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## Personality Traits, Self-Esteem and Social Ostracism Among Valorant Players\*

### Valorant Oyuncularında Kişilik Özellikleri, Benlik Saygısı ve Sosyal Dışlanma

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#### Abstract

Individuals born in and after 1995 spend most of their time playing video games. The majority of video games have violent content. This study aims to examine the effects of personality traits and self-esteem on social ostracism among Valorant players. In this context, 83 Valorant video game players, 55 male (66.3%) and 28 female (33.7%), were reached online. The mean age of the participants was 21.49 and the age-related standard deviation was 2.03 (age range 18-27). Faceted Inventory of the Five-Factor Model, Self-Esteem Scale, Social Ostracism Scale, and demographic information form were used. Data was analyzed by quantitative analysis techniques, namely correlation and simple linear regression. Findings show a positive relationship between social ostracism and neuroticism; and a negative relationship between social ostracism, agreeableness, and self-esteem. Neuroticism (envy) and self-esteem significantly predicted the variance (41%) in social ostracism. Findings were examined in light of the relevant literature, and some recommendations were made.

#### Keywords

Valorant, Social Ostracism, Self-Esteem, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Personality

\*This study was presented as a poster at the IV.Social Psychology Congress held in Izmir on 11-12 June 2022.

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Geliş/Received: 18.12.2022  
Kabul/Accepted: 31.05.2024

#### Öz

1995 ve sonrasında doğan bireyler, zamanlarının çoğunu video oyunları oynayarak geçirmektedir. Video oyunlarının çoğu şiddet içeriklidir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Valorant oyuncuları arasında kişilik özelliklerinin ve benlik saygısının sosyal dışlanma üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektir. Bu kapsamda 55'i erkek (%66,3) ve 28'i kadın (%33,7) olmak üzere toplam 83 Valorant video oyunu oyuncusuna çevrimiçi olarak ulaşılmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan bireylerin yaş ortalaması 21,49'dur (ss=2,03;

yaş aralığı 18-27). Veriler Boyutlandırılmış Beş Faktör Kişilik Envanteri, Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği, Sosyal Dışlanma Ölçeği ve demografik bilgi formu yardımıyla toplanmıştır. Verilerin çözümlenmesinde, nicel analiz tekniklerinden korelasyon ve basit doğrusal regresyon kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, sosyal dışlanma ile nevroitiklik arasında pozitif bir ilişki olduğunu göstermektedir; sosyal dışlanma, uyumluluk ve benlik saygısı arasında negatif bir ilişki vardır. Nevrotiklik (kıskançlık) ve benlik saygısı, sosyal dışlanmadaki varyansı (%41) önemli ölçüde yordamaktadır. Bulgular alanyazın temelinde tartışılmış ve konuya ilişkin bazı önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

### Anahtar Kelimeler

Valorant, Sosyal Dışlanma, Benlik Saygısı, Nevrotiklik, Uyumluluk, Kişilik

## Introduction

The most important occupation of today's youth is playing video games. According to Oyunfor (2021), the most-played free games in Turkey in 2021 are as follows: Garena Free Fire, PUBG Mobile, Call of Duty: Mobile, Valorant, Call of Duty: Warzone, LifeAfter, Arena of Valor, Lords Mobile, Mobile Legends, League of Legends. Among the games in this list, "Valorant" has recently become especially popular, and since Valorant was released in June 2020, not much work has been done on the Valorant game players (Roldan, & Prasetyo, 2021). As Valorant is the fastest-rising FPS e-sport of 2020 (Roldan, & Prasetyo, 2021), the Valorant video game players were chosen as a sample group. This research aims to examine the effects of personality traits and self-esteem on social ostracism among Valorant video game players.

## The Valorant

In Valorant, there are 19 heroes (characters) with different abilities, which attracts the attention of the players (Riot Games, 2021). With the arrival of the last heroes (Harbor, Gekko, Deadlock, ISO), the number of heroes in Valorant has increased to 23 (Play Valorant, 2024a). The number of maps in the game has been updated to 10 with the addition of the map called 'Lotus'. The names of the other maps are as follows: Sunset, Breeze, Fracture, Pearl, Icebox, Ascent, Split, Bind, and Haven (Play Valorant, 2024b). Valorant, which has a unique hero, weapon skins (coating), and advanced graphics quality, increases the desire of the players to play.

Valorant is a product of the game production company Riot Games, and is a game that responds to the requests and complaints of the players. Organizing various e-sport tournaments every year, the game not only contributes to the development of the players but also makes its players feel valuable with various awards. The reasons why Valorant is preferred by the players are that it is free (Riot Games, 2021), the anti-cheat system is advanced compared to other games, it has very different mechanics (i.e., interesting cinematics), it is a game that changes and develops with the feedback of the players. In addition, Valorant, which is advertised and promoted on social media platforms such as YouTube, Twitch, and Instagram, has become the center of attention for e-athletes due to its prestige and prize pool in the national and international tournaments it organizes. The fact that publishers frequently mention Valorant on Twitch and bring Valorant to the fore also increases the popularity of the game. Moreover, the broadcasters play this game and sometimes the in-game gifts are distributed draws attention to the game. Because big prizes are given, people want to improve themselves, win prizes in tournaments, and prove that they are the best.

Valorant, which is increasing in popularity day by day and appeals to a different player base, has also become the focus of attention of players with different characteristics. Many players are success-oriented, enter for fun, or just choose to relieve their stress by playing games. In Valorant, where ranks are important, it is possible to make friends with players of equal rank, but players with lower ranks may be excluded by some groups. The most important reason why Valorant players are preferred is that it brings together different players with various personality traits who have switched to Valorant from other games (i.e., CS-GO [*Counter-Strike Go*], LOL [*League of Legends*], PUBG) due to the graphic quality or the use of excessive cheating.

According to a qualitative study conducted by Çakar (2021), 45% of the participants gave 'Valorant' as the answer to the "Which digital games do you like the most?" question. The reasons for these preferences varied among the participants: 10% of users said they were prone to the game. 10% of the users thought that the game provides stress relief and users like to compete, 10% of the users reported it was fun to play, 5% of the users stated playing for a long time as the reason, and 5% of the users said they liked it. Furthermore, 65% of the participants state that digital games have become popular because they are accepted by the majority, 20% believe that they have become popular due to the excess of free time during the pandemic period, and 10% report that they have become popular as a result of the digital age we live in. Reasons behind the popularity of digital games as cultural objects can be listed as follows: they are frequently preferred because of the excess free time during the pandemic period (35%); digital games change frequently and new ones come out (25%); the rapid popularity of the digital games (25%) and the digital games are liked by the majority (15%). Pleasure and happiness, the pleasure of being a decision maker, ambition and determination, curiosity, stress relief and competition, the necessity of being a Publisher, and wanting to get away from the real world were among the motivations for playing video games reported by the participants. CS-G and LOL are preferred for the joy of playing as a group, while Valorant is preferred for reasons of predisposition, stress relief, competition, and entertainment.

According to Twitchmetrics (2021), Valorant is sixth of the most watched games with 52.437.349 viewer hours; comes fourth in the most streamed games with 480 average live channels, and is the seventh most popular game with 73.425 average viewers. Valorant broke a record by reaching 1.7 million views on Twitch during its member period. In this process, Valorant distributed beta access to those who watched the broadcast (Playerbros, 2021). In Valorant, fraud detection can be done with Vanguard. Reports of other players are utilized to detect cheating, as well as cheat detection techniques, hardware removals, data analysis, and artificial intelligence research (Riot Games, 2021). After the free full version of Valorant was released, it was met with great interest in Europe. Valorant, which started its closed beta period with limited access in April 2020, was watched for 470 million hours on the broadcast platform called 'Twitch' (BBC New Turkish, 2020).

In this game, 10 people fight in two teams. It is a competitive, strategy-based shooter game (Riot Games, 2021). Each round is 100 seconds (Espor Newspaper, 2021). The team that wins 13 rounds also wins the game (Riot Games, 2021). One of the terms used in this game is "spike". It is a kind of explosive that can be installed in predetermined areas on maps, and once installed it takes 4 seconds to deploy and explodes in 45 seconds (Playerbros, 2021). There are 23 heroes in Valorant, and these heroes have their special abilities (Riot Games, 2021). "Jett" was the most preferred hero between 2020-2021 (Webtekno, 2021). Jett's role can be described as a duelist; she has an agile and dodging fighting style (Riot Games, 2021). She has 5 blades as her ultimate ability (sharp storm). Jett's ultimate allows her to use several throwing blades that deal moderate damage and kill on headshots (Valorant Fandom, 2021). 18 different weapons are used by agents in Valorant (Riot Games, 2021). The most preferred of these weapons is the "Phantom". The reason for choosing this weapon is its average accuracy and rate of fire (Foxngame, 2021). Ten maps in Valorant can be used by players, but players cannot choose the maps themselves (Riot Games, 2024).

Since Valorant is a competitive game, for an individual who enters the game alone, neutralizing their opponents and then being praised by their teammates makes the player happy. The purpose of the players who enter with their friends is to have fun, so the time spent together makes them happy and also allows them to enjoy the game. The players both have fun and relieve their stress. In this way, their motivation and desire to play the game increase. People who play the game well try to be the best and complete the game as MVP (the most valuable player), while people who play the game poorly continue the game and do their best in the hope that they can get better. In this way, both those who play well and those who play poorly continue to play the game with the motivation of being the best. Furthermore, the presence of skins in Valorant allows players to use their weapons decoratively and make them interesting. Moreover, due to the rank system, players want to play the game more to reach the highest rank. The rank system prevents the formation of disproportionate teams and provides a fair match. Considering the overall performances, Valorant offers competitive matchmaking and balanced combat (Play Valorant, 2020).

## Social Ostracism

Ostracism, being ignored and excluded, is a collection of painful events experienced by many individuals (Wesselmann & Williams, 2013). Being ignored and excluded are like being invisible, not existing, or being dead. Ostracism means 'social death' in many societies and is an emotionally threatening negative experience (Williams, 2009).

With ostracism, members who do not comply with the norms of the group and disrupt the group order are pushed away to protect the group. Ostracism increases negative affect, including anxiety, sadness, and anger, and reduces positive affect (Williams, 2009). Recognizing that one is being ostracized is a painful experience, and individuals take action to eliminate this pain. The immediate reactions to ostracism are usually strong, negative, and constant (Williams & Zadro, 2005). In most cases, ostracism manifests itself in a relatively subtle form, such as refusing eye contact or delayed response to a target's expressions (Ren et al., 2017).

The temporal model of ostracism asserts that ostracism experiences of individuals are not uniform over time and that the effect of ostracism may depend on different personality traits and situational factors (Williams, 2009). Within the scope of this model, personality traits and self-esteem, which are thought to affect ostracism, were examined in this study.

According to the model, the individual first notices ostracism. Early detection of ostracism is important for adaptation purposes because it provides individuals a chance to either correct their behaviors or seek alternative groups before they are exposed to the damaging and isolating effects of ostracism (Williams, 2009). The temporal model of ostracism has three stages: reflexive, reflective, and resignation.

Anything that threatens the individual's survival in the reflexive stage requires them to react. In this context, pain in any part of the individual can cause an immediate reaction. Pain can direct the individual's attention to ostracism. At this stage, ostracism immediately triggers negative emotions (i.e., sadness, anger) and pain as well as threatens basic human needs (i.e., the need to belong, the need for high self-esteem, the need to have control over the environment/feel worthy of attention, and the need for a meaningful existence) (Williams, 2009). These initial reactions to ostracism are very similar to the reaction that occurs when someone accidentally touches the stove with their hand. Just as everyone immediately withdraws from the stove, ostracism triggers reactions that are largely resistant to personality variations or contextual factors (Ren et al., 2017, p. 15). In the reflective stage, individuals evaluate the meaning and importance of ostracism. Thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and behaviors aimed at strengthening the sense of belonging increase self-esteem. According to the need fortification hypothesis, ostracized individuals feel, think, and act in ways that reinforce their most clearly threatened needs. For example, if their sense of belonging is highly threatened, ostracized individuals will have a higher desire to belong (Williams, 2009). In short, it can be stated that the initial pain of ostracism motivates individuals to get involved once again. At this stage, in order to heal, individuals try to fortify their threatened needs (Ren et al., 2017). Permanent ostracism manifests its long-term effects in the *resignation phase*. Resources needed for fortifying the threatened needs are depleted over time. Fortification of belonging transforms into disconnection and alienation. Preservation of self-esteem gives way to depression, and the struggle to be seen as worthy of attention is replaced by a feeling of passivity and worthlessness (Williams, 2009). Individuals at this stage have suicidal thoughts, experience extreme distress, and feel like ghost (Ren et al., 2017).

## Personality Traits

Personality is a consistent behavioral pattern that includes features that make each individual unique and distinguish each from others (McGraw-Hill Education, 2016, p. 258). Previous studies conducted on video game players have shown that especially neuroticism and agreeableness have a significant relationship with playing video games (e.g., Chory & Goodboy, 2011; Johnson & Gardner, 2010). Therefore, these two personality traits were included in this study.

Neuroticism is an emotional state that manifests itself with symptoms such as a tendency to escape from problems that arise in daily life, feelings of guilt, not being able to find what one is

looking for in life (İlhan & Gencer, 2010), self-pity and feeling insecure (Burger, 2006). In general, people with neurotic personality traits experience intense and high anxiety, and exhibit childlike behaviors. Individuals with high neurotic tendency levels cannot fully perform their vital activities and have difficulty adapting to the changes in their environment. In this way, they constantly live a passive life (Karahana et al., 2005). Shortly, neuroticism refers to a tendency to experience unpleasant emotions. High scorers on this factor are anxious and irritable; those with low scores can be described with adjectives such as calm and cold-blooded (McCrae, & Costa, 1987).

Agreeableness indicates whether a person has a soft heart or a strict personality, whether they trust or doubt another person, and whether they show compatible behaviors (Burger, 2006). High scorers on this factor are characterized by adjectives such as reliable, tolerant, and good-natured, while those with low scores are characterized by adjectives such as critical, ruthless, and skeptical (McCrae, & Costa, 1987).

Neuroticism and social ostracism are positively related to each other (Zhang & Dai, 2015), meaning that high neuroticism results in high social ostracism or vice versa. According to Hales et al. (2016), disagreeableness is a particularly harmful consequence of ostracism, as it leads to further ostracism. Disagreeable targets are more likely to be ostracized than agreeable targets. Similarly, people with low agreeableness are more likely to arouse ostracism intentions and to be ostracized by others. Personality characteristics influence the possibility of being ostracized, and low agreeableness is one of the risk factors (Rudert et al., 2020). Bedi (2021) reports that agreeableness negatively and neuroticism positively predict workplace ostracism. Agreeable people are usually more reserved and unlikely to start arguments that could lead to social exclusion. Anger, envy, jealousy, guilt, and other negative emotions that are socially focused are frequently experienced by neurotic people, who are also moody. In an attempt to cope with these unpleasant feelings, neurotic people may engage in social activities that lead to conflict (Howard et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypotheses are tested:

Neuroticism is positively related to social ostracism.

Agreeableness is negatively related to social ostracism.

## Self-Esteem

Self-esteem, which is an individual's attitude about themselves, includes information about who the individual is (Mruk, 2006), as well as the individual's skills, abilities, social relations, and personal beliefs related to future events (Heatherston & Wyland, 2003). As a significant power of motivation (Uyanık-Balat, & Akman, 2004), self-esteem means in the broadest sense, that a person feels valuable, effective, and successful (Özkan, 1994). In other words, it is the evaluation of the difference between an individual's self-image (real self) and ideal self (Tözün, 2010). Furthermore, self-esteem is a feeling that is a result of one's judgment and self-evaluation (Özkan, 1994), and has a structure that changes with age. The environment may affect self-esteem positively or negatively (Dilek & Aksoy, 2013).

In a study conducted by Tektaş-Soy and Kocataş (2020), a weak and positive relationship between social exclusion perceptions and negative self-esteem of individuals diagnosed with substance addiction was observed. Kavaklı (2019) concluded that the main effects of psychological ostracism on self-worth, especially loneliness and a general sense of belonging, are higher when compared to social exclusion. There is a negative relationship between social exclusion and self-esteem in adolescents (Gürler & Demirli, 2017). Individuals with high self-esteem were more likely than those with low self-esteem (a) to end relationships with their ostracizing partners; and (b) to employ ostracism as a strategy for ending the relationship. Conversely, those with low self-esteem were more likely to report being shunned by others, shun people in general, and shun others in response to criticism or rejection (Sommer vd., 2001). Furthermore, workplace ostracism is negatively correlated with self-esteem (Bedi, 2021). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is tested:

Self-esteem is negatively related to social ostracism.

## Present Study

Young individuals may be argued to have spent more time with their computers during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to lockdowns, where technology has become an inseparable part of our

lives. In a study (Aktaş ve Bostancı, 2021) conducted with university students, the pandemic was reported to have increased students' digital game usage time and war strategy game-play.

It has been shown in previous studies that video games are associated with many negative outcomes (e.g., aggression [Swing & Anderson, 2007], depression and lower academic achievement [Brunborg et al., 2014]). At the time data were collected, no specific quantitative study could be found in Turkey about the "Valorant" game players. Now, there have been, however, only a limited number of qualitative studies (see Arslan, 2022; Temelli et al., 2023) focusing on Valorant players in Turkey, and therefore this study is expected to fill an important gap in the literature. Furthermore, it will be the first quantitative study about the Valorant game players in Turkey. Accordingly, the findings of this study can contribute to the knowledge regarding the predictors of social ostracism among Valorant players.

This study is also thought to be important for gamemakers who want to have an idea about Valorant players. In other words, valuable information about the personal characteristics of Valorant players are expected to be provided. Gamemakers who want to get more information about Valorant players will be able to benefit from this study when they want to innovate for the game.

Social ostracism needs special attention since it can be encountered in every life stage. In other words, individuals of all ages can be subject to social ostracism. For example, individuals may be ostracized by their peers during their educational lives. Similarly, employees may be ostracized by their colleagues. It is possible to increase the number of such examples. The goal of current research is to examine the antecedents of social ostracism. Based on the temporal model of ostracism (Williams, 2009), personality traits and self-esteem are taken as possible antecedents.

To sum up, the goal is to uncover potential mechanisms underlying social ostracism. To achieve this goal, the present research is designed to examine the relationship of social ostracism with personality traits and self-esteem. Additionally, this study is important in terms of gaining more information about Valorant players. Given the importance of playing video games, especially among youth, it is possible to mention that this study can fill an important gap in the literature concerning the psychology of gamers. Shortly, in this study, the predictive value of personality traits and self-esteem on social ostracism is examined. Therefore, the following hypothesis is tested:

Neuroticism (positively), agreeableness and self-esteem (negatively) predict social ostracism.

## Methods

### Participants

Within the scope of the study, 83 Valorant players, 55 males (66.3%) and 28 females (33.7%), were reached. The convenience and snowball sampling methods were utilized. The mean age of the participants was 21.49, and the age-related standard deviation was 2.03 (age range 18-27). The distribution of the participants according to their educational status is as follows: 56 (67.5%) high school graduates, 4 (4.8%) pre-bachelor's degrees, and 23 (27.7%) undergraduate degrees. While the majority of the individuals participating in the study were university students (66.3%), individuals from different occupational groups (such as lawyers, physiotherapists, engineers, and psychologists) also participated in the study.

### Data Collection Tools

**Faceted Inventory of the Five-Factor Model (FI-FFM)** was developed by Watson et al. (2017) and adapted to the Turkish language by Bulut & Yildiz (2018). It consists of 131 items and 5 factors (neuroticism-31 items; extraversion-26 items; agreeableness-20; conscientiousness-37 items and openness to experience-17 items). In this study, agreeableness and neuroticism were used. Neuroticism consists of 4 dimensions (anger proneness, anxiety/depression, envy, and somatic complaints) and agreeableness consists of 3 dimensions (trust, empathy, and straightforwardness/modesty). A 5-point Likert-type scale was used (1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree). High scores indicate high agreeableness and neuroticism. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients reported by Bulut & Yildiz (2018) for neuroticism was 0.88 and was 0.78 for agreeableness. In this study, Cronbach's

alpha for neuroticism was 0.93 and for agreeableness, it was 0.85. For the dimensions of neuroticism Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.91 for anxiety/depression; 0.84 for anger proneness; 0.77 for somatic complaints and 0.86 for envy. For the dimensions of agreeableness Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients were 0.89 for trust; 0.77 for empathy and 0.67 for straightforwardness/modesty.

**Self-Esteem Scale** was developed by Rosenberg (1965) and adapted to the Turkish language by Çuhadaroğlu (1986). It consists of 10 items. A four-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1-strongly wrong to 4-strongly true is used. A high score on the scale indicates high self-esteem. In Çuhadaroğlu's (1986) study, the validity coefficient was 0.71. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.91.

**Ostracism Experience Scale for Adolescents** was developed by Gilman et al. (2013) and adapted to the Turkish language by Akin et al. (2014). The scale consists of 11 items and 2 factors. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used (1-never and 5- always). A high score from the scale indicates high social exclusion. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient reported by Akin and others (2014) was 0.89. In the current study, the internal consistency coefficient was 0.90.

## Procedure and Data Analysis

The data was gathered between January and April 2022 using Google Forms. The researchers first made contact with people in their immediate social network. These initial participants distributed the link of the research via Whatsapp, Twitter, Discord, and Instagram to additional members of their social network. The ethics committee granted the necessary authorization. The study was voluntary, and participants were free to leave at any time without having to give a reason. The questionnaires were completed in roughly 15 minutes. Participants were not questioned about their personal information, and the data were examined anonymously. Participants were given the assurance that there was no right or wrong response to the questions. Utilizing quantitative analysis methods, data were examined. To test the relationship between the variables, Pearson correlation analysis was used, and to test the predicting effect, simple regression analysis was performed. Data were analyzed using SPSS25.

## Results

Table 1 displays the correlations between the variables. As the table shows, while neuroticism was positively correlated to social ostracism, agreeableness and self-esteem were negatively correlated to social ostracism.

**Table 1:** The Correlations Between The Variable

Variables	n	M	S	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	2	2.1	2.2	2.3	3	4
1.Neuroticism	83	2,66	,71	,91**	,74**	,55**	,74**	-,40**	-,37**	-,11	-,38**	-,50**	,51**
1.1.Anxiety / Depression	83	2,93	,91	1	,53**	,34**	,56**	-,30**	-,39**	,01	-,23*	-,58**	,51**
1.2.Anger-Proneness	83	2,69	,93	1	1	,33**	,46**	-,36**	-,27*	-,10	-,45**	-,21	,23*
1.3.Somatic complaints	83	2,11	,85	1	1	1	,32**	-,20	-,09	-,17	-,21	-,28*	,20
1.4.Envy	83	2,49	,89	1	1	1	1	-,39**	-,26*	-,23*	-,41**	-,24*	,51**
2.Agreeableness	83	2,90	,55	1	1	1	1	1	,77**	,74**	,69**	,03	-,31**
2.1.Trust	83	2,24	,77	1	1	1	1	1	1	,29**	,23*	,14	-,32**
2.2.Empathy	83	3,40	,64	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	,45**	-,06	-,23*
2.3.Straightforwardness / Modesty	83	3,26	,82	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-,08	-,10
3.Self-esteem	83	2,90	,64	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-,49**
4.Social ostracism	83	1,98	,64	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

\*\*p<0.01 \*p<0.05



Table 2 shows the results of the regression analysis. Envy (dimension of neuroticism) and self-esteem significantly predicted the variance (41%) in social ostracism.

**Table 2:** Regression Results

Variables	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	ΔF
N □ anxiety/depression	,15	,47	,41	8,12
N anger proneness	-,06			
N somatic complaints	-,05			
N envy	,37*			
A □ trust	-,12			
A empathy	-,12			
A straightforwardness/modesty	,15			
Self-esteem	-,32*			

\*p<0.05 Dependent variable: Social ostracism

□ N: Neuroticism

□ A: Agreeableness

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the predictive value of personality traits and self-esteem on social ostracism levels among Valorant players. There exists significant positive correlations between neuroticism and social ostracism; negative correlations between agreeableness and social ostracism; and negative correlations between self-esteem and social ostracism. The findings also indicate that while neuroticism and self-esteem predicted social ostracism, agreeableness did not predict social ostracism.

Descriptive statistics showed that the mean of neuroticism was 2.66 (SD= .71) (anxiety/depression: 2.93 and somatic complaints: 2.11); the mean of agreeableness was 2.90 (SD= .55) (empathy: 3.40 and trust: 2.24); the mean of self-esteem was 2.90 (SD= .64) and the mean of social ostracism was 1.98 (SD= .64). These descriptive statistics can be interpreted as follows: social ostracism score was low; neuroticism and self-esteem scores were between low and medium; agreeableness score was at a medium level.

The positive correlation between neuroticism and social ostracism is in line with expectations and previous study findings (Bedi, 2021; Zhang & Dai, 2015). The negative correlation between agreeableness and social ostracism is consistent with previous literature findings. Rudert et al. (2020) showed that the probability of being ostracized is influenced by one's personality, with low agreeableness being a risk factor in particular. The expected negative relationship between self-esteem and social ostracism was also obtained as a result of this study. In the cyberball task, people with lower trait self-esteem experienced more social suffering than people with greater trait self-esteem (Onoda et al., 2010). Furthermore, only one dimension of neuroticism (i.e., envy) predicted social ostracism. This means that as envy scores increase, social ostracism levels also increase. Individuals scoring higher on neuroticism are known as having negative moods caused by insecurity, restlessness, and anxiety (Burger, 2006; McCrae & Costa, 1987). Neurotic people, who have difficulty in keeping up with the flow of natural life, may be socially excluded by people around them due to the negative emotional states they experience. As COVID-19 period was a difficult time, people want to have positive people around them who energize them, not drive them into negative moods. Therefore, the negativities brought by neuroticism and the lack of energy of neurotic people affect social ostracism in parallel. Similarly, anxiety related to neuroticism causes behavioral and psychological problems. The findings demonstrated that anxiety levels rise in multiplayer online video games following a match, and that exposure to cyberbullying behaviors was linked to both trait and state anxiety (Altınışık, 2021).

In contrast to our expectations, agreeableness did not predict social ostracism. Agreeableness is the ability to adapt to changing or ongoing situations (Burger, 2006; McCrae & Costa, 1987). But even individuals scoring high on agreeableness may be prone to social ostracism. One may not consistently receive acceptance or support in every compatible situation. People are similar to colors and have different hues, and individuals may not produce the same tone with every color they are compatible with. Thus, each adaptive behavior may not result in positive feedback. Considering how people can be unpredictable at times, conformity does not guarantee an immunity against social exclusion. In contrast to the findings of this study, Rudert and others (2020) suggest that personality characteristics influence the possibility of being ostracized, and low agreeableness is one of the risk factors. This discrepancy can be attributed to a difference in the interpretation of agreeableness in different countries.

In this study, self-esteem predicted social ostracism, which was consistent with the findings of many previous studies (e.g., Gürlür & Demirli, 2017; Kavaklı, 2019; Tektaş-Soy & Kocataş, 2020). Self-esteem is a concept that determines a person's self-love and subjective evaluation. The higher the self-esteem, the less it can be affected by social ostracism. Social ostracism influences self-esteem in two ways. People with low self-esteem are dragged into a negative mood, but people with high self-esteem learn to be self-sufficient and somehow continue by adapting to the flow of life. Self-esteem can predict social ostracism because people who are self-confident and do not have an inflated self will tend to think realistically and protect themselves from the people or environments from which they would be excluded.

The strength of this study is the uniqueness of its sample group. Although Valorant is a highly popular game among youth, the number of studies focusing on Valorant players as the sample group are extremely limited. Our study is one of the few studies conducted on Valorant players in Turkey. Furthermore, this study provides information about the antecedents of social ostracism, namely neuroticism and self-esteem. Moreover, while the majority of studies conducted on Valorant players are qualitative, it can be stated that the quantitative nature of this study is an important feature that distinguishes this study from other studies. On the other hand, there were some limitations of this study. One of these limitations is the number of participants. Although the link to the research was sent to many Valorant players, most of them did not show a willingness to participate in the research. Since participation in the study was voluntary, no coercion was exerted on the participants. A larger sample group with more balanced male/female percentages could provide more confident results. Furthermore, this study focused on personal factors in predicting social ostracism. Future studies should take contextual factors (as Temporal Model of Ostracism suggests, William, 2009) such as peer groups into consideration. Longitudinal studies on Valorant players could also be suggested for the following research. Lastly, it is recommended to utilize mixed research designs (qualitative and quantitative) to gain deeper knowledge about Valorant players.

Studies on neuroticism have shown that it directly affects concepts related to the individual's self-esteem, such as depression, loneliness, and feelings of inadequacy (Gürlür and Demirli, 2017). Neurotic individuals often face negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and anger (Akturan, 2021). Low self-esteem is associated with disorders such as depression, anxiety, social phobia, paranoia, epilepsy, and schizophrenia (Çelikbaş et al., 2019). According to the study conducted by Leary (1990 cited in Büyükbeci and Deniz, 2017), it was stated that there is a strong relationship between perceived social ostracism and social anxiety, loneliness, depression, and jealousy. Since individuals have different personality traits and interpret such situations differently, it is recommended to receive personalized psychological support from psychiatrists, psychologists, or mental health experts. For individuals with high neuroticism and low self-esteem scores, personalized programs can be made to improve self-esteem and reduce neuroticism. Participation in group activities and volunteering can be encouraged to reduce social ostracism.

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## Özet

Günümüz gençliğinin en önemli uğraşısı video oyunları oynamaktır. Türkiye’de son zamanlarda “Valorant” popüler hale gelmiştir. Valorant 2020 yılının haziran ayında piyasaya sürüldüğü için Valorant oyuncuları üzerinde sınırlı sayıda çalışma yapılmıştır. Bu araştırmanın amacı, Valorant video oyunu oyuncuları arasında kişilik özellikleri ve benlik saygısının sosyal dışlanma üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektir.

Nevrotik kişilik özelliklerine sahip bireyler yoğun ve yüksek kaygı yaşarlar ve çocuksu davranışlar sergilerler. Bu bireyler yaşamsal faaliyetlerini tam olarak yerine getiremezler ve çevrelerindeki değişikliklere uyum sağlamakta güçlük çekerler. Uyumluluktan yüksek puan alanlar güvenilir, hoşgörülü, iyi huylu gibi sıfatlarla, düşük puan alanlar ise eleştirel, acımasız ve şüpheli gibi sıfatlarla nitelendirilirler.

Bireyin kendisi ile ilgili tutumu olan benlik saygısı, bireyin kim olduğu ile bireyin gelecekteki olaylara ilişkin becerileri, yetenekleri, sosyal ilişkileri ve kişisel inançları hakkındaki bilgileri içerir.

Dışlanma, görmezden gelinme, yok sayılmak, var olmamak gibi anlamlara gelen birçok bireyin yaşadığı acı verici olayların bir toplamıdır. Dışlanmanın zamansal modeli, bireylerin dışlanma deneyimlerinin zaman içinde tek tip olmadığını ve dışlanmanın etkisinin farklı kişilik özelliklerine

ve durumsal faktörlere bağlı olabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Bu model kapsamında, bu çalışmada dışlanmayı etkileyebileceği düşünülen kişilik özellikleri ve benlik saygısı incelenmiştir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, sosyal dışlanmanın altında yatan potansiyel mekanizmaları ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu amaca ulaşmak için mevcut araştırma, sosyal dışlanmayı kişilik özellikleri ve benlik saygısı ile incelemek üzere tasarlanmıştır. Ayrıca bu çalışma, Valorant oyuncularını hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinilmesi açısından da önemlidir. Özellikle gençler arasında video oyunları oynamanın önemi göz önüne alındığında, bu çalışmanın oyuncu psikolojisi ile ilgili literatürde önemli bir boşluğu doldurabileceği ifade edilebilir.

Çalışma kapsamında 55 erkek ve 28 kadın olmak üzere 83 Valorant oyuncusuna ulaşılmıştır. Katılımcıların yaş ortalaması 21,49, yaşa bağlı standart sapma 2,03'tür (yaş aralığı 18-27). Araştırmaya katılan bireylerin çoğunluğunu üniversite öğrencileri oluştururken, farklı meslek gruplarından (avukat, fizyoterapist, mühendis, psikolog gibi) bireyler de çalışmaya katılmıştır.

Verileri toplamak için Boyutlandırılmış Beş Faktör Kişilik Envanteri, Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği, Sosyal Dışlanma Ölçeği ve kişisel bilgi formu kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizi, nicel analiz tekniklerinden korelasyon ve basit doğrusal regresyon ile gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Sosyal dışlanma ile nevroitiklik arasında pozitif bir ilişki tespit edilmiştir. Sosyal dışlanma, uyumluluk ve benlik saygısı arasında negatif bir ilişki vardır. Kıskançlık ve benlik saygısı, sosyal dışlanmadaki varyansı (%41) önemli ölçüde yordamaktadır.

Nevrotikliğin yalnızca kıskançlık boyutu sosyal dışlanmayı yordamaktadır. Doğal hayatın akışına ayak uydurmakta zorlanan nevroitik insanlar yaşadıkları olumsuz duygu durumları nedeniyle çevrelerindeki insanlar tarafından sosyal olarak dışlanabilirler. Literatürde de benzer sonuçlara rastlamak mümkündür.

Beklentilerin aksine, uyumluluk sosyal dışlanmayı yordamamaktadır. Uyumluluk, değişen veya devam eden durumlara uyum sağlama yeteneğidir. Uyumlulukta yüksek puan alan bireyler bile sosyal dışlanmaya eğilimli olabilmektedirler. İnsanlar renklere benzer ve farklı tonlara sahiptirler ve bireyler uyumlu oldukları her renkle aynı tonu üretmeyebilirler. Bu nedenle, her uyarlanabilir davranış olumlu geri bildirimle sonuçlanmayabilir. Bu çalışmanın bulgularının aksine, kişilik özelliklerinin dışlanma olasılığını etkilediğini ve düşük uyumluluğun risk faktörlerinden biri olduğunu öne süren çalışmalar da bulunmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada benlik saygısı, daha önce yapılan birçok çalışmanın bulgularıyla tutarlı olarak sosyal dışlanmayı yordamaktadır. Benlik saygısı, sosyal dışlanmayı öngörebilir, çünkü kendine güvenen ve şişirilmiş bir benliğe sahip olmayan insanlar, gerçekçi düşünmeye ve kendilerini dışlanacakları insanlardan veya ortamlardan koruma eğiliminde olacaklardır.

Bu çalışmanın en önemli yönlerinden biri örneklem grubunun benzersizliğidir. Ayrıca, bu çalışma sosyal dışlanmanın öncülleri olan nevroitiklik ve benlik saygısı hakkında bilgi vermektedir. Bu çalışma, sosyal dışlanmayı öngörmede kişisel faktörlere odaklanmıştır. Gelecekteki çalışmalar, akran grupları gibi faktörleri dikkate almalıdır.