit there. They say, 'We go into the coffeehouse now and sit. We couldn't even walk in past. But now, for example, my sister-in-law can sit and chat with the men, like with my uncle." (Participant 2)

Village Coffee, considered the first public spaces of Anatolia (Çağlayan, 2012), remain in rural areas as key male-dominated venues where men socialize exclusively with other men. These spaces are traditionally places from which women are excluded, with societal expectations even dictating that women dress modestly when passing by (Ardahan, 2015). However, the empowerment of TADYA women through their shift toward an agroecological lifestyle has significantly transformed the use of the "village coffeehouse," the most male-dominated space in the community, in favor of women.

This dimension of women's empowerment revealed in our study is particularly significant. The transformation of space plays a crucial role in achieving gender equality. While many recent studies on women's empowerment through cooperatives (Vurkun Çavdar & Atasü Topcuoğlu, 2023; Akgül, 2022; Gümüşoğlu, 2012) have found that cooperatives increase women's visibility in public spaces, no direct evidence of the transformation of public spaces themselves has been identified in the existing literature.

Psycho-Social Transformations

One of the most significant processes accompanying the increased income, independence from spouses, and heightened public visibility of TADYA women is their psycho-social empowerment. This is a two-way process, making it difficult to distinguish causes from effects. Many of the women we interviewed shared that being part of TADYA boosted their self-confidence, improved their public speaking skills, and enabled them to communicate more comfortably with urban individuals—something they previously found intimidating.

In the early TADYA meetings, many women avoided speaking, preferred not to be noticed, and

struggled to express themselves even when given the opportunity. Today, these same women are often at the forefront of meetings, confidently voicing their opinions and embracing the opportunity to participate.

"…Even when I was just sitting in a meeting, my legs would tremble… but now I feel at ease. In the past, I would think, 'I hope no one asks me a question or even notices me.' Now, I just go in, sit down, and feel comfortable." (Participant 4)

A key factor in the psycho-social empowerment of TADYA women is their interaction with urban individuals. Since 2013, village tours have been organized to introduce urban residents to an eco-friendly way of life and create opportunities for them to connect directly with the farmers who produce their food. These interactions foster mutual bonds between producers and the "prosumers" (producer-consumers). Additionally, the weekly direct-to-home sales system, where each product is accompanied by detailed labelling, allows prosumers to contact producers directly via phone, providing feedback even if they cannot visit the village.

This engagement with a changing social environment helps TADYA women develop a social identity. Previously, these women primarily produced small-scale, less diverse goods for their families and interacted only within their immediate communities. Now, they confidently offer a wide variety of eco-friendly products to a broader audience, gaining visibility and pride in their work.

Studies on rural women's cooperatives in Turkey (Akgül, 2022; Başaran & Irmak, 2022; Kasap & Eroğlu, 2021; Demircan Yıldırım, 2020; Gümüşoğlu, 2012) have similarly found that joining cooperatives boosts women's confidence, improves their ability to express themselves in social contexts, and strengthens their relationships with public institutions. While women's cooperatives typically focus on promoting gender equality, female entrepreneurship, employment, and economic empowerment (Kurtege Sefer, 2024; Şahankaya Adar et al., 2023), it is crucial to adopt a holistic perspective that also considers the psycho-

social, cultural, and environmental dimensions of development (FAO, 2024).

For TADYA women, being part of an eco-friendly movement like agroecology is a critical factor supporting their psycho-social well-being. The movement not only empowers them economically but also fosters a sense of purpose and moral satisfaction through sustainable, nature-conscious practices.

Technology Use and Its Reflections

During the interviews with TADYA women, we observed that all of them, including those who were illiterate, owned smartphones. When asked about this, the women explained that they had purchased smartphones to track orders for TADYA, manage the storage of their products for winter, and explore gastronomic activities beyond the village's traditional flavours.

Even those who could not use the phones independently mentioned that they sought help from younger villagers whenever they wanted to look up recipes. This enabled them to expand their product offerings to include items such as canned foods, dairy products, pickles, sauces, and marmalades, all of which were highly satisfying to "prosumers." As a result, they were able to increase their sales significantly.

Another key factor driving smartphone use among TADYA women is the ability to photograph their products. This serves multiple important purposes. First, in line with TADYA's principles, photographs are used as evidence in agroecological audits, which are regularly planned. Monitoring the variety and quantity of products harvested from specific gardens is conducted by two TADYA inspectors during farm visits. In cases where visits are delayed, photographs are used to ensure compliance with agroecological standards.

Similarly, the production stages of canned goods, sauces, jams, bread, and jarred meals are documented through photographs and shared with producer and prosumer groups. This visual documentation aims to demonstrate adherence to agroecological principles and the use of eco-friendly methods at every stage of production. For

example, it showcases practices like using glass or paper packaging instead of plastic and implementing permaculture techniques in gardens. This approach fosters a more transparent production process, ensuring trust between producers and consumers while maintaining a commitment to nature-friendly practices.

While the use of smartphones has increased significantly among TADYA women, the same enthusiasm has not yet extended to computer use. Managing weekly order forms—a task that involves updating forms, sending them to prosumers, and closing products once stock is depleted—requires proficiency with computers. However, for women who have spent their entire lives in the village, computer use remains a challenging and intimidating process.

Although some women have taken steps toward learning computer skills and made some progress, many still find the task of using a computer and managing TADYA's order forms overwhelming. This issue highlights a key difference between women who have always lived in the village and those who have relocated there later in life. Women who joined TADYA after moving to the village tend to have greater confidence in using computers and are more comfortable handling tasks like order management. Meanwhile, lifelong village residents remain hesitant—perhaps, as one of them put it, "lacking courage"—despite the full trust placed in them by their more experienced peers.

When examining studies on rural women through the lens of cooperatives (Başaran & Irmak, 2022; Kasap & Eroğlu, 2021; Demircan Yıldırım, 2020; Gümüşoğlu, 2012), there is a notable absence of data on how cooperatives influence women's use of technology. However, within feminist literature, we encounter critical studies addressing the masculine nature of technology, rooted in the dichotomy of the feminine (nature) and the masculine (science) (Savcı, 1999; Shiva & Mies, 2019).

In this context, the TADYA example demonstrates that agroecological living has increased women's engagement with technology. This aligns directly with Shiva's (1993) argument that agroecology, in contrast to industrial agriculture, has feminist roots. TADYA's experience highlights how an eco-friendly framework can challenge traditional gendered associations with technology and foster women's technological empowerment.

The Fragility of Women's Solidarity

During our participant observations and interviews, we noted both the presence and fragility of women's solidarity within the largely female-led TADYA collective. Agroecology, grounded in Paulo Freire's 1970s "constructivist education" model, emphasizes non-hierarchical, horizontal communication, where "dialogue" is seen as an existential necessity (Freire, 2019, p. 108). However, achieving this awareness and creating a non-oppressive, liberating discussion platform is challenging within the constraints of existing cultural norms.

Although the focus on women's cooperatives in studies addressing rural women in Turkey is well-justified, it is worth noting that cooperatives, by legal definition, are hierarchical structures. This often complicates the idea of equal participation and decision-making among members (Kurtege Sefer, 2023). In contrast, TADYA functions as a collective aligned with agroecology's constructivist learning model, and its members occasionally receive "non-violent communication" training. However, the process of behavior change among TADYA women has been slow and challenging.

While we observed a degree of solidarity and mutual assistance among TADYA women, particularly within smaller subgroups, the collective often experiences intense conflicts that overshadow collaboration. These disputes tend to occur more frequently during activities like preparing weekly orders rather than during collaborative tasks such as cutting noodles, making stuffed vegetables, or producing tarhana. At times, these conflicts escalate to the point where some members avoid attending meetings altogether, despite these gatherings being intended as social opportunities.

Our analysis identified three primary causes of these conflicts: jealousy/envy, ineffective communication, and group dynamics. These factors are deeply intertwined and are better understood as a complex, self-reinforcing cycle. For instance, conflicts often arise when a member earns more money from weekly sales or offers a greater variety of products than others. Unresolved interpersonal issues from the past further exacerbate these tensions.

Another source of conflict stems from TADYA's principles and criteria. Based on DBB's agroecological standards, these principles clearly outline how the collective should operate, including collaboration, task distribution, monitoring processes, announcements, and sales. They also emphasize the importance of "non-violent communication" throughout these processes (TADYA, 2024). Despite these guidelines being clearly communicated to every new member, disputes still occur during product preparation or in response to consumer feedback. These conflicts reveal the underlying challenges in maintaining solidarity within the collective while adhering to agroecological principles.

Our observations revealed that other significant causes of conflict among TADYA women include gossip, indirect communication, and reliance on uninvolved third parties to address issues. When asked why they avoid direct communication or resolving issues with the person involved, many TADYA women explained that they are either relatives or childhood friends with one another. This closeness creates a fear that direct criticism might "escalate the issue," leading to larger conflicts.

During participant observations, it became clear that when a problem arises involving a member, others often discuss the issue with someone they feel close to, but when interacting with the person involved, they act as if no problem exists. This behaviour has normalized cliques and exclusions among members, making them an expected aspect of group dynamics.

This situation highlights that for TADYA women, solidarity and conflict coexist on a fragile foundation, underscoring the need for further development in managing interpersonal relationships. When asked about conflict resolution, the women acknowledged that conflict is a normal part of their collective experience. They expressed their commitment to addressing conflicts and improving their "non-violent communication" practices. Many reflected on past experiences, recognizing that suppressing or ignoring issues led to more significant problems later. As a result, they are motivated to prioritize finding pathways to solidarity over avoiding conflicts.

"It's normal within TADYA; things are resolved or being worked on. Nothing is swept under the rug without resolution… Otherwise, it piles up and eventually explodes in unexpected ways. So, we'll find solutions; we'll talk it out." (Participant 2)

While literature on women in cooperatives often highlights solidarity and unity (Başaran & Irmak, 2022; Demircan Yıldırım, 2020), the dynamics observed among TADYA women show that even when working toward the same goal, women are not a homogeneous group. For the members of TADYA, a nature-friendly collective, progress happens not *despite conflict* but *alongside it*. Conflict can become a pathway for growth only when everyone has an equal voice and value within the group. In such an environment, conflict is seen not as a barrier but as an integral part of collective development.

Class Differences and Conflict Resolution

When designing our research, we aimed to explore how class differences between a "new villager" member of TADYA and women who have lived their entire lives in the village would influence agroecological transformation. These differences became apparent in their approaches to conflict resolution. One participant, who had no prior direct connection to rural life and previously worked as a high-ranking executive in the city, moved to the village motivated by a desire for healthy, clean food. Initially a prosumer of TADYA, she eventually relocated to the village, purchasing a 20-acre vineyard and building a

home for her family that aligned with the village's traditional architecture.

This participant, who maintains a certain distance from both conflicts and closer relationships within the group, finds the dynamics among the long-time village residents of TADYA to be highly complex. She noted,

"They've been here for so long. I can't really understand them. One day they're fighting, and the next day they act as if nothing happened. For me, if I had been in such an intense argument, it would mean the end of the relationship. But that's not how it works here."

She also admitted to avoiding interactions she feels unprepared to handle.

While primarily focused on managing her vineyard, this participant and her family also remain active as TADYA prosumers, sourcing all their vegetables, grains, and legumes from other TADYA producers. Additionally, they provide feedback within the TADYA network to support producers in improving their practices.

Globally, the "new peasantry" movement has sparked optimistic perspectives about its potential to reshape agriculture (Ploeg, 2018; Özkaya, 2016). However, in Turkey, there are contrasting views, with some arguing that this movement does not hold the same promise (Aydın, 2016). While the forms of new peasantry vary across cultures (Ploeg, 2018), the TADYA example suggests that agroecological practices play a significant role in nurturing this movement. This highlights the potential of agroecology to bridge class differences and promote sustainable, inclusive agricultural practices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this study, which explores the impact of agroecological practices on women through the case of TADYA, indicate that an agroecology-oriented movement plays a significant role in empowering women economically and psycho-socially. It also enhances their use of public space and integration of technology into their lives. TADYA's model shows

key similarities with rural women's cooperatives, especially in terms of economic and psychosocial empowerment, as well as increasing the visibility of women in the public sphere. However, TADYA's uniqueness lies in two main aspects.

First, TADYA is deeply rooted in agroecology, which not only promotes sustainable agricultural practices but also aligns with a nature-friendly and environmentalist ethos. This emphasis on environmental sustainability enriches the women's relationship with the land, allowing them to connect with nature and embrace practices that benefit the environment, such as permaculture, organic farming, and agroecological principles. This ecological focus gives the women of TADYA a sense of belonging to a movement that goes beyond economic gain to embrace broader ethical and environmental goals.

Second, TADYA operates as a non-hierarchical collective, fostering equality and inclusivity. Unlike many traditional cooperatives that are structured around a formal leadership hierarchy, TADYA's non-hierarchical structure fosters a more egalitarian and participatory environment. This allows for a more democratic approach to decision-making, where all members, regardless of their experience or background, have an equal say. The absence of a rigid hierarchy facilitates the development of solidarity, although challenges related to conflict resolution and communication persist, as observed in the study.

These two factors—agroecology as a guiding principle and a collective, non-hierarchical organization—distinguish TADYA from other rural women's cooperatives. They contribute to a distinctive empowerment process for TADYA women, fostering both economic independence and a sense of collective identity within the context of sustainable, community-driven agriculture.

In conclusion, the case of TADYA suggests that agroecology can be a powerful tool for women's empowerment in rural settings, offering opportunities not only for economic development but also for enhancing social cohesion, environmental consciousness, and the use of technology. The collective model, combined with agroecological practices, provides a unique framework for women to navigate and transform

their social, economic, and cultural realities, despite the challenges that inevitably arise in such processes.

Recommendations

Considering the current local and global conditions, agroecology emerges as a significant tool for achieving social and environmental justice. As the findings of this study demonstrate, agroecology can be considered an alternative model for promoting gender equality, reviving traditional knowledge at risk of being forgotten, producing through eco-friendly methods, and ensuring access to healthy and clean food.

For this reason, to encourage more farmers to adopt an agroecological lifestyle:

- Policy Integration: Agroecology should be incorporated into national and regional environmental and agricultural policies. This includes providing incentives for sustainable farming practices and creating frameworks to support agroecological transitions.
- Establishment of Agroecology Schools: Specialized training centers should be developed to disseminate agroecological knowledge and practices. These schools can serve as hubs for education, skill-building, and the exchange of traditional and scientific agricultural expertise.
- Support for Women Farmers: Women farmers should receive targeted support, such as scholarships, grants, and mentorship programs, to encourage their participation in agroecology schools and initiatives. Empowering women as key actors in agroecology can strengthen rural communities and promote gender equity.

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