

# “Beyin Göçü” Olgusunda Gençlerin Görüşleri: Öz-belirleme Kuramı Temelinde Bir İnceleme

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## Öz

Beyin göçü, birçok ülke için önemli bir sorun haline gelmiştir. Gençlerin veya iyi eğitim almış bireylerin beyin göçü, hem ev sahibi ülkeler hem de göç veren ülkeler için sosyal ve ekonomik sonuçlar doğurmaktadır. Bu çalışma, beyin göçü bağlamında eğitilmiş gençlerin yurt dışına gitme veya Türkiye’de kalmaya karar vermelerinin ardındaki motivasyonları anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın analizlerinde kuram temelli bir yaklaşım temel alınarak betimsel yaklaşım kullanılmış ve tümdengimsel (dedüktif) bir süreç kullanılmıştır. Öz-belirleme teorisinin temaları olan 'ilişkililik', 'yeterlilik' ve 'özerklik' çerçevesinde betimleyici analiz yapılmıştır. Çalışmada 18-23 yaş arasındaki toplam 15 genç ile görüşülmüştür ( $N_{kız}=8$ ,  $N_{erkek}=6$ ,  $N_{transgender}=1$ ). Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu 11 açık uçlu soru içermekte olup, her görüşme yaklaşık 40 dakika sürmüştür. Ses kayıtları deşifre edildikten sonra, her araştırmacı yanıtları "ilişkililik", "yetkinlik" ve "özerklik" temaları altında kategorize etmiştir. Sonuçlar, ilişkililik ihtiyacının gençlerin Türkiye’de kalmaya karar vermeleri için kritik önemde olduğunu göstermiştir. Bununla birlikte, yurt dışına gitmek isteyen gençlerin yanıtları genellikle "yetkinlik" ve "özerklik" temalarında yer almıştır. Gençlerin ihtiyaçlarına dikkat çeken bulgular özellikle eğitilmiş gençlerin beyin göçlerini önlemek amacıyla eğitim ve iş yaşamında çeşitli tedbirler alabilme fırsatı sunabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Beyin göçü, gençlik, ilişkisellik, öz-belirleme kuramı, özerklik, yetkinlik



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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

### Giriş

Göç, yoksulluk, savaş ve baskı (Bakewell, 2021), doğal afetler (Shakya vd., 2022) veya iklim değişikliği (Kaczan & Orgill-Meyer, 2022) gibi birçok nedenden meydana gelebilir. COVID-19 kısıtlamaları göçmen sayısını azaltmasına rağmen, Ukrayna ve Suriye'deki savaş ve küresel ekonomik zorluklar nedeniyle göç oranı artmıştır (OECD, 2022; Simpson, 2022). OECD raporuna göre (2022), artan göçün başka önemli bir nedeni de uluslararası üniversite öğrencileridir; bunlar, OECD ülkelerindeki tüm üniversite öğrencilerinin ortalamasının %10'unu oluşturmaktadır.

Son yıllarda en çok tartışılan göç nedenlerinden biri de eğitilmiş nüfusun sosyo-ekonomik koşulları daha iyi ülkelere yerleşmeleri ile karakterize olan "beyin göçü"dür. Beyin göçü ileri düzeydeki meslek ve bilim insanları ile uzmanların gelişmiş bir başka ülkeye yerleşip, çalışmak amacı ile kendi ülkelerinden ayrılmaları olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Türk Dil Kurumu, 2023). Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu verileri (2021) Türkiye'den yurtdışına göçün en fazla genç yetişkinlik döneminde olduğunu göstermektedir. Beyin göçünü inceleyen çalışmalar genellikle ekonomik sonuçlarına odaklanmaktadır (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012; Ette & Witte, 2021; Stark vd., 1997). Bazı araştırmalar, beyin göçünün nedenlerini hava kirliliği ile ilişkilendirmiştir (Khuc vd., 2022; Lai vd., 2021; Li vd., 2020; Xue vd., 2021). Beyin göçü sonrası süreci inceleyen çalışmalar, nitelikli işçiler (Adovor vd., 2021; Botezat, A., & Moraru, 2020; Dohlman vd., 2019; Emmanuel vd., 2019; Hashish & Ashour, 2020; Okafor & Chimereze, 2020), akademisyenler (Khan, 2021; Lanko, 2022) ya da geri dönmeyen öğrenciler/gençlerle yürütülmüştür (Gungor, 2004; Sano vd., 2020). Ancak, beyin göçünü önlemek için, bu konunun nedenlerine daha fazla dikkat gösterilmesi gerektiği düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, bireyleri beyin göçüne iten ihtiyaçların belirlenmesi ulusal politikaların oluşturulmasında da önemlidir.

Bireylerin motivasyonlarının ve ihtiyaçlarına yönelik bakış açısı sunan kuramlardan birisi Öz-belirleme-kuramıdır. Öz-belirleme kuramı insanın ihtiyaçları, motivasyonu ve iyi oluşunun sosyal bir bağlam içindeki dinamiğini açıklayan bir model sunar (Deci ve Ryan, 1985). Kuramda üç temel psikolojik ihtiyaç vurgulanır: (1) Özerklik (2) Yetkinlik (3) İlişkisellik. Zihinsel sağlığın psikolojik ihtiyaçların karşılanmasıyla ilişkili olduğu gösterilmiştir (Davids vd., 2017; Perlman vd., 2020). Eğitilmiş gençlerin Türkiye'den göç nedenlerini veya onları Türkiye'de yaşamaya teşvik edecek ihtiyaçları anlamak hem eğitilmiş gençlerin zihinsel sağlığı hem de ülkenin kalkınması açısından önemlidir.

Türkiye, dış göç oranının en yüksek olduğu ülkelerden biridir (OECD, 2022). Ayrıca, Türkiye'de dışarıya göç artan bir sorun haline gelmiştir. - TÜİK (2022) dış göç oranlarının bir önceki yıla göre %62,3 arttığı bildirmiştir. Genç nüfusun göç oranları da düşünüldüğünde, bu oranlar genç yetişkinlerin beyin göçüne yönelik tutumlarını incelemenin önemli olduğunu düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışmada üniversite öğrencilerinin beyin göçüne yönelik görüşlerinin değerlendirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaçla üniversitede öğrenim gören gençlerin beyin göçünün avantajları ve dezavantajlarına yönelik derinlemesine değerlendirme yapılmaları beklenmiştir.

### Yöntem

Çalışma gençlerin beyin göçüne ilişkin bakış açılarını anlamaya yönelik nitel bir çalışmadır. Araştırmada kolay ulaşılabilir örnekleme yöntemi ile Ankara'da öğrenim gören 18-23 yaş arasında 15 gençle görüşülmüştür ( $N_{kız}=6$ ,  $N_{erkek}=8$ ,  $N_{transseksüel}=1$ ;  $N_{devlet}=9$ ,  $N_{özel}=6$ ;  $N_{hazırlık}=2$ ,  $N_{birinci}=4$ ,  $N_{ikinci}=3$ ,  $N_{üçüncü}=5$ ,  $N_{dördüncü}=1$ ). Görüşmeler için kişisel bilgi formu ile yarı yapılandırılmış 11 sorudan oluşan form kullanılmıştır. Formda "Beyin göçü nedir? ; "Beyin göçü yapmak istiyor musunuz?"; "Türkiye'de yaşayan bir genci beyin göçü yapmamaya ikna etmeniz gerekse ona neler söylerdiniz?" gibi sorular yer almaktadır. Verilerin analizinde Öz-belirleme kuramının önerdiği kavramlar temel alınarak betimsel analiz kullanılmıştır.

### **Bulgular**

Bulgular Öz-belirleme kuramında önerildiği üzere ilişkisellik, yetkinlik ve özerklik temalarında incelenmiştir. Buna göre ilişkisellik temasında “birincil ilişkiler”, “kültürel aidiyet” ve “kültürel ilişkisellik ihtiyacı” kategorileri belirlenmiştir. Yetkinlik teması altında “kişisel çıktılar” ve “ülkenin olanakları” kategorileri belirlenmiştir. Özerklik temasında ise “yaşam düzeni” ve “gelecek beklentisi” kategorileri belirlenmiştir.

### **Tartışma, Sonuç ve Öneriler**

Araştırmada gençlerin göç etmek istememelerinin daha çok ilişkisellik ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak amacıyla olduğu görülmüştür. Buna karşın yetkinlik ve özerklik ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak amacıyla verilen yanıtlar daha çok göç etmek yönünde fikirleri içermiştir. Vatanseverlik, ülke için savaşma, kültürel değerleri koruma, aile ve arkadaşlara yakın olma gibi ihtiyaçlar gençlerin ilişkisellik ihtiyaçları ile ilgili kalma nedenleri arasında belirlenmiştir. Yetkinlik temasında gençler hedeflerine ulaşmak için gereken aşırı çabaya, işsiz kalma olasılığına, mesleklerin değersizliğine, yüksek maliyetlere, sosyo-ekonomik belirsizliğe, işe alım sürecindeki subjektif değerlendirmeye ve eğitim ve iş olanaklarındaki yetersizliğe vurgu yapmışlardır. Son olarak özerklik temasında ise gençler Türkiye’de hobileri ya da işleri için daha az olasılık olduğuna vurgu yapmışlar buna karşın yurtdışında hobileri ya da kendi istedikleri işlerde çalışmak için daha fazla şans ve zamanları olabileceğini düşündüklerini belirtmişlerdir.

Beyin göçünün önlenmesinde ilişkisellik ihtiyacının önleyici rolü görülmektedir. Buna karşın özerklik ve yetkinlik ihtiyaçları bağlamında gençlerin ulaşabilecekleri fırsatların arttırılması önerilmektedir. Özellikle yetkinlik ihtiyacının desteklenmesinin önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Beyin göçü gerçekleştirmiş genç yetişkinlerle yapılan bir çalışmada (Tanrısevdi vd., 2019) göçün daha çok daha özgür ve toleranslı düşünce ve araştırma olanakları ile ekonomik avantajlar nedeniyle gerçekleştiği belirlenmiştir. Eğitimli genç nüfusun beyin göçü nedeniyle ülkeden ayrılmasının ülkenin ekonomik, kültürel ve sosyal yapısında değişimlere neden olabileceği göz önüne alınarak gençlerin ihtiyaçlarının ülke ve eğitim politikalarıyla desteklenmesi önemlidir.

## **Youth Perspectives on the Phenomenon of Brain Drain: An Examination Based on Self-Determination Theory**

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### **Abstract**

*Brain drain has become an important issue for many countries. The brain drain of youth or well-educated people can have social and economic consequences for both the host countries and the countries of origin. This study aims to understand the motivations of educated youth for their decision to go abroad or stay in Turkey in the context of brain drain. This qualitative study was conducted using a theory-driven approach and a deductive process. A descriptive analysis within the themes of self-determination theory—'relatedness', 'competence', and 'autonomy'—was conducted. A total of 15 youths aged 18-23 years participated in the study ( $N_{girls}=8$ ,  $N_{boys}=6$ ,  $N_{transgender}=1$ ). The semi-structured interview form contained 11 open-ended questions and each interview lasted almost 40 minutes. After transcribing the audio recordings, each researcher categorized youths' responses under the themes of "relatedness", "competence" and "autonomy". The results showed that the need for relatedness is crucial for youths' decision to stay in Turkey. However, the responses of the youth who wanted to go abroad tended to fall under the themes of "competence" and "autonomy". These findings may have drawn attention to the needs of youth and provided an opportunity to take various precautions in the educational and working environment before increasing levels of brain drain.*

*Keywords: Brain drain, youth, relatedness, self-determination theory, autonomy, competence*



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## **Youth Perspectives on the Phenomenon of Brain Drain: An Examination Based On Self-Determination Theory**

### **1. Introduction**

Migration can occur for several reasons such as poverty, war, and oppression (Bakewell, 2021), natural disasters (Shakya et al., 2022), or climate change (Kaczan & Orgill-Meyer, 2022). Even though COVID-19 restrictions have reduced the number of immigrants, the migration rate has increased due to the war in Ukraine and Syria, and global economic difficulties (OECD, 2022; Simpson, 2022). According to the OECD report (2022), another essential reason for the growing migration is international university students, who make up an average of 10% of all university students in OECD countries. The rate of employed immigrants was 70%, almost ten times higher than that of the unemployed (OECD, 2022).

Turkiye is one of the countries where both immigration and emigration are an important issue. Turkiye has the highest proportion of external migration (OECD, 2022). The Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI) reported that the emigration rate, considering both Turkish and other nationalities, increased by 62.3% compared to the previous year (TSI, 2023). Additionally, emigration among Turkish citizens is almost 25% higher than the previous year. Youths between the ages of 20-29 make up almost  $\frac{1}{4}$  of this population TSI reports (2022, 2023). Even if there are no general statistics on the education levels or emigration aims of individuals in Turkiye, one type of migration might be brain drain.

Brain drain was cited as a reason for the migration of both youth and those in employment and has gained attention in recent decades. Brain drain is defined as “when large numbers of educated and very skilled people leave their own country to live and work in another one where pays and conditions are better” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). Migration of educated youth or skilled people can lead to changes in the economic (Beine et al., 2001), cultural and social structure of the country of origin (Burger, 2022). One might think that the concept is an issue related to developing countries. In fact, most research on brain drain is conducted in developing countries (Aytac; 2019; Azadi et al., 2019; King& Gëdeshi, 2020). However, there are also studies in developed countries that consider brain drain as a problem for their society (Kvartiuk et al. 2020; Sano et al., 2020;). Therefore, brain drain can be considered as a global problem that attracts the attention of most countries. Therefore, it is important to evaluate its causes and consequences.

Brain drain research is more likely to focus on the economic consequences of it (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012; Ette & Witte, 2021; Stark et al., 1997). Some research has analyzed the causes of brain drain in relation to air pollution (Khuc et al., 2022; Lai et al., 2021; Li et al., 2020; Xue et al., 2021). Studies on post-brain drain have been conducted with skilled workers (Adovor et al., 2021; Botezat, A., & Moraru, 2020; Dohlman et al., 2019; Emmanuel et al., 2019; Hashish & Ashour, 2020; Okafor & Chimereze, 2020) and academics (Khan, 2021; Lanko, 2022) or some of them with non-returning students/youth (Gungor, 2004; Sano et al., 2020). However, in order to prevent brain drain, the reasons for it should be given more attention in research.

Studies on causes of brain drain are generally conducted with the adult population. The most expressive reasons for brain drain among professionals who had a brain drain were economic benefits and more freedom abroad; conversely, unemployment, political instability, and fewer research opportunities in Turkiye (Aytac; 2019; Tanrisevdi et al., 2019). A few studies on youth

who do not return have focused on their proportion and the reasons why they go abroad (Gungor, 2004; Metin, 2023). There are few studies on brain drain that focus on non-emigrant youth. Association of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2021) reported that most Turkish non-immigrant youth (69%, N= 2229) expressed a desire to live abroad - generally in European countries and the USA - if they had the opportunity to do so. They cited three main reasons: fewer job opportunities, less freedom, and no sense of security in Turkiye. Preventing brain drain is important for a country's development. Therefore, identifying the needs that drive individuals to brain drain and developing national policies accordingly can be beneficial.

One of the most important theories that provide a framework for evaluating and classifying individuals' needs is self-determination theory. Self-determination theory is a modal that explains the dynamics of human needs, motivations and well-being in a social context (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The theory identifies three basic psychological needs: (1) autonomy (2) competence (3) relatedness. Autonomy refers to the feeling of having a choice and voluntarily supporting one's own behavior. Competence refers to the experience of mastery and effectiveness of one's own activity. Relatedness refers to the need to feel connected to others and to have a sense of belonging. Positive mental health outcomes have been shown to be related to the satisfaction of psychological needs (Davids et al., 2017; Perlman et al., 2020). It is important for both the mental health of educated youths and the development of the country to recognize the motivations behind educated youth leaving Turkiye or to understand the needs that would encourage them to stay.

Turkiye has faced the most critical changes in the last ten years, such as a higher migration rate and the economic crisis. In addition, the emigration rate among youths in Turkiye is increasing. Moreover, a study focusing on the reasons for the migration of educated youths has not been encountered in the literature. In this study, self-determination theory provided a basis for classifying youths' need to go or stay. In this study, it is aimed to assess adolescents' opinion towards brain drain and to understand their motivation for staying and leaving Turkiye based on self-determination theory.

## **2. Method**

The current research was conducted as a qualitative study on youth's opinion of brain drain.

### **2.1. Research model**

This study aimed to examine the perspective of the youth on brain drain, therefore qualitative methods were used. These methods are used to "answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective, most often from the standpoint of the participant" (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Data analysis was conducted using a theory-driven approach and a deductive process which systematically tested and applied theoretical frameworks to explain research findings (MacFarlane & O'Reilly-De Brún, 2012; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Self-determination theory provides a perspective to explain psychological needs in humans' motivation. In the current study, the psychological needs of youths that might influence their decisions to stay in or leave Turkiye were identified based on self-determination theory. Subsequently, the categories were mapped to the themes specified in the theory, namely "relatedness", "competence" and "autonomy".

## 2.2. Participants

The participants were selected through a convenience sampling method. One of the researchers shared an announcement stating the purpose of the study, the eligibility of participants, and the ability to contact the researcher via social media. The volunteer participants responded to the announcement via email. Then, one of the researchers organized an online call or scheduled a face-to-face interview with each participant. Two pilot studies were conducted with a total of six participants. The main study included 15 volunteer participants.

A total of 15 participants were included in the current study. All of them were university students in Ankara, Turkiye. Their mean ages were 20.06 (range: 18 - 23). Almost half of them were male and attended private universities. In terms of their distribution by grade level, the highest number were in junior grade education (n = 5), while the lowest number were in senior grade education (n = 1). Table 1 shows the characteristics of the participants in the main study.

**Table 1.**

### *Participant Characteristic*

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Female	6	40.1
Male	8	53.3
Transgender	1	6.6
Age		
18	1	6.7
19	6	40.0
20	3	20.0
21	2	13.3
22	2	13.3
23	1	6.7
School Type		
Private	9	60.0
State	6	40.0
Year at school		
Prep school	2	13.4
Freshman	4	26.6
Sophomore	3	20
Junior	5	33.4
Senior	1	6.6
Total	15	100

## 2.3. Data Collection Tools and Process

A semi-structured interview form was used to understand the participants' psychological needs, motivations, and perspectives on staying in or leaving Turkiye. First, the questions to be asked to participants were prepared by two researchers. After, the first pilot study consisted of five questions and was asked to two participants. After reviewing the answers, the researchers decided to add six more questions to the form. Before the second pilot study, expert judgments were received from one educational psychologist and one linguistic expert. Questions were designed according to expert opinions. In the second pilot study, the interview form, which contained 11 questions, was presented to four different participants.

Subsequently, the form was finalized. Examples of the questions: "What does the brain drain?"; "Would you like to have a brain drain?"; "If you had to convince a youth to have a brain drain, what would you say?". Participants were not asked directly about competence, autonomy, or relatedness, so the extent to which content related to these needs emerged spontaneously in participants' attitudes could not be assessed.

The data for the study was obtained through open-ended questions, and semi-structured interviews. Before getting into the interview questions, the participants' personal details were recorded (gender, age, type of school they attend, and the year they study). Each semi-structured interview was conducted by the same researcher and lasted almost 40 minutes, and all were recorded. Before coding, for the purpose of ensuring confidentiality, each participant was identified with the letter 'k' followed by a number.

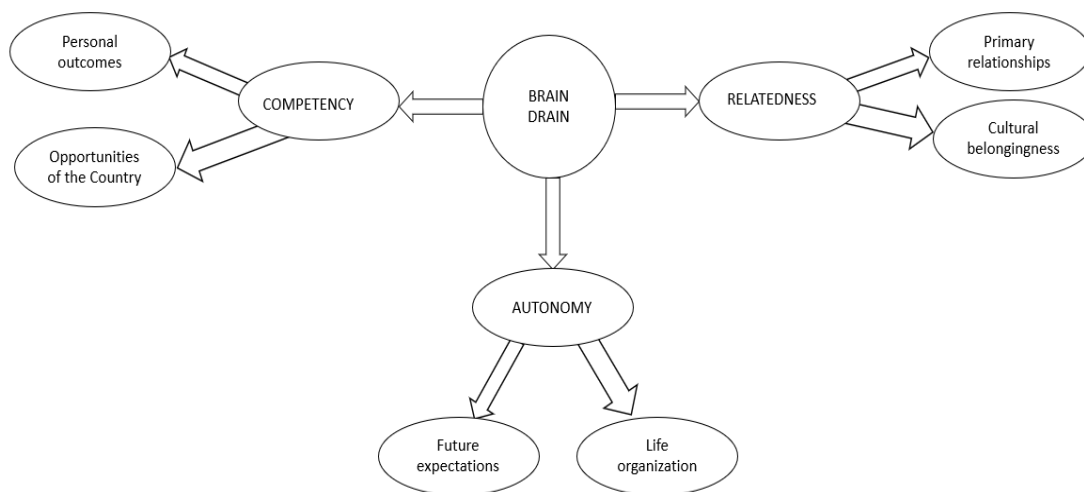
#### **2.4. Data Analysis**

Before analyzing the data, one of the researchers transcribed the audio recordings verbatim into written recordings. The data was analyzed using MAXQDA. Subsequently, both researchers separately conducted a descriptive analysis within the themes of self-determination theory; 'relatedness', 'competence', and 'autonomy'. Inter-coder reliability (ICR) is a quantitative assessment of the consistency between different coders in how they categorize the same data. There are different ways to measure ICR. A percentage-based model, which is recommended when the coding task is not complicated, was used in the current study (Feng, 2014). ICR was computed by using MAXQDA based on three themes of Self-determination theory. ICR was determined to be .83. Finally, researchers reviewed their codes and made a decision about inconsistent categorization.

### **3. Findings**

The results on the topics of "relatedness", "competence" and "autonomy" were examined in terms of self-determination theory. The theme "relatedness" contained two categories, namely "primary relationships" and "cultural belongingness". The topic of competence also contained two categories: "personal outcomes" and "opportunities of the country". Finally, the topic of autonomy was divided into two categories: "life organization" and "future expectations". Themes and categories of the study are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.***Themes and Categories of the Study***3.1. Relatedness**

Relatedness is defined as the need to feel belonging and connectedness with others (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Participants' responses mentioned the importance of their primary relationships such as family, relatives, or friends as well as their cultural belongingness. The participants' responses with their frequencies are presented in two categories.

**3.1.1. Primary relationships (f = 21)**

Primary relationships had the positive meaning of staying in Türkiye. Participants emphasized their possible longing to live abroad. Primary relationships were crucial to the lives of youths.

*"I would say there's nothing like having your family, friends..."* K2

*"If I wasn't estranged from my family, I would stay..."* K3

*"Their family, friends, and the routine they are accustomed to are inexistent."* K4

**3.1.2. Cultural belongingness (f = 52)**

Cultural belonging had the meaning of having familiar characteristics in the culture, expecting situations, including negative ones, and belonging. However, participants also mentioned frustrations about living in Türkiye. They also emphasized their fear of not fitting into another culture and the possibility of discrimination.

*"Because I do not feel like I belong here; as a transgender individual, I do not feel like there is any space for me, or that people understand me."* K10

*"If I were to emigrate abroad, people might have a prejudice against me due to my Turkish origin, and they could marginalize me."* K10

*"Differences, a new life, a new language, new cultures, new music, new foods; all these will undoubtedly enrich a person."* K6

### 3.2. Competence

Competence means feeling effective in interactions with one's social environment and having the opportunity to use and express one's abilities (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In their responses, participants mentioned the importance of their personal outcomes, such as being famous and making an effort in life. On the other hand, they mentioned the importance of the country's opportunities. The participants' responses are presented in two categories with their occurrences

#### 3.2.1. Personal Outcomes (f = 24)

According to the study, personal outcomes have an important influence on the migration of skilled workers abroad. The participants expressed that their expectations abroad are at a higher level.

*"I can be a pioneer in a music genre, in a specific design."* K3

*"If I stay in my country, I will need to make a lot of effort, and since there is a high number of graduates, I might face difficulties."* K8

*"Moving abroad is somewhat costly, and therefore, it is likely to result in a significant financial loss."* K12

#### 3.2.2. Opportunities of the Country (f = 49)

Opportunities in the country, such as the economy and study opportunities, were important to the participants. They stated that they would have better opportunities abroad than in Türkiye.

*"I do not see myself receiving the recognition I deserve or accessing sufficient opportunities within the scope of my field of study and the projects I will undertake."* K5

*"Due to the economic crisis and the presence of immigrants, I do not envision a very bright future for my country."* K11

*"...there are more opportunities in some parts of Europe where I will work. There are more areas where I can show myself. At least I will be able to do the work in my mind."* K1

### 3.3. Autonomy

Autonomy is defined as the individual initiating and continuing his/her own actions and being the source and focus of her own actions (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In their responses, participants mentioned the importance of their regular lifestyle habits and their future expectations. The participants' responses are presented with their frequency in two categories.

#### 3.3.1. Life Organization (f = 6)

The participants mentioned that their current lifestyle habits have a significant impact on not leaving their country. They emphasized that the order they have in their lives is important to them because they do not have to adapt to new situations, people, systems, etc.

*"I have a strong affection for Turkey from a geographical perspective."* K1

*"It may take time for me to adapt to a new country."* K15

*"Always familiar faces, familiar people. That's why I can predict what a person I see on the street might do.... Change can be seen as an advantage. Breaking away from monotony..." K2*

### **3.3.2. Future Expectations (f = 5)**

Future expectations had a negative impact on life in Turkey. According to the participants' answers, they believe that other countries offer them a better future. With this view of foreign countries, the participants wish for a brain drain in order to have a better future.

*"As a transgender individual, I may have more agency over decisions concerning my body." K10*

*"I think that people abroad will be guided according to their intentions and will come to more successful places in the future. I think it is a slightly closer future." K9*

*"Because I don't see a very good future for him in this country. The things I want to do, the things I try to do, are not the things this country supports. That's why I rarely want to go to other countries." K3*

## **4. Discussion & Conclusion and Suggestions**

This study was based on the self-determination theory, which provided us with a perspective for understanding the motivations and needs of individuals (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The aim was to understand youths' motivations for considering leaving or staying in Türkiye. Educated youth were reported more likely to migrate than uneducated youth. Therefore, the current study was conducted with university students. Participants answered 11 semi-structured questions related to attitudes towards brain drain. The answers were analyzed based on the needs for "relatedness", "autonomy", and "competence" of the self-determination theory.

Participants in the current study were individuals in emerging adulthood, described as ages between 18-25, a period characterized by transition to adulthood with increasing autonomy and independence (Arnett, 2007). Therefore, it can be expected that the need for relatedness is not an important factor for participants. However, the most prevalent theme related to the stay in Turkey was the need for relatedness. The youth expressed both their need for connection with their friends and family and belonging to their culture. Youth cited the inability to be close to home and see family and friends at their convenience as a reason for not wanting to go abroad. Moreover, national feelings such as patriotism, fighting for the country, and protecting cultural values which were examined in terms of belonging to culture were emphasized the most by youth. Previous research has not drawn attention to the need to belong to culture (Aytac; 2019; Gungor, 2004; Metin, 2023; Tanrısevdi et al., 2019). In Türkiye where honor culture is prevalent, family and social relations outside the family are crucial cultural components (Mosquera et al; 2002; Uskul et al, 2012). Additionally, cultural norms and aspects are crucial for people in honor culture. Youth's responses still increase autonomy and cultural belongingness.

Migration has also become widespread. Therefore, discrimination issues have become crucial both in Türkiye and all around the world. The youth have pointed out their concerns about not fitting into the foreign culture, primarily due to fears of discrimination. Previous research indicated that concerning about ethnic discrimination in Turkish immigrants (Aytac, 2019). Relatedness defines a feeling of being cared for and being closely connected to another person

(Ryan & Deci, 2008). Concerning of discrimination seems one of the important issues affecting feeling secure and connected with other people based on the youth perspective.

Concerns on discrimination also emerged in youth responses related to competence. Youth pointed out sufficient psychical/financial resources, adequate employment, and educational opportunities, and the respect and appreciation they will receive in abroad society. However, the youth expressed concern about discrimination in the workplace. Many studies pointed out the economic and social advantages of developed countries (Adovor et al., 2021 Aytac et al., 2019; Botezat et al., 2020). Besides, the concern about discrimination could be an important finding of the present study. Migration rates have increased worldwide (IOM, 2022). Ethnic discrimination has become a crucial issue that is one of the consequences of migration. Therefore, the issue may have attracted the attention of youths and increased their concerns about it.

Emerging adulthood was characterized by accepting responsibilities as well as independence (Arnett, 2007). Competence refers to the belief that one can achieve one's self-chosen goals (Ryan & Deci, 2008). Most of the responses emphasized less competency feelings in Turkiye, contrary to their opinions shaped by providing facilities that allow them to develop their skills abroad. They emphasized the difficulties such as excessive effort required to achieve the goal, the possibility of becoming unemployed, the worthlessness of the profession, the higher costs, the socio-economic uncertainty, the subjective evaluation in recruitment, and the insufficient opportunities in education and work if they live in Turkiye. Previous research had consisted of results. They showed that economic instability in Turkiye and the fear of becoming unemployed are important reasons for the brain drain (Aytac; 2019; Güngör, 2004; Tanrısevdi et al., 2019). However, youth specified living abroad included several positive outcomes such as enough resources and appreciation that meet their need for competency. However, one participant stated that the quality of Turkish education is sufficient and offers youth the opportunity to improve their skills.

Autonomy is crucial for youth both as a developmental issue and as a personal need. The concept is related to the freedom of the individual to make their own decisions and shape their own behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2008). The current results showed that youth believe being abroad provides them with more autonomy through greater freedom of speech and personal freedom. Conversely, living in Turkey provided fewer opportunities for their hobbies or changing their lives. Autonomy as a human right contributes to the well-being of youth (Boyle 2008; De-Juanas et al., 2020). However, the TUIK report (2022) emphasized life satisfaction among youths aged 18-24 is lower than for other age groups. Youths' opinion on having less autonomy in Turkiye might be related to their lower level of life satisfaction.

Although youth emphasized their need for autonomy and providing less autonomy in Turkey, they confused that greater autonomy is good or bad. They specified that less chance of changing might be related to a safe life or cause a monotonous life. Identity development starts with adolescence (Erikson,1956) and maintains during emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2007). Identity theories (e.g. Crocetti et al., 2008; Erikson, 1956; Marcia, 1966) clarified that a successful identity development should include an exploration and searching process. Therefore, people around youths such as parents, educators, or members of government supply more opportunities to support their identity development.

In conclusion, youths' need for relatedness affects their decision to stay in Türkiye the most. However, the need for competence and autonomy met less in Türkiye. Therefore, their opinion of living abroad is shaped around two needs. Policymakers should take into account youths need for competence and autonomy to prevent brain drain. Promoting job facilities, ensuring trust in competence, and supporting identity development by providing a variety of activities might be crucial in decreasing the level of brain drain. However, the current study presented preliminary results based on a restricted sample. Therefore, brain drain, as one of the growing problems, the needs more research to understand needs of people and prevent brain drain.

This research is important to understand the motivation of youths who stay in Turkey or live abroad. However, there are some limitations in the current study that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, university students' opinions about brain drain have been investigated by conducting qualitative research. However, it can be influenced by many factors such as socioeconomic status, family opinions, peer attitudes, or well-being. Future research on brain drain should take into consideration both individual and environmental factors. Secondly, the opinions of youth have been examined based on the self-determination theory. However, brain drain is a concept that could be addressed interdisciplinarily based on economic or migration theories. Finally, only students with bachelor's degrees have been reached. However, vocational students, master students, PhD students, or unemployed graduates could also be critical groups in terms of brain drain.

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