



Journal of Economy Culture and Society

Research Article

Open Access

The Transformation of Intimate Relationships Among University Youth: The Case of Sakarya University



Özgür Kaya¹  & Mehmet Tayfun Amman¹ 

¹ Sakarya University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Sociology, Sakarya, Türkiye

Abstract

This study aims to explore the dynamics of premarital intimate relationships among undergraduate students at Sakarya University, which represents a postmodern melting pot at the intersection of agricultural-traditional and industrial-modern societal characteristics. This positioning makes the university a microcosm of Turkish society, with its diverse student body offering an ideal sample to demonstrate secularizing trends and cultural aspects such as individualization, the culture industry, and extensive narcissism, all of which emerge under global influences. The survey was conducted with 740 participants using stratified random sampling under a quantitative research methodology, as this approach enhances representativeness and ensures more precise comparisons across subgroups, thereby improving the reliability and generalizability of the findings. Accordingly, a confidence interval of 90% and an error margin of 0.3 were ensured in the survey. The selected data include variables such as the students' levels of religiosity, the types of education (faculties), ideological predispositions, urbanization, and the duration and frequency of their current relationships, as these factors are anticipated to best reflect secularization trends. Thus, several findings reveal some remarkable consequences. For instance, the lower the level of religiosity among young people, the more they tend to be flexible and relaxed in their premarital intimate approaches. Students brought up in urban cities have more intimate experiences in the premarital stage than their counterparts from rural areas. Those who give priority to material demands in terms of ideological predispositions are more prone to engage in premarital sexual activities than those who give preference to spiritual and moral requirements. As a result, this research can be considered a contribution to the debates on modernity in the Turkish context of intimate relationships and family studies.

Keywords

Secularization • Individualization • Urbanization • Intimacy • University Students



“ Citation: Kaya, Ö. & Tayfun Amman, M. (2025). The transformation of intimate relationships Among University youth: The case of Sakarya University. *Journal of Economy Culture and Society*, (71), 239–257. <https://doi.org/10.26650/JECS2024-1561854>

© This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. 

© 2025. Kaya, Ö. & Tayfun Amman, M.

✉ Corresponding author: Özgür Kaya ozgvrkaya@gmail.com



The Transformation of Intimate Relationships Among University Youth: The Case of Sakarya University

In modern societies, societal values, norms and moral codes have rapidly changed due to the globalization of technological advances and digital novelties. Socio-cultural conventions, which once were a consistent frame of reference to navigate individuals' behaviors, have become indistinct, while individuals have gained more autonomy in their decision-making processes. This shift toward greater individual independence causes some disadvantages as well as opportunities. As the traditional autopilot has been switched off because of individualization, individuals are bound to take responsibility for their actions on their own (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). In the context of intimate relationships, this autonomy can often lead to entangled relationships in this more complex or atomized environment, especially among young people.

One of the most prominent manifestations of this comprehensive cultural turn can be viewed in the changing premarital experience among young people. According to a survey conducted in 24 developed countries in 1998, for instance, 76% of the young population tended to exhibit a positive approach toward premarital intercourse (Widmer et al., 1998). Similarly, this sign of emancipation from the restrictions of traditional values and norms has also started to be evident in the socio-cultural context of Türkiye. For instance, according to the findings of a comprehensive study conducted in 2005 across 17 provinces in Türkiye, involving face-to-face interviews with 2,908 young individuals aged 13 and above, the average age at which individuals experienced their first non-marital sexual encounter was found to be 19.4 for women and 18.8 for men (Armutçu, 2007), which means that the same rapid cultural transformations under global influences have simultaneously come to coexist with the decline of cultural conventions and religious traditions.

As a late modern country, Türkiye has undergone far-reaching transformations in the socio-cultural realm since the establishment of the republic, in line with Western values and norms. In other words, the historical adventure of Turkish modernity has been marked by the cultural tension between secularists, who regard the embrace of Western values as a prerequisite for the Enlightenment (see Kaya, 2006), and conservatives, who perceive the adoption of these values as a form of alienation (see Göle, 2019). The massive movement of the population from rural regions to urban centers since the 1950s has not only continued to contribute to the dissolution of traditional solidarity but also, as Mardin (2017) asserted, has made the competition between central and peripheral social sections more visible. The cultural shift in Türkiye, alongside its economic transformation, accelerated with the adoption of neoliberal economic policies implemented in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup, driven by the forces of globalization. Soon, this process was accompanied by the widespread influence of the mass media and its cultural consequences, including the rise of popular and consumer culture. During this period, the underlying lifestyle differences between the central and peripheral social sections became evident once again, this time manifesting through a new cultural atmosphere represented in the contrast between pop and arabesque music (Kozanoğlu, 1999; Gürbilek, 2001). Therefore, it is no wonder that young people often find themselves stuck between two contradictory ways of life in Türkiye, which can be regarded as an extension of the aforementioned historical-cultural duality of Turkish modernity. Moreover, this tension manifests itself in young people's romantic relationships, including premarital intimate approaches. Therefore, this paper specifically concentrates on

the premarital intimate attitudes of undergraduate students at Sakarya University. The social analysis here, whose main aim is to clarify the correlations between religiosity, ideological predispositions, the current situations of romantic relationships, and ongoing premarital attitudes, is based on data gathered from a sample of 740 undergraduate students at Sakarya University.

Secularization is often considered a process in which the dominant religion, along with its values, institutions, and practices, gradually loses its established status and influence over the political, educational, and cultural spheres of social life (Wilson, 2016; Bruce, 2002). That is, the weakening of religious authority enables individuals to make increasingly autonomous decisions regarding nature, society, and humanity, thereby enhancing the fluidity of social relations in general and romantic relationships in particular. Indeed, some important findings of our research also indicate a substantial shift in romantic relationships. For instance, as individuals' religiosity diminishes, there are tremendous positive attitudes toward premarital intercourse. Similarly, those who tend to materialism have more premarital experience than those who tend to idealism.

Another phenomenon influencing the establishment of intimate relationships is urbanization. Investigating the construction of urban spaces from a Marxist perspective, some scholars argue that urban environments are socially constructed to align with the primary needs of capitalist production. For example, urban planning plays a crucial role in creating and reinforcing class inequalities. Thus, the reconstruction of physical space cannot be considered independent of capital accumulation and political power, as reshaping urban space through various initiatives—such as housing and gentrification—serves merely as a palliative measure to prolong the capitalist system's lifespan (Castells, 1977; Harvey, 2016). Therefore, industrial capitalism reflects the economic stratification of class society, while urban spaces simultaneously encompass the corpus of postmodern values and norms¹, facilitating the flourishing of more secular relationships. In this regard, our research findings indicate that premarital sexual intercourse is significantly more common among students with urban backgrounds than among their rural counterparts.

Consequently, these results, as the prominent indicators of secularization, highlight that students tend to become open to liquid and frail relationships because marriage and family are no longer obligatory life stages but customizable projects, open to interpretation, negotiation and change among partners. Hence, relationships are increasingly based on emotional satisfaction rather than duty, making them more fragile and flexible (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). For this reason, it is important to understand the dynamics of romantic relationships among young people, which can tell us what will happen to the family structure in the near future, as well as provide some clues regarding more extensive socio-cultural transformations in Turkish society.

Theoretical Framework: Cultural Implications of Secularization

The receding authority of the organized religion in modern societies has resulted in the emergence of a range of cultural facts, infiltrating into everyday interactions. A concise overview of these facts can be depicted as follows:

The Age of “Me”: The Power of Individualization

Although the foundations of individualization can be found in classical social theories such as Durkheim's division of labor, Weber's rationalization, and Tönnies's distinction between community and civil society,

¹The postmodern condition can simultaneously encompass phenomena that appear irreconcilable in rational, religious, and cultural terms. For a detailed discussion on this topic, see (Kellner & Best, 2011).

the concept attracted much more interest in the late 1970s due to the imminent globalization of the liberal model of modernity based on neo-liberal policies. Some contemporary scholars, such as Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002), attempted to redefine it in this era as follows:

- The weakening of traditional social bonds, including family ties, class affiliations, and community connections, has resulted in individuals navigating life with greater independence. This case has caused several personal freedoms and responsibilities for individuals' life choices over time.
- Individualization entails individuals making life plans on their own and engaging in reflexive evaluation of their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in order to ensure self-control over them. In doing so, they lack the guidance of established conventions, norms, and institutions. Thus, individuals find themselves in a more dynamic and fluid environment.
- Individualization requires encountering some risks and uncertain conditions because individuals always have to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. As familiar forms of interactions, which describe traditional social structure, diminish, it can lead to potential instability and insecurity in the course of one's life, especially when it comes to issues such as employment and relationships.
- Individualization is not solely a result of personal choice; it is also institutionalized through social policies and practices. For instance, welfare and educational systems and free market circumstances are rearranged in order for individuals to internalize the process.

Kelly (2022) argues that becoming an individual today is equivalent to a form of conformism, as the discourse of authenticity itself has recently turned into a commodity. It is conformist because, on the one hand, everyone is expected to be distinct, yet, on the other hand, this distinction must align with the demands of the free market. For example, the authentic lifestyle of the Hippies, which emerged in the 1960s, was a countercultural movement that rebelled against the values and norms of modern industrial society. Although Hippies no longer exist as a distinct social group today, various aspects of their lifestyle—such as alternative fashion and music styles, their approach to nature, polyamorous relationships, individualized beliefs like mysticism and meditation, vegetarian diets, and drug use—have been commodified and seamlessly integrated into the market through neoliberal economic policies over the past four decades. Even so, in modern secular societies, the simultaneous commitment to both individual and collective demands often leads to internal tension and confusion. As a result, individuals frequently succumb to widespread social anxiety as they navigate between cooperation and competition.

The Culture Industry: Love for Sale?

The concept, first introduced by Adorno and Horkheimer (2007), critical theorists from the Frankfurt School, in their seminal work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* [1947], refers to the mass production of cultural goods and services within capitalist societies. Adorno and Horkheimer argued that the culture industry deliberately maintains the status quo by transforming art into standardized commodities, not only for profit but also to promote passive consumption among audiences, thereby diminishing their capacity for critical thought and ensuring social control. The concept 'culture industry' synthesizes Marxist and Weberian analyses. From a Marxist perspective, it highlights how the cultural sphere is dominated by competitive and increasingly monopolistic corporations driven by profit motives, thereby commodifying culture and alienating people in the process. From a Weberian viewpoint, it underscores organizational rationalization,

where cultural production and consumption are increasingly planned, suppressing alternatives. Since the latter decades of the 20th century, this understanding has evolved, especially in advertising and marketing, which aim to captivate audiences as a new opiate of the modern masses. Rationalization impacts not only production but also standardizes cultural products, creating a sense of “pseudo-individuality” in consumption (Garnham, 2007, pp. 942-945). Consequently, the culture industry fulfills a deceptive social function by manipulating the masses through the precise orchestration of all mass media instruments, such as novels, movies, music, and astrology. Thus, it fosters an inauthentic culture, which becomes an end in itself. For instance, the authentic works of Beethoven, Mozart, and Wagner have been presented to audiences in fragmented forms as a prerequisite for successful advertising and marketing.

Over the past forty years, modern human experiences, influenced by Weberian instrumental reason and global neoliberal policies, have profoundly affected the self-perceptions and societal values of new generations. This process, undoubtedly, also influences the ways in which young people form and sustain romantic relationships. The cultural climate generated by this version of modernity under the guidance of instrumental reason creates a conducive environment for dysfunctional relationships. As the power of institutional religion in daily life diminishes, a new ideology of love, well-suited to being marketed by the culture industry as a new secular religion, has been on the rise.

Neoliberal capitalism, through the culture industry, has discovered ways to market the enticing content reflecting the lifestyles of marginal counter-culture groups (e.g., hippies) —such as drug use and polyamory — as attractive consumer goods promising liberation to all members of society, especially the youth. This perceived freedom has weakened the social function of shame, leading to unfiltered discussions on intimate matters. As social values and norms are discarded as “obsolete” and “burdensome” in the name of diversifying love consumption, the sole means of preserving equilibrium is to accelerate relationships. Love can be encountered anywhere at any time; however, precisely because of this advertisement and exhibition of intimacy, love can no longer manifest itself anywhere. Few things are as disenchanted as the words “my love” and “I love you” due to the homogenizing policy of the culture industry.

Through cultural commodities such as films, music, and advertisements that impose this love ideology, the emotions, norms, language, and symbols of the youth are restructured. From the perspective of these arrangements, which incite the desire for consumption and draw a significant portion of the youth toward shallower qualities and superficial interactions, men are not seen as wealthy enough for women, women are not seen as sexy enough for men, holidays are not seen as luxurious enough, and parents are not seen as sufficiently tolerant and supportive.

Cultural Narcissism: Why Are Relationships More Fragile Than Ever?

The term, also referred to as ‘the culture of narcissism’ (Lasch, 1991), denotes the public expression of nearly all repressed desires by individuals, either without feeling constrained by the social control of the superego or perceiving weak restrictions from prevailing socio-cultural values and norms. In this context, in our society, concurrent with global trends, instances of cheating, deception, and lying have escalated in domains such as business, relationships, politics, and all forms of media. Furthermore, several scholars have asserted that these trends contribute to the emergence of a “post-truth age” (Keyes, 2004; McIntyre, 2018). The products of the culture industry convey messages of approval and appreciation that make individuals feel valuable. Messages such as “You are special!”, “You deserve the best in life!”, “All the power you need is within you!”, “Nothing is impossible!”, “you can do anything and get whatever you want!” etc. are conveyed through mass media, especially self-help publications (Niedzviecki, 2006). To feel successful and

confident, individuals need not do anything other than purchase these products. In fact, all these flattering suggestions, which resonate with childhood traumas, reinforce hedonistic and impulsive attitudes that serve the development of an inflated view of the self. Moreover, Twenge and Campbell (2013) compare narcissism to a highly contagious socio-cultural epidemic distinct from clinically diagnosed pathological cases. They emphasize that the fundamental characteristic of cultural narcissism is the internalized belief among young individuals—whose parents never denied their desires and who were raised as “heirs and princesses”—that they deserve the best of everything without any responsibility or effort on their part.

According to Lasch (1991), the tense conditions of a secular, modern society compel individuals to adopt narcissism as a defense mechanism. These conditions initially target the stable family structure and influence the child’s personality. Members of a society so concerned about their future naturally invest less time and energy in the next generation. This historical sense of discontinuity, which spells disaster for that society, adversely affects parents’ reliable and composed demeanor, thereby undermining the child’s positive self-perception of being loved and wanted. A child internalizing the perception that the world is insecure and dangerous has no choice but to adopt a narcissistic defensive stance. However, adopting a self-centered view of the world prioritizes cut-throat competition, undermining the principles of social solidarity. When young people falter between their current selves and their ideal selves and cannot meet the expectations of an inflated view of the self characterized by hedonistic, impulsive, and narcissistic attitudes and behaviors, they fall into the trap of various addictions such as alcohol, drugs, gaming, and sex.

Consequently, young individuals striving for success in intimate relationships often fail to establish genuine and sincere emotional bonds, frequently leading their communication to become limited or exclusive. In other words, “every sexual relationship under the sway of narcissism becomes less fulfilling the longer the partners are together” (Sennett, 1977, p. 9). Hence, it could be argued that narcissism also constitutes an underlying cause of frequent partner changes. Consequently, the secularization theory posits that as societies progress, religion loses its influence over various aspects of life, including governance, education, and individual behavior. This theory is supported by the observation that highly developed societies tend to exhibit lower levels of religiosity and higher degrees of secularization (Norris & Inglehart, 2004).

The process of secularization in Turkey, initiated with the founding of the Republic in the early 20th century, has seen significant developments over the decades. Initially driven by Atatürk’s reforms, such as the abolition of religious courts and the introduction of a secular legal code, the influence of religion in public life was systematically reduced. This was part of a broader modernization effort aimed at aligning Turkey with Western standards. However, the secularization of Turkish society became more pronounced and visible in the public sphere starting from the 1980s and 1990s. Meanwhile, the introduction of mass media became increasingly prominent in the last quarter of the 20th century, playing a crucial role in the establishment of secular values and norms in Turkish society. Individuals were exposed to the cultural contents of Western modernity, particularly through television, catalyzing the process of secularization. The pop music culture of the 1990s (exemplified by songs of Sezen Aksu and Tarkan) gradually highlighted the secular ideology of love as a personal realm, presenting it as a secular religion.² The film and television industry, which gained momentum in the late 1990s, contributed to the normalization of secular lifestyles by portraying changing gender roles and issues such as divorce, virginity, masturbation, nudity, infidelity, rape, immoral proposals, forbidden love, and the trivialization of sexual relations. Notable productions such as *Berlin in Berlin* (1994), *Mum Kokulu Kadınlar* (1996), *Mustafa Hakkında Her Şey* (2004), *Duvara Karşı* (2004),

²For a comprehensive discussion on the secularization of love or whether love has become a new religion, see Illouz (2024: 62-89).

Binbir Gece (2006), *Barda* (2007), *Aşk-ı Memnu* (2008), and *Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?* (2010) are some of the prominent examples. In the television world, the increasing success of romantic love themes, which garnered higher ratings, quickly paved the way for the normalization of pornography in everyday life (Kahraman, 2010).

In addition, another leading contributor of modernity to secularization is urbanization, which provides members with an opportunity to become anonymous or invisible in the urban crowds. This is especially the case regarding intimate relationships. The large-scale migration from rural regions to urban areas in Turkey, which intensified from the 1950s onwards, has caused a transformation in everyday social interactions. Urban environments provide more diverse social connections and increased opportunities for education and employment, leading to more liberal attitudes toward issues like premarital intimate approaches.

Main Question of the Research

How have university students' attitudes toward premarital relationships evolved in the context of secularizing trends in contemporary Turkey?

Objectives

The primary objectives of this study can be outlined as follows:

- To investigate how varying levels of religiosity among students influence their attitudes toward premarital intercourse, with an emphasis on the secularization trends in Turkish society.
- To investigate how urbanization affects students' attitudes toward premarital intercourse, distinguishing between those from urban and rural backgrounds.
- To analyze the correlation between ideological perspectives and attitudes toward premarital intercourse, focusing on the continuum from conservative to liberal ideologies.
- To identify and compare differences in sexual attitudes and experiences among students across various faculties within the university.
- To draw attention to the correlation between the number of romantic relationships students have and their engagement in sexual activity, which contributes to the emergence of more fluid and fragile relationship dynamics.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design, using a survey method to gather data from undergraduate students at Sakarya University. The survey was conducted with a stratified random sample of 740 students, ensuring representation across different faculties, years of study, and demographic backgrounds. The data were analyzed using statistical methods to identify correlations between variables, including religiosity, urbanization, and sexual attitudes.

Determination of the Research Universe and Sample

This study utilizes data from a doctoral thesis conducted at Sakarya University by one of the authors (Kaya, 2024). Initially, the research universe was identified as undergraduate students at Sakarya University. All necessary ethical approvals and research permissions were obtained from the university's rectorate. Given the use of a stratified sampling technique, data regarding the number of students registered in each faculty and their gender distribution were obtained from the university's student affairs office. Grad-

uate schools and institutes providing postgraduate education were excluded from the target population. Additionally, for reasons of cost and time efficiency, certain faculties deemed to have similar descriptive characteristics and thus not significantly affecting the study's effectiveness were also excluded. Consequently, the revised research population was determined to comprise seven faculties with a total of 25,466 students, consisting of 12,756 males and 12,710 females. This new population retained the gender ratios (51% female and 49% male) of the total registered student body at Sakarya University (45,683 students). To ensure that the findings could be generalized to the entire research universe and thus maintain representativeness, a stratified sampling technique was chosen. As Creswell (2012) explains, "In stratified sampling, researchers divide (stratify) the population on some specific characteristic (e.g., gender) and then, using simple random sampling, sample from each subgroup (stratum) of the population (e.g., females and males). This guarantees that the sample will include specific characteristics that the researcher wants included in the sample" (p. 144). This technique's advantage is the ability to compare different subgroups with distinct characteristics. Therefore, the ratios of faculties and gender within the research universe were considered to achieve a balanced distribution among participants. Using an online sample size calculator (qualtricks.com), the ideal sample size was determined to be 740 participants, based on a 90% confidence level, a population size of 25,466, and a 3% margin of error. The consistency of this tool's calculations with those presented by Rea and Parker (2014, p. 171) for populations between 500 and 100,000 further validated the sample size. Subsequently, the ratios of male and female students within each faculty were calculated (see Table 1) to ascertain the number of participants for the survey.

Table 1*Population Ratios and Stratified Sample Size*

Research Population and Ratios				Stratified Sample Size		
Faculty	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
State	231	121	352	7	3	10
Conservatory	0,66	0,34	0,0138			
Law	625	769	1394	18	23	41
	0,45	0,55	0,0547			
Theology	1123	2299	3422	33	66	99
	0,33	0,67	0,1343			
Communication	799	966	1765	23	28	51
	0,45	0,55	0,0693			
Humanities and Social Sciences	2326	4148	6474	68	120	188
	0,36	0,64	0,2542			
Engineering	4774	1858	6632	139	54	193
	0,72	0,28	0,2604			
Political Sciences	2878	2549	5427	84	74	158
	0,53	0,47	0,2131			
Total	12756	12710	25466	372	368	740
	0,5009	0,499	1			

Development of the Questionnaire and Selection of Survey Questions

The research process began with preliminary interviews with a randomly chosen group of seven students to gather initial information about the challenges that university students face in forming and maintaining romantic relationships. These interviews explored topics such as the duration, frequency, and reasons for the termination of romantic relationships, expectations from partners, sexual attitudes, infidelity, civil and religious marriages, religious and ideological tendencies, cohabitation, consanguineous marriages, family relationships, language used in social settings, social media usage, and consumption habits, as well as descriptions of soulmates. This process, conducted compared with the existing literature, resulted in an initial pool of 160 questions. Following extensive consultations with the thesis advisor over approximately nine months, these questions were refined and categorized on the basis of societal dynamics presumed to influence close relationships among university students. The final questionnaire comprised 93 questions, excluding the participant information form, organized into multiple-choice Likert-type questions (with 6-point, 4-point, and combined 3-point scales for ease of analysis). Johnson and Morgan (2016, p. 50) emphasized the importance of clear and straightforward wording to ensure that survey items are easily understood by participants. Therefore, to prevent potential comprehension issues, the wording of the items was reviewed for everyday language suitability. A pre-test was conducted with a few students, establishing an average completion time of 10-12 minutes.

Data Collection and Analysis

To achieve the required participant ratios and numbers, surveys were conducted with 820 participants in two stages. In the first stage, surveys were administered in classroom settings during lecture hours, with the support and permission of the instructors. Conducting the survey in a formal and quiet classroom environment, often with the presence of supportive faculty members, significantly enhanced the seriousness with which participants approached the survey. Before distributing the survey, the researcher provided brief explanations to the participants about the study's purpose, the importance of their voluntary and anonymous participation, and the necessity of completing the entire survey. Foreign students and married students were excluded from the study, and this information was communicated to the classes in advance. Despite surveying slightly more students than planned in each faculty, the expected gender ratios were not achieved, particularly in faculties other than engineering, where male participation in classes was low. This necessitated a second round of data collection with 60 additional male students, conducted in the faculty cafeterias and the central library rather than classrooms. Data from the 820 participants were entered into IBM SPSS Version 26, and the final dataset was adjusted to the stratified sample size of 740 by removing incomplete responses and excess female participant data.

The Landscape of Romantic Engagements Among Students

The findings of this study reveal the implications of a cultural transformation in romantic relationships among students, based on variables such as religiosity, education, urbanity, ideology, and the number and duration of romantic relationships.

From Faith to Flexibility: The Role of Religion in Premarital Intimacy

Table 2*Changing Religious Attitudes As A Sign of Secularization*

	Very Religious		Religious		Less Religious		Indifferent to Religion		Non-Religious		Anti-Religious	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mothers	136	18,04	484	65,4	110	14,9	10	1,4	-	-	-	-
Fathers	101	13,6	410	55,4	181	24,5	40	5,4	5	0,7	3	0,4
Students	26	3,5	258	34,9	279	37,7	128	17,3	38	5,1	11	1,5

The data in **Table 2** indicate that the religiosity levels of the participants' parents are predominantly concentrated in the categories of "very religious" and "religious." In contrast, participants' own religiosity levels notably shifted toward the "less religious" category. Additionally, there is a relative increase in the proportion of individuals who identify as "indifferent to religion," "non-religious," and "anti-religious," respectively.

Secularization, often regarded as a component of the modernization experience, originated in Europe. Industrial modern societies are organized rationally, meaning they are structured around bureaucratic, economic, political, professional, artistic, and scientific spheres that have become increasingly autonomous through specialization and division of labor. As a result, religious references lose their function in explaining the meaning of life in such societies (Wilson, 2016). Similarly, with the adoption of the Western modernization paradigm, Turkish society has also been undergoing a process of secularization—either *manifestly*, as those advocating modernity embrace secular practices in line with their progressive outlook, or *latently*, as conservative segments of society are inevitably exposed to secular practices in various ways (Amman, 2010). Therefore, **Table 2** appears to confirm this situation.

Table 3*Religious Attitudes and Premarital Intercourse*

		Very Religious		Religious		Less Religious		Indifferent to Religion		Non-Religious		Anti-Religious	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Students' Sexual Experience	YES	5	19,2	69	26,7	152	54,5	105	82	36	94,7	10	90,9
	NO	21	80,8	189	73,3	127	45,5	23	18	2	5,3	1	9,1
$X^2 = 158,008$ d.f.: 5 $P = 0,000$													

The crucial data in **Table 3** reveal a clear, statistically significant correlation between religiosity and premarital sexuality: As the students' level of personal religiosity decreases, the incidence of their premarital sexual experiences increases ($P < 0,01$).

According to Schreck and Hirschi's (2009) social control theory, if individuals' social attachments and emotional commitments to society are strong enough, they are less likely to engage in socially disapproved behaviors, including crime, drug abuse, and premarital sex. The four key qualities—attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief—lie at the core of their social control theory, and undoubtedly, secularization reduces their strength and efficiency in society. Thus, the engagement of students in premarital sexuality appears to be a consequence of the weakening of social values and norms in Turkish culture, which is influenced by the process of secularization. The results of a similar study conducted with 2,200 participants across Turkey also significantly align with the findings in **Table 3** (see Yıldız & Yıldırım, 2023).

Table 4*Qualities Expected from Potential Partners*

No.	Qualities Expected	Mean
1.	Loyalty	3,83
2.	Honesty	3,82
3.	Trust	3,8
4.	Respect	3,77
5.	Love	3,75
6.	Empathy	3,73
7.	Compassion	3,72
8.	Politeness	3,69
9.	Sexuality	3,25
10.	Appearance	3
11.	Material resources (wage, assets, etc.)	2,87
12.	Social status (standing, reputation, etc.)	2,68
13.	Age gap	2,65
14.	Religiosity	2,58

Participants marked multiple options in this question.

Students were asked to rank 14 essential attributes they ideally expect in a potential romantic partner. According to the data presented in **Table 4**, religiosity received the least emphasis, indicating that religion holds minimal significance in their preferences regarding finding a partner for a romantic relationship. In contrast, more personal qualities, such as loyalty, honesty, trust, respect, and love, appear to be prioritized. Additionally, in a similar study conducted in 2013 in the capital city of Ankara, a total of 3,177 university students (1,955 women and 1,222 men) from various faculties and departments across five different universities were surveyed regarding their preferences for potential spouses. Participants were presented with a list of 50 attributes and asked to rank them based on their perceived importance. The findings revealed that the importance attributed to religiosity (female-male ; 3.22 on a 5-point Likert scale) ranked 49th among the given attributes (Efe, 2013, p. 50).

Table 5

4 Point Likert Scale	
1	Not important at all
2	Not important
3	Important
4	Very important

The narrowing space granted to religion in romantic relationships, alongside the increasing significance of ethical values as independent principles, can be considered an indication of secularization. This is because this form of profane morality has been shaped “within the framework of a modern order in which our purposes align within the scope of our mutual interests” (Taylor, 2019, p. 269).

Religion, according to Berger (1990), serves as the sacred canopy that provides members of society with a meaningful, shared worldview, thereby ensuring a sense of ontological security. However, in Western societies, the unifying influence of this sacred worldview has increasingly diminished and become fragmented

due to the secularizing effects of modernization. As a result, this pluralistic shift leads to a “crisis of meaning” in human life (Berger & Luckmann, 2015, p. 43). Taking these data into account, it can be argued that a similar process of secularization is also evident among the young people in Türkiye. To provide a national-level example, between January 25 and February 2, 2025, the Gezici Research Center conducted a face-to-face “Love Research Analysis” with 5,276 individuals aged 18 and over across 38 provinces in Türkiye. According to the results, in response to the question “If you were in love, would you marry someone from a different religion?” 41% of participants answered “yes, I would,” 44% responded “no, I would not,” and 15% stated “it depends on the situation.” These findings also suggest that nearly half of the respondents prioritize a secular ideology of love over institutionalized religion, offering significant insight into the extent of secularization in Türkiye (Sözcü, February 2025).

How Education Shapes Romantic and Sexual Attitudes

Table 6

Faculties and Premarital Intercourse

	Students' Sexual Experience			
	YES		NO	
	N	%	N	%
Conservatory and Law Faculties (combined)	38	74,5	13	25,5
Faculty of Theology	20	20,2	79	79,8
Four Other Faculties (combined)	319	54,1	271	45,9
Total*	377	50,9	363	49,1
$\chi^2 = 51,075$ d.f.: 2 $P = 0,000$				

*The faculties have been grouped into a triple categorization, based on similarities in the quality of education provided, the observed student profiles, and their degrees of secularization, with expert opinions being consulted in the process.

In a comparative study between Turkey and European countries, Turkey's secular education policy has been identified as notably successful. According to the research, while 92% of participants who have completed compulsory education consider themselves religious, this percentage decreases to 59% among university graduates (Kaymakcan, 2021). Building on this trend, the data in **Table 6** also show a clear, statistically significant relationship between faculties and premarital intercourse ($P < 0.01$). Faculties with weaker ties to traditional religious teachings, such as Law and the Conservatory, along with four other faculties, exhibit higher rates of premarital intercourse, reflecting a more secular lifestyle. In contrast, the Faculty of Theology remains largely unaffected by this secular trend.

This situation does not imply that students outside the theology faculty do not have belief; rather, it reflects that they perceive faith in a more individualized manner. In other words, secularization, according to Luckmann [1967], does not necessarily denote the complete disappearance of religion. Instead, it reflects a shift away from the authority of institutionalized religion toward a more specialized and individualized form of belief in modern society. As the influence and doctrinal framework of organized religion diminish in contemporary societies, spirituality increasingly becomes a matter of personal choice, often manifested in subjective forms such as self-help therapies or personal meaning-making efforts (Luckmann, 2023). These individualized forms of belief, thus, appear to facilitate the premarital sexual experience in romantic relationships.



The Impact of Urbanization on Romance

Table 7

Urbanization and Premarital Intercourse

“People should get to know each other sexually before getting married”			
(%)	Disagree	Somewhat	Agree
Metropolis	26,4	29,3	44,2
City Center	32,3	32,6	35,1
Countryside	45,6	30,9	23,5
Total	32,6	31,1	36,4
X²=21,759 d.f.: 4 P = 0,000			

According to the data in [Table 7](#), students from metropolitan areas exhibit a distinct trend toward more liberal sexual experiences, whereas students from rural areas tend to maintain more traditional views ($P < 0.01$). This shift in premarital sexual experiences from rural to urban areas reflects the broader characteristics of urbanization. Urban life, with its promotion of multiculturalism (Glaeser, 2011) and high population density, fosters both anonymous social interactions (Simmel, 2015, pp. 157-161) and a reflection of social stratification. Economic inequality, geographic segregation, and cultural fragmentation in cities often lead to divisions among different socioeconomic groups (Bourgois, 2003). Moreover, cities resemble fast-paced marketplaces where goods and products are distributed and sold, which is why, in many cases, competition and self-interest between buyers and sellers take precedence over solidarity and cooperation. This competitive environment, compounded by the pressures of global neoliberal policies, has also led to the commodification of culture. In *The Crisis of Culture* (2024), Roy introduces the concept of "deculturation" to describe the process in which the shared meanings of socio-cultural values and norms that guide behavior become meaningless due to the forces of globalization, neoliberalism, individualism, and the pervasive influence of the internet. This disintegration of cultural coherence not only distorts the common framework of values but also prevents individuals from adopting a new, cohesive culture, leaving them in a fragmented world of identities. Consequently, it can be stated that industrial urban life, designed to meet the needs of capitalism, has been experiencing a cultural crisis, which also contributes to the fluidity and fragility of romantic relationships, particularly since the 1980s, a period marked by the global rise of neoliberal policies.

From Idealism to Materialism: Ideological Divides in Intimacy

Table 8

Ideological Predisposition and Premarital Intercourse

Student's Sexual Experience			
		(%)	
		NO	YES
Group 1	1. Communist	22,2	77,8
	2. Capitalist	26,8	73,2
	3. Social democrat	30,4	69,6
	4. Liberal	33,7	66,3
	5. Secular	34,8	65,2
	6. Kemalist	36,4	63,6
	7. Feminist	40,4	59,6



Student's Sexual Experience			
		(%)	
		NO	YES
Group 2	8. Socialist	42,4	57,6
	9. Democrat	43	57
	10. Nationalist	50,2	49,8
	11. Religious	71,7	28,3
	12. Conservative	74,2	25,8
	13. Islamist	79,9	20,1
$\chi^2 = 424,612$ d.f.: 14 $P = 0,000$			

Note: Participants marked multiple options in this question.

According to the data in **Table 8**, there is a statistically significant relationship between students' ideological worldview and their premarital sexual experience ($P < 0.01$). Accordingly, it is observed that students in Group 1, which represents materialist-secular views, have a higher prevalence of premarital sexual experience compared to students in Group 2, which represents idealist-spiritual views.

Worldly ideologies (Group 1) embrace the Enlightenment legacy, characterized by humanism, libertarianism, rationalism, and individualism—qualities that align closely with the process of secularization. Central to these ideologies is the a priori belief that a better social world can be constructed through human agency. In contrast, spiritual worldviews (Group 2) tend to prioritize the preservation of guidance derived from ancient socio-cultural values and norms, seeking to maintain their assurance to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, this case duly fits into a distinction between *manifest* and *latent* secularization, a conceptualization as a contribution to the secularization theory asserted by Amman (2010). According to this, the individuals in Group 1 enthusiastically embrace the external influences of modernity as they are in manifest secularization, whereas those in Group 2 are more reluctant and hesitant to accept the secularizing impacts as they are in latent secularization.

The second half of the 20th century witnessed a struggle between young individuals representing these two distinct worldviews, each shaping their own projects of society. Within this struggle, the meaning attributed to sexuality also diverged. For instance, Marcuse (1964) identified the Sexual Revolution of the '68 youth as an agency for socio-political transformation. However, it can be argued that today's sexual freedom, largely shaped by neoliberalism, serves depoliticization rather than socio-political transformation. Consequently, these findings suggest that ideological orientation plays a vital role in forming sexual norms, with secular and left-leaning students embracing more liberal sexual attitudes, while those with religious or conservative ideologies adhere more closely to traditional sexual mores.

The Contemporary Landscape of Romantic Relationships Among Students

Table 9

Number of Relationships and Premarital Intercourse

		Counts of Relationships						
		(%)	0	1	2	3	4	5 +
Sexual Experience	YES	-	43,2	59,8	71,3	85,7	92,9	$\chi^2 = 250,476$
	NO	100	56,8	40,2	28,7	14,3	7,1	S.D: 5
								$P = 0,000$

The data in Table 9 illustrate a clear and statistically significant correlation between the score of relationships and the chance of engaging in sexual intercourse ($P < 0.01$). According to this, as the number of relationships increases, the proportion of individuals engaging in premarital sexual activities also increases significantly. This trend indicates that having more romantic relationships is linked with a greater possibility of premarital sexual experience, highlighting how greater exposure to romantic relationships correlates with more liberal sexual attitudes and behaviors. Besides, for the longest relationships, the data from Table 10 indicate that the majority of participants have had relatively short romantic relationships, with the highest percentage of participants (36.8%) reporting that they have not had a long-term romantic relationship lasting a year or more. Only a small percentage of participants reported having relationships lasting four years (5.3%) or longer (6.9%). Accordingly, regarding the shortest relationships, the data in Table 10 show that many participants experienced very brief romantic relationships, with 35.4% of participants reporting that their shortest relationship did not last beyond a month.

Table 10

Duration of Participants' Romantic Relationships

How many years did your longest romantic relationship last?						
0	1	2	3	4	5+	Total (%)
36,8	24,3	16,8	10	5,3	6,9	
How many months did your shortest romantic relationship last?						
0	1	3	5	7	9+	Total (%)
35,4	29,1	18,9	6,6	3,8	6,2	

The findings presented in Tables 8 and 9 provide insight into the quality of romantic engagements. Romantic relationships tend to be relatively short in duration, as a considerable number of participants have never experienced a long-term relationship lasting more than a year, and many have had only brief romantic encounters. First and foremost, such limited timeframes make it difficult for individuals in a romantic relationship to develop a deep understanding of each other or cultivate an intimate bond. Furthermore, frequent partner changes within short periods do not contribute to sustaining a stable and healthy romantic relationship.

One possible explanation for younger individuals' preference for short-term relationships is the opportunity cost associated with commitment, given the abundance of alternatives within the campus environment. In this regard, Bauman (2003, pp. 20-21) introduces the concept of "top-pocket relationships," where individuals maintain romantic ties that are accessible but non-binding—relationships that can be "pulled out" when convenient and discarded when no longer needed.

Furthermore, Twenge and Campbell (2013) argue that, within the new cultural climate of the late modern era, young people have internalized the belief that, due to being treated as "heirs and princesses" by their parents—who never deny their wishes—they are entitled to the best of everything without the need for responsibility or effort. This sense of entitlement is a consequence of their upbringing, in which no request is ever refused. Therefore, their expectations, shaped by a hedonistic, conformist, and impulsive lifestyle, may also hinder the sustainability of long-term relationships. Illouz (2012) also regards this lifestyle of the younger generation due to emotional capitalism, reflecting that contemporary relationships are shaped by market-like dynamics, where romantic ties are increasingly commodified. Consequently, the prevalence of short-term relationships and the high turnover of romantic partners may be a result of the superficial nature of romantic engagements within a market-driven lifestyle.

Limitations

The generalizability of the findings to other institutions, age groups, or cultural contexts may be limited because this study focuses on undergraduate students at Sakarya University. Due to the absence of financial support for this research, the sample size was determined based on an optimal balance between time and cost management. Given that the study examines premarital relationships among Turkish youth, participants were informed both verbally and in writing just before the administration of the questionnaire in the classroom to prevent any adverse impact on the research findings. Consequently, married students and international students were excluded from the study. The chosen quantitative research method, the questionnaire, has certain limitations, such as its inability to fully capture complex emotions or detailed perspectives. Therefore, future researchers interested in similar topics may consider adopting a mixed-methods research design. Additionally, grouping faculties with similar characteristics ensured the representativeness of the stratified sampling technique due to an insufficient number of students in some faculties for independent evaluation.

Conclusion

It can be asserted that, over the past 40 years, secularization trends worldwide have contributed to an increase in the prevalence of sexual experiences among younger generations. For example, a global study conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2014, which surveyed 40,000 participants across 40 countries, found that the percentage of individuals in European countries who considered premarital sexual relations to be “morally unacceptable” was as follows: 13% in the United Kingdom, 11% in Italy, 11% in Greece, 8% in Spain, 6% in France, and 6% in Germany (Pew, 2014). Similarly, a 2021 study in the United Kingdom, which surveyed 50,000 university students, revealed that 44% of female students and 41% of male students (averaging 43%) reported having had no sexual experience prior to starting university (Hillman, 2021). These findings indicate that approximately 67% of the students had sexual experience before entering university.

Although these rates still remain lower than those observed in many European countries, this global trend of secularization can also be observed in Turkey, where secularization has been gradually increasing over recent decades. Some scholars who examine the theory of secularization largely agree that Turkey has experienced a similar process (see Amman, 2010; Çapçioğlu, 2018; Ertit, 2019). For instance, according to Ertit (2019), young people in Anatolian cities in the early 1990s were often discouraged from going out alone or holding hands with their partners, even if they were engaged. However, this situation began to change in the 2000s. Referring to two studies conducted in 1996 and 2004, he noted a significant increase in sexual activity and dating among male students. In 1996, only 19.9% of male students had experienced full sexual intercourse, but by 2004, this proportion had risen to 34.4%. Similarly, the percentage of young people who were dating increased from 29.7% in 1996 to 42.3% in 2004 (pp. 277-278). Current research findings, including dimensions such as religiosity, ideology, urbanization, and expectations from partners, continue to support these ongoing cultural shifts in Turkey.

Meanwhile, the Turkish Statistical Institute's Family Report (TÜİK, 2022) reveals that 5.9% of marriages in 2010 were between relatives, with this percentage steadily decreasing over the years to 4.4% in 2017 and 3.9% in 2022. Accordingly, cousin marriages were not widely accepted by a significant majority of students (73.7% of males and 83.4% of females) in our survey, despite being permissible according to religious (Islamic) rules and conventions. Consequently, these overlapping findings, which clearly show a growing negative

perception of cousin marriages among young people in Turkey, can be indirectly interpreted as another indicator of secularization as well.

In a study conducted in 2004 with 687 students, 20.6% of the participants believed that there was no relationship between premarital intercourse and the concept of *namus*³ (girls: 19.3%, boys: 21.5%) (Ceyhan, 2005:161). However, according to the findings of a recent doctoral research study we referenced earlier, 56.8% of students stated that there was no relationship between a man's premarital intercourse and the concept of *namus* (girls: 67.4%, boys: 46.2%), and 55.5% of students stated that there was no relationship between a woman's premarital intercourse and the concept of *namus* (girls: 68.2%, boys: 43%) (Kaya, 2024:131).

In a 2006 study involving 340 students, which highlighted the tendency among religious students to disapprove of premarital intercourse, 71.4% of religious students reported having a negative attitude toward premarital sexual relations or believed that sexuality should be experienced in a limited manner (Kaya et al., 2007:445). Correspondingly, our research findings also indicate that as religiosity decreases among young people, there is a tendency for positive attitudes toward premarital sexual experiences to increase.

In another study conducted in 2010 with 1,314 students, the average age at first sexual intercourse was found to be 17.80 ± 2.58 for females and 16.75 ± 2.01 for males. More strikingly, the same study found that students who consumed alcohol, an indicator of a secular lifestyle, were significantly more sexually active than those who did not consume alcohol (Saraçoğlu et al., 2015).

In addition to all these, we in this survey, directed the entire participants a multiple-choice question regarding the reasons for the end of their close relationships. The results were as follows: 64.7% cited "lying/selfishness/infidelity"; 44.9% mentioned "consuming everything quickly/getting bored easily"; 19.5% referred to "high expectations related to living standards"; and 12.8% marked "religious/cultural/familial differences." These results imply that students are being influenced by cultural shifts, which are already aforementioned as signs of a secular society. Consequently, it is evident that there is a growing trend of fluid and fragile relationships among students, particularly when considering the frequency (Table 9) and duration (Table 10) of these relationships.

In summary, the increase in premarital intercourse, driven by the combination of the aforementioned cultural transformations shaping a secular-modern society, is viewed as a key aspect of Ertit's theory of secularization. In his theory, Ertit asserts, with a Nietzschean tone, that "God is dying in Turkey as well" (Ertit, 2018: 195). Furthermore, these shifts facilitate and accelerate dating among young people, leading to more fluid and fragile relationships (Bauman, 2003). Such hasty and vulnerable relationships lack the ethics of authenticity, which Taylor (2003) identified as one of the main challenges of modernity. Consequently, this paper aims to highlight a significant challenge that may lead to profound structural transformations in the future family structure in Turkey—namely, the asymmetric relationship between declining religiosity and increasing premarital intercourse, which contributes to the rise of more fluid and fragile romantic relationships. Ultimately, this process seems to lead to a phenomenon of "living/aging alone," initially observed in the United States and Western Europe, along with the tragic consequences it has engendered, such as dying in solitude and being found only after the body has decomposed (see Klinenberg, 2013). Without the implementation of necessary policies, it appears likely that similar outcomes will become increasingly evident in Turkey within a few decades.

³Although the term is etymologically derived from the ancient Greek word "nomos," in Turkish culture it carries a religiously connoted nuance. In this respect, it bears more resemblance to the English word "chastity" rather than "dignity."



Acknowledgments	The authors wish to extend their deepest gratitude to the academic and administrative staff of Sakarya University for their continuous support and invaluable guidance. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the students whose participation was essential to the successful completion of the research.
Ethics Committee Approval	This study was approved by the Social and Humanities Ethics Committee of Sakarya University (Meeting No. 62, Decision No. 20, dated 11.10.2023).
Peer Review	Externally peer-reviewed.
Author Contributions	Conception/Design of Study- M.T.A., Ö.K.; Data Acquisition- M.A.A.H.; Data Analysis/Interpretation- M.T.A., Ö.K.; Drafting Manuscript- M.T.A., Ö.K.; Critical Revision of Manuscript- M.T.A., Ö.K.; Final Approval and Accountability- M.T.A., Ö.K.
Conflict of Interest	The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.
Grant Support	The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

Author Details**Özgür Kaya (Dr.)**¹ Sakarya University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Sociology, Sakarya, Türkiye 0000-0002-1719-3895 ozgvrkaya@gmail.com**Mehmet Tayfun Amman (Prof)**¹ Sakarya University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Sociology, Sakarya, Türkiye 0000-0003-0370-5172

References

- Adorno, T., & Horkheimer, M. (2007). *Dialectic of enlightenment*. Stanford University Press.
- Amman, M. T. (2010). Türkiye'de ailenin açık ve örtülü sekülerleşmesinin sosyolojik analizi. In M. F. Bayraktar (Ed.), *Aile ve eğitim* (pp. 41–70). Ensar Neşriyat.
- Armutçu, E. (2007). *Türkiye cinselliğini konuşuyor*. Doğan Kitap.
- Bauman, Z. (2003). *Liquid love: On the frailty of human bonds*. Polity Press.
- Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Individualization: Institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences*. SAGE Publications.
- Berger, P. L. (1990). *The sacred canopy: Elements of a sociological theory of religion*. Anchor Books.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (2015). *Modernite, çoğulculuk ve anlam krizi* (M. D. Dereli, Trans.). Heretik Yayıncılık.
- Bourgois, P. (2003). *In search of respect: Selling crack in El Barrio*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bruce, S. (2002). *God is dead: Secularization in the West*. Blackwell.
- Castells, M. (1977). *The urban question: A Marxist approach* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Edward Arnold.
- Ceyhan, M. Ş. (2005). *Üniversite gençliğinin cinselliğe bakış açısı* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Ankara Üniversitesi.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson.
- Çapcıoğlu, İ. (2018). Sekülerleşen toplumda bireyselleşen aile. *Turkish Studies*, 13(2), 19–34. <https://doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.13343>
- Efe, E. (2013). *Üniversite öğrencilerinin eş seçme eğilimleri* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Hacettepe Üniversitesi.
- Ertit, V. (2018). God is dying in Turkey as well: Application of secularization theory to a non-Christian society. *Open Theology*, 4, 192–211. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2018-0014>
- Ertit, V. (2019). *Sekülerleşme teorisi*. Liberte Yayınları.
- Garnham, N. (2007). Culture industries. In G. Ritzer (Ed.), *The Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology* (pp. 942–945). Blackwell Publishing.
- Glaeser, E. L. (2011). *Triumph of the city: How our best inventions make us smarter, stronger, healthier, and happier*. Penguin Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Stanford University Press.
- Göle, N. (2019). *Modern mahrem: Medeniyet ve örtünme*. Metis Yayınları.



- Gürbilek, N. (2001). *Vitrinde yaşamak: 1980'lerin kültürel iklimi*. Metis Yayınları.
- Harvey, D. (2016). *Kent deneyimi* (E. Soğancılar, Trans.). Sel Yayıncılık.
- Hillman, N. (2021). *Sex and relationships among students: Summary report* (HEPI Policy Note 30). Higher Education Policy Institute.
- Illouz, E. (2012). *Why love hurts: A sociological explanation*. Polity Press.
- Illouz, E. (2024). *Romantik ütopayı tüketmek: Aşk ve kapitalizmin kültürel çelişkileri* (G. Boztepe, Trans.). Livera Yayınevi.
- Kahraman, H. B. (2010). *Cinsellik, görsellik, pornografi*. Agora Kitaplığı.
- Kaya, F., Serin, Ö., & Genç, A. (2007). Eğitim fakültesi birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin cinsel yaşamlarına ilişkin yaklaşımlarının belirlenmesi. *TSK Korumucu Hekimlik Bülteni*, 6(6), 441–448.
- Kaya, İ. (2006). *Sosyal teori ve geç modernlikler: Türk deneyimi*. İmge Kitabevi.
- Kaya, Ö. (2024). *Üniversite gençliğinde romantik ilişkilerin dönüşümü* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Sakarya Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Kaymakcan, R. (2021). *Gençlerin dine bakışı ve okullarda din-değerler öğretimi*. Dem Yayınları.
- Kellner, D., & Best, S. (2011). *Postmodern teori* (M. Küçük, Trans.). Ayrıntı Yayınları.
- Kelly, M. G. E. (2022). *Normal now: Individualism as conformity*. Polity Press.
- Keyes, R. (2004). *The post-truth era: Dishonesty and deception in contemporary life*. St. Martin's Griffin.
- Klinenberg, E. (2013). *Going solo: The extraordinary rise and surprising appeal of living alone*. Penguin Books.
- Kozanoğlu, C. (1999). *Cıllı imaj devri: 1980'lerden 90'lara Türkiye ve starları*. İletişim Yayınları.
- Lasch, C. (1991). *The culture of narcissism: American life in an age of diminishing expectations*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Luckmann, T. (2023). *The invisible religion: The problem of religion in modern society* (T. Kaden & B. Schnettler, Eds.). Routledge.
- Marcuse, H. (1964). *One-dimensional man: Studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society*. Beacon Press.
- Mardin, Ş. (2017). *Türkiye'de toplum ve siyaset* (M. Türköne & T. Önder, Eds.). İletişim Yayınları.
- McIntyre, L. (2018). *Post-truth*. MIT Press.
- Niedzwiecki, H. (2006). *Hello, I'm special: How individuality became the new conformity*. City Lights Publishers.
- Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2004). *Sacred and secular: Religion and politics worldwide*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pew Research Center. (2014). *Global views on morality*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2014/04/15/global-morality/>
- Rea, L. M., & Parker, R. A. (2014). *Designing and conducting survey research*. Jossey-Bass.
- Roy, O. (2024). *The crisis of culture: Identity politics and the empire of norms*. Hurst Publishers.
- Saraçoğlu, G. V., Erdem, İ., Doğan, S., & Tokuş, B. (2014). Youth sexual health: Sexual knowledge, attitudes, and behavior among students at a university in Turkey. *Noro Psikiyatri Arşivi*, 51(3), 222–228. <https://doi.org/10.4274/npa.y6768>
- Schreck, C. J., & Hirschi, T. (2009). Social control theory. In *21st century criminology: A reference handbook* (Vol. 1, pp. 305–311). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412971997.n35>
- Sennett, R. (1977). *The fall of public man*. Penguin Books.
- Simmel, G. (2015). Metropol ve zihinsel yaşam (S. Gürses, Trans.). In C. Harrison & P. Wood (Eds.), *Sanat ve kuram: 1900–2000 değişen fikirler antolojisi* (pp. 157–161). Küre Yayınları.
- Sözcü. (2025, Şubat 14). 14 Şubat haritasında şaşırtan sonuç: Türkiye'de çok eşliliğe sıcak bakanların sayısı artıyor. <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/14-subat-haritasinda-sasirtan-sonuc-turkiye-de-cok-eslilik-sicak-bakanlarin-sayisi-artiyor-p138597>
- Taylor, C. (2003). *The ethics of authenticity*. Harvard University Press.
- Taylor, C. (2019). *Seküler çağ* (D. Körpe, Trans.). Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları.
- Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu. (2022). *İstatistiklerle aile*. <https://data.tuik.gov.tr>
- Twenge, J. M., & Campbell, W. K. (2013). *The narcissism epidemic: Living in the age of entitlement*. Atria Books.
- Widmer, E. D., Treas, J., & Newcomb, R. (1998). Attitudes toward nonmarital sex in 24 countries. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 35(4), 349–358.
- Wilson, B. R. (2016). *Religion in secular society: Fifty years on* (S. Bruce, Ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Yıldız, R., & Yıldırım, E. (2023). *Türkiye'de cinsiyet algısı araştırması*. Nobel Yayınları.