Examining the Relationship between External Influences Acceptance and Self-Alienation and General Well-Being among Turkish Young Adults from an Existential Social Work Perspective: Implications for Social Work Intervention

Türkiye'deki Genç Yetişkinlerde Dış Etkileri Kabullenme ve Kendine Yabancılaşma ile Genel İyi Oluş Arasındaki İlişkinin Varoluşçu Sosyal Hizmet Perspektifinden İncelenmesi: Sosyal Hizmet Müdahalesi için Çıkarımlar

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Makale Bilgisi	ÖZET
	Çağdaş sosyal hizmet araştırmaları, dış etkiyi kabul etmenin ve kendine yabancılaşmanın bireylerin genel ruhsal durumu üzerindeki zararlı etkilerini vurgulamaktadır, ancak bu faktörler ile genel refah arasındaki ilişkilerin sosyal hizmet biliminde daha fazla araştırılması gerekmektedir. Bu çalışma, Türk genç yetişkinler arasında dış etkiyi kabullenme, kendine yabancılaşma ve genel iyi oluş arasındaki ilişkileri incelemektedir. Varoluşçu sosyal hizmet kuramına dayanarak hem dışsal etki kabulünün hem de kendine yabancılaşmanın genel iyi oluşu olumsuz yönde yordayacağı varsayılmıştır. Otantiklik Ölçeği (dışsal etki kabulü ve kendine yabancılaşma alt ölçekleri) ve Genel İyi Oluş Ölçeği kullanılarak 310 katılımcıdan veri toplanmıştır. Yapısal eşitlik modellemesi hem dış etki kabulünün hem de kendine yabancılaşmanın genel iyi oluşu olumsuz yönde yordadığını, kendine yabancılaşmanın dış etki kabulüne kıyasla daha güçlü bir olumsuz etki gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu iki boyut aynı zamanda birbirleriyle güçlü bir pozitif ilişki göstermiştir. Bu bulgular, dışsal etki kabulü ve kendine yabancılaşmanın refah üzerindeki farklı etkisini vurgulamakta ve sosyal hizmet uygulamalarında ve müdahalelerinde kendine yabancılaşmanın ele alınmasının özel öneminin altını çizmektedir. Sonuçlar, otantiklik temelli müdahalelere ilişkin artan sosyal hizmet bilgisine katkıda bulunmakta ve genel refahı geliştirmeye yönelik varoluşçu sosyal hizmet yaklaşımları için ampirik destek sağlamaktadır.
Article Information	ABSTRACT
	Contemporary social work research highlights the detrimental effects of accepting external influence and self-alienation on individuals' overall mental state, yet the relationships between these factors and general well-being require further investigation in social work science. This study examines the relationships between external effect acceptance, self-alienation, and general well-being among Turkish young adults. Drawing on existential social work theory, we hypothesized that both external effect acceptance and self-alienation would negatively predict general well-being. Data were collected from 310 participants using the Authenticity Scale (external effect acceptance and self-alienation subscales) and the General Well-Being Scale. Structural equation modeling revealed that both external effect acceptance and self-alienation negatively predicted general well-being, with self-alienation showing a stronger negative effect compared to external effect acceptance. The two dimensions also demonstrated a strong positive association with each other. These findings highlight the differential impact of external effect acceptance and self-alienation on well-being and underscore the particular importance of addressing self-alienation in social work practice and interventions. The results contribute to the growing body of social work knowledge regarding authenticity-based interventions and provide empirical support for existential social work approaches to promoting general well-being.
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INTRODUCTION

The construct of general well-being constitutes a fundamental paradigm within social work, encompassing physiological, affective, and cognitive health dimensions that facilitate optimal human functioning. Social work interventions target the enhancement of well-being through multifaceted approaches addressing psychosocial factors, socioeconomic determinants, and interpersonal dynamics. This is particularly salient in young adult populations, who encounter developmental challenges in identity formation, vocational trajectory, and social assimilation (Hatano et al., 2022). This period of young adulthood is often characterized by heightened exploration of identity, values, and life paths (Arnett, 2000), making individuals potentially more vulnerable to external pressures or, conversely, more driven to seek authenticity. Understanding how constructs like external influence acceptance and self-alienation impact their well-being during this formative stage is therefore critical for effective social work intervention. General well-being functions as a critical outcome measure in social work interventions, specifically those aimed at fostering individual agency and psychological resilience (Saleebey, 2016). The construct exhibits both individual and societal implications, influencing social participation, relational stability, and community cohesion (Huang et al., 2022). Within the social work framework, which addresses systemic phenomena through holistic interventions, well-being optimization remains paramount. Enhanced well-being demonstrates efficacy in ameliorating social disadvantage, psychological dysfunction, and social marginalization (Payne, 2021; Thompson, 2017).

Multiple theoretical frameworks within psychological and social sciences elucidate the well-being construct. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theorizes self-actualization as a crucial well-being component, positing that well-being emerges through the hierarchical satisfaction of physiological, safety, affiliation, esteem, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) postulates that well-being manifestation occurs through the fulfillment of three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT applications in social work interventions prioritize autonomy and social connection enhancement, particularly in vulnerable populations (Krill, 2011). The PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) delineates five essential well-being components: Positive Affect, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement, which inform social work practice methodologies (Payne, 2021). Empirical evidence identifies multiple variables correlating with general well-being. Mental health status demonstrates significant predictive validity, with psychological distress inversely correlating with well-being (Keyes, 2007; Diener et al., 2005). Social support mechanisms exhibit positive associations with well-being outcomes (Hua et al., 2024), informing community-based intervention strategies (Wilkinson et al., 2018). Economic stability functions as a critical determinant, with financial security significantly impacting physical and psychological well-being (Dolan et al., 2008). Identity cohesion and self-concept stability demonstrate positive correlations with well-being measures (Lee et al., 2020), while self-alienation exhibits negative associations (Wong, 2014). While these general relationships are acknowledged, there is a need for more focused research on how these dynamics play out specifically within young adult populations, particularly in non-Western contexts like Turkey. Young adults are often navigating a complex interplay of societal expectations (e.g., from family, education, and early career pressures) and the internal drive for self-definition, which can make them particularly susceptible to the struggles of external influence acceptance and self-alienation (Erikson, 1968; Arnett, 2000). The unique cultural and social fabric of Turkey may further shape these experiences.

The existential social work (ESW) paradigm provides the theoretical framework for this investigation, emphasizing meaning construction, autonomy, and authenticity. ESW integrates existentialist philosophy, focusing on experiential existence, personal agency, and meaning acquisition (Thompson, 2017). This framework conceptualizes well-being as contingent upon authentic living and agency preservation. ESW posits that individuals must navigate existential challenges while maintaining value congruence (Bugental, 1965). The current investigation employs ESW to examine the negative impact of external influence acceptance and self-alienation on well-being outcomes. Despite theoretical foundations suggesting negative associations between external influence acceptance, self-alienation, and well-being, empirical investigations examining these

relationships concurrently remain limited. Existing literature typically examines these variables in isolation, failing to account for interaction effects (Huang et al., 2022). This limitation is particularly relevant for young adult populations navigating complex social matrices (Martínez-García, 2024). The present study aims to examine the relationships of external influence acceptance and self-alienation with general well-being among Turkish young adults, utilizing the ESW framework (Figure 1). This investigation seeks to inform social work interventions targeting young adult populations experiencing societal pressure and self-alienation (Nilsson, 2018). Subsequent sections delineate hypothesis development, methodological procedures, results presentation, and implications discussion.

Figure 1. *Theoretical Model of Research*
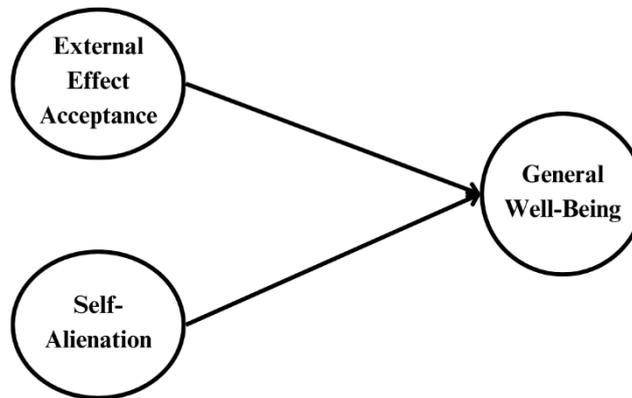
Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

General well-being

General well-being is a complex construct that encompasses physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual domains of human life (Diener et al., 2005) and the changes that occur when a person turns to the different resources available to him or her (Morris & Nguyen 2024). It includes aspects like being satisfied with life (actual reported happiness), psychological well-being (predispositions that are self-acceptance and self- development), social well-being (Diener, 1984; Ryff, 1989). It has its reference from Aristotle's eudaimonia and the emphasis that early Greek people had for virtues and optimality (Fowers, 2016). Existentialists such as Frankl (1963) and Sartre (1956) also noted that well-being was a matter of a meaningful life and was synonymous with authenticity, an aspect at the center of the interest in the processes of meaning making of ESW (Krill, 2011). Some of the theoretical frameworks in this area include SDT by Deci and Ryan (1985) where positive aspects of life is related with the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In this paradigm of well-being the strengths and virtues of an individual are given a major focus (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) particularly in the work of Seligman (2011) who introduced the PERMA model that has five fundamental components namely: The five aspects include positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. Using Ryff's Model of Psychological Well-being (1989), it is concluded that there are six dimensions of psychological well-

being namely, self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, positive relationship with others. Family Resilience Theory looks at the issues concerning well-being from the perspective of how family systems adjust to stress (Walsh, 2016) while in therapy programs, well-being is viewed as one of the variables to gauge the effectiveness of the interventions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

In clinical practice, well-being extends beyond symptom alleviation to fostering fulfilling lives (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009), particularly in ESW where it aligns with self-awareness and meaning-making (Thompson, 2017). Research demonstrates strong correlations between general well-being and mental health outcomes, with higher well-being associated with lower depression and anxiety (Keyes et al., 2002). Positive mental health and emotional stability are core components (Lamers et al., 2011), while psychological well-being protects against mental health issues (Ryff & Singer, 2006). Strong social support and quality relationships consistently promote subjective and psychological well-being (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Life satisfaction serves as a key indicator (Diener, 1984), correlating with positive mental health and lower stress (Pavot & Diener, 2008). Meaning in life significantly determines well-being (Steger et al., 2006), while resilience enables maintaining well-being during adversity (Masten, 2001; Ungar, 2011).

In ESW, well-being integrates meaning, authenticity, and personal responsibility. The framework emphasizes confronting existential issues to achieve authentic living (Thompson, 2017), viewing well-being as a process of becoming rather than merely avoiding distress (Krill, 2011). This approach aligns with authenticity and self-determination (Sartre, 1956), encouraging clients to explore existential anxieties and life choices (Yalom, 1980). Drawing from Frankl's (1963) logotherapy, ESW practitioners help clients find meaning through existential challenges, particularly during grief, trauma, or life transitions (Cooper, 2017). General wellbeing is a core goal of social work interventions, and it is critical to improving quality of life, whether at the individual, family or community level. Social workers promote well-being through many aspects of life - emotional, social, psychological (Keyes, 2007). This holistic approach is consistent with social work's purpose to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable and marginal members of society (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2017). Interventions usually combine psychological care, social advocacy and access to essential services like housing, health and jobs (Green Lister, 2012). For instance, helping the homeless might include trauma-focused counselling but also stable housing and social connections (Reisch, 2019). These community-based interventions also enhance wellbeing by building social capital and support networks, because strong social ties and belonging are cornerstones of psychological and emotional health (Kawachi Berkman, 2001). Such approaches promote social integration and community engagement (Aldrich Meyer, 2015). What is more, the strengths-based paradigm in social work focuses on developing people's abilities, not their shortcomings (Saleebey, 2016) and enhances self-efficacy and empowerment through setting and accomplishing goals (Green Lister, 2012). For ESW, wellbeing means assisting clients in facing existential questions of autonomy, isolation, meaning and death (Thompson, 2017). Through existential interventions, social workers guide clients in exploring their sense of purpose and authentic self (Krill, 2011), as seen in work with terminally ill clients, where the focus shifts to finding meaning and inner peace amid life's challenges (Cooper, 2017).

In ESW, mindfulness and meaning-centered therapies support general well-being by fostering present-moment awareness, emotional acceptance, and meaning-making from life experiences (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Studies indicate that mindfulness-based interventions enhance emotional well-being, alleviate anxiety, and increase life satisfaction (Hofmann et al., 2010). Meanwhile, meaning-centered therapies aid individuals in finding a sense of purpose, a key element of existential well-being (Steger et al., 2006). These approaches are sustainable as they develop long-term coping skills and resilience, shifting from symptom management to promoting overall life satisfaction (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). For example, youth programs integrate risk behavior reduction with positive development, life skills training, and emotional regulation to achieve enduring improvements in well-being (Benson et al., 2006).

External Effect Acceptance and General Well-being

In ESW, external effect acceptance describes the uncritical acceptance of societal influences, norms, and values, viewed not as positive but as passive submission that undermines personal agency and meaning-making. From an existential perspective, individuals who adopt externally imposed meanings without question compromise their autonomy and authenticity (van Deurzen, 2018). This contradicts existentialism's core value of human freedom, which emphasizes active self-reflection and authentic choice-making over conformity to societal expectations (May, 1983). While humans encounter external realities, they retain the capacity to choose their engagement with these forces (Sartre, 1956). The concept's philosophical foundations lie in the works of Sartre and Heidegger. Sartre's notion that humans are "condemned to be free" highlights the constant responsibility of choice-making in defining one's essence. He termed the surrender to external expectations "bad faith" self-deception that denies one's freedom and responsibility (Sartre, 1956). Heidegger's "Das Man" concept similarly describes how societal pressures lead to inauthentic existence, arguing that authenticity requires rejecting external impositions for self-realization (Heidegger, 1962). Modern scientific literature examines external influence acceptance within frameworks of conformity and social conditioning. Existential psychotherapy and ESW view it as a barrier to authenticity and personal well-being (van Deurzen, 2018), while social influence theory studies it through conformity and compliance (Asch, 1955). SDT, though differently framed, aligns partially by recognizing how external pressures that undermine autonomy negatively impact well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

From a theoretical perspective, accepting external influence is critically important in ESW and psychotherapy, as it contrasts with the ideal of authenticity central to these approaches (Cooper, 2017). ESW, based on existential philosophy, posits that societal norms and cultural expectations can pressure individuals to adopt external meanings unreflectively, leading to inauthenticity and a disconnect from their inner selves (van Deurzen, 2018). ESW thus emphasizes critically evaluating and, if needed, resisting external influences in favor of self-directed choices (May, 1983). Clinically, existential therapists and social workers help clients confront these external influences and their effects on actions, beliefs, and well-being, supporting clients in forming authentic, self-defined values and choices. Techniques like existential questioning and reflective dialogue are commonly used to foster autonomy and authenticity (van Deurzen, 2018). Current research explores variables linked to external influence acceptance. Social conformity, for example, is shown to reduce autonomy and well-being when individuals uncritically follow societal expectations (Alshaalan & Gummerum, 2022). Social desirability, or the drive to meet others' expectations, can suppress one's true self, leading to alienation (Kim & Kim, 2024). Additionally, perceived lack of control and social comparison processes can heighten susceptibility to external influence and diminish well-being (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007; Zhao et al., 2024).

Empirical studies reveal a link between accepting external influences and reduced well-being. Buchinger et al. (2024) found that those pursuing extrinsic goals like wealth or status experience lower life satisfaction and increased anxiety and depression, echoing the existential view that living by external values leads to unfulfillment. Authenticity research also shows that those resisting external pressures and aligning decisions with their true selves report greater well-being (Wood et al., 2008). This is consistent with existential arguments that uncritically accepting external influences disrupts agency and contributes to distress (Heidegger, 1962; Sartre, 1956). SDT similarly supports that autonomy-promoting environments enhance well-being, underscoring the adverse effects of external influence acceptance (Ryan & Deci, 2000) Although research suggests a negative link between accepting external influence and well-being, cross-cultural studies are limited, leaving it unclear if these harmful effects are universal or culturally specific (Buchinger et al., 2024). Further investigation is also needed to understand how individuals effectively resist external pressures and the role of social work interventions in this process.

ESW theory offers a framework for understanding the impact of external influence acceptance on well-being, emphasizing individual responsibility in creating life meaning amid societal pressures toward inauthenticity (van Deurzen, 2018). Accepting external influence is seen as a refusal to engage in self-determination, allowing external forces to dictate beliefs and choices. ESW posits that well-being is achieved through rejecting inauthentic paths and forming self-defined values (Cooper,

2017). In this approach, social workers help clients confront external pressures, supporting the development of an authentic life course (van Deurzen, 2018). This acceptance of external influence has notable implications for social work, especially within an existential framework. Social workers addressing the impact of societal norms and family expectations often challenge passive acceptance, empowering clients to reclaim agency (Adams, 2008). By raising awareness of these external forces, social workers enable clients to evaluate and resist influences that lead to inauthenticity, fostering a more self-directed path (Cooper, 2017). This approach is particularly relevant when external influence contributes to mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression. For example, societal standards may push individuals toward goals misaligned with their values, eventually harming well-being and creating feelings of disconnection (Buchinger et al., 2024). ESW interventions empower individuals to reject inauthentic pressures, encouraging reflective processes to explore and reshape their sense of self based on internal, rather than external, values (van Deurzen, 2018; Adams, 2008).

Self-alienation and General Well-being

Self-alienation is the state in which people are estranged from themselves, and there is a gap between their inner values, beliefs and emotions, and their outer behaviour. This disconnection usually manifests itself as an inability to identify with, or to express, a genuine sense of self, accompanied by feelings of conflict and existential angst (Yalom, 1980). A variety of social pressures, external expectations or interpersonal conflicts can force people to take on roles that conflict with their self-concept and lead to feelings of emptiness, confusion, and decreased sense of purpose which have an impact on general well-being (Kernis Goldman, 2006; Schlegel et al., 2011). In ESW, self-alienation is seen as a hindrance to authenticity and self-fulfillment, illustrating how external forces mold the self in ways that are at odds with the inner truth (Thompson, 2017; Yalom, 1980). Such a break from authenticity can block a person's capacity to find meaning, so essential for psychological and emotional wellbeing (Van Deurzen, 2018).

The idea of self-alienation dates back to existentialist and Marxist thought. Thinkers like Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre discussed alienation as a separation from one's authentic self-caused by societal pressures or the inability to confront existential challenges. Kierkegaard (1941) stated that adopting identities shaped by external factors leads to despair, while Heidegger (1962) described "fallenness" as a loss of authenticity when one becomes immersed in societal norms. Sartre (1956) framed self-alienation as "bad faith," where individuals deny their freedom by conforming to external expectations. Marxism also addresses alienation, with Marx describing it as a separation from one's labor in capitalist societies, resulting in a loss of creative expression and a sense of powerlessness (Mészáros, 1970). In contemporary psychology, influenced by both existentialist and Marxist traditions, self-alienation is understood as the internalization of societal expectations, leading to a disconnect from authentic self-expression (May, 1983).

Self-alienation is a complex term that plays a crucial role in existential psychology, humanistic psychology, and Marxist theory. In existential psychology, it results from a failure to live authentically, and to avoid existential fears like freedom and death. This avoidance flattens meaning and leaves one in a state of greater psychological distress (Frankl, 1963; Van Deurzen, 2018). According to existential thinkers such as Viktor Frankl and Rollo May, self-alienation is the product of complying with the dictates of society rather than accepting life's fundamental challenge (May, 1983). Self-alienation is a barrier to self-actualization in humanistic psychology, with its founders Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. Rogers (1959) called it an incongruence between the ideal and real self, which contributed to anxiety and lack of fulfillment. Acknowledging this lack is essential to self-knowledge and genuineness. According to Marxist theory, self-alienation is the dehumanizing aspect of capitalist labor, where people are separated from their creativity and sense of self (Mészáros, 1970). Likewise, SDT identifies self-alienation as a consequence of thwarted autonomy, competence and relatedness, arguing that the forces of external pressure push people away from their inner values, and have detrimental effects on wellbeing (Deci Ryan, 2000; Cooper, 2017).

The uses of self-alienation, both theoretical and clinical, reach from well-being and identity formation to mental health. Theorists in existential psychology, humanistic psychology and SDT have interpreted self-alienation as central to an explanation of distress and low life satisfaction in

individuals separated from their true selves (Schlegel et al, 2011). Existential therapy (Yalom and May) works to ease self-alienation by helping people accept their freedom and existential angst, leading to a rediscovery of authenticity (Yalom, 1980; May, 1983). Client-centred therapy (Rogers, 1959), in particular, has been associated with the promotion of self-acceptance and the reduction of self-alienation through the creation of a safe space where clients can feel accepted and act on their true feelings. Research indicates that reducing self-alienation has positive effects on mental health, eases symptoms of distress, and promotes general well-being by bringing external actions and internal values into harmony (Luyckx et al, 2006; Heppner et al, 2008). In recent research, various factors are associated with self-alienation, particularly within the context of external influences. One primary factor is conformity to social expectations, where individuals prioritize external validation over inner desires, leading to self-alienation as their actions increasingly reflect societal demands rather than authentic self-expression (Kifer et al., 2013). Similarly, perceived social pressure heightens self-alienation, as individuals feeling pressured to conform to external standards—such as body image, career paths, or behavior norms—often disconnect from their intrinsic motivations, resulting in emotional distress and reduced life satisfaction (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). Autonomy plays a critical moderating role; research from SDT suggests that lacking autonomy, where individuals cannot act in line with their true values, fosters self-alienation, while autonomy-supportive environments encourage alignment with one's true self, reducing alienation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Cooper, 2017).

Identity development is also crucial in self-alienation, particularly during emerging adulthood, where those struggling to form a coherent identity amidst external pressures may experience heightened alienation. Individuals with diffuse identities or low self-concept clarity, often shaped by external influences, are more susceptible to societal expectations, which can increase alienation and psychological distress (Luyckx et al., 2006; Schlegel et al., 2011). Low self-esteem and unclear self-concepts also make individuals more vulnerable to external validation, deepening the gap between their true selves and societal demands. Research consistently demonstrates a strong link between self-alienation and diminished well-being. Self-alienated individuals report lower general well-being, life satisfaction, and mental health. This link is largely due to compromised authenticity—defined as alignment between actions and one's true self—which fosters general well-being (Wood et al., 2008). When individuals feel disconnected from their authentic selves, they are more likely to experience symptoms of anxiety, depression, and low life satisfaction (Schlegel et al., 2011). Additionally, self-alienation contributes to psychological distress, with those feeling disconnected from their true selves reporting higher levels of depressive symptoms, anxiety, and stress (Luyckx et al., 2006; Heppner et al., 2008). Beyond mental health, self-alienation also affects life satisfaction and physical health. Alienated individuals often experience feelings of emptiness or meaninglessness, disconnected from core values and goals, which reduces motivation and engagement in life (Sheldon & Kasser, 2008). Additionally, the emotional and psychological strain of self-alienation can manifest physically, contributing to chronic stress, fatigue, and weakened immunity (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Despite extensive research on self-alienation's negative effects on well-being, certain gaps persist. Most studies are Western-centric, particularly focused on college students (Luyckx et al., 2006), limiting insight into self-alienation in diverse cultural, socio-economic, and age groups. Research in non-Western contexts, where selfhood and identity may vary, is especially needed. Additionally, there is a lack of studies exploring the mechanisms that link self-alienation and well-being holistically.

Complementing its stance on external pressures, ESW's approach to self-alienation directly tackles core existential anxieties such as isolation, the burden of freedom, and the quest for meaning—all of which are intimately linked to an individual's sense of estrangement from their true self (Yalom, 1980). Interventions, therefore, center on cultivating profound self-awareness and fostering authentic living. This involves guiding clients to identify and confront the internal and external sources of their alienation, such as unmet personal aspirations or internalized societal conflicts (Cooper, 2017). Furthermore, ESW leverages the power of meaning-making, as emphasized by thinkers like Viktor Frankl, to help individuals rediscover purpose and thereby counteract the emptiness often associated with self-alienation (Frankl, 1963; Wong, 2014).

ESW theory also emphasizes relational dynamics, as self-alienation often surfaces in relationships where inauthentic interactions dominate. Social workers encourage clients to pursue genuine connections and reduce conformity, enhancing well-being by aligning relationships with their true selves (van Deurzen, 2018). Additionally, ESW's focus on freedom of choice underscores autonomy as crucial in overcoming self-alienation. Social workers guide clients in embracing this freedom, moving them away from imposed roles and toward a reclaimed sense of agency (Cooper, 2017). The link between self-alienation and well-being has significant implications for social work interventions within the ESW framework. Understanding this relationship helps social workers tailor interventions that address existential concerns underlying emotional struggles. Central to alleviating self-alienation within an ESW framework is the journey towards profound self-awareness and radical self-acceptance. This involves empowering clients to recognize and embrace their authentic selves, distinct from any superimposed external expectations (Cooper, 2017). Since alienation often breeds a sense of powerlessness, ESW interventions actively work to restore the client's sense of agency. By supporting individuals in making autonomous choices aligned with their genuine values—a Sartrean embrace of freedom and responsibility (Sartre, 1956)—social workers facilitate a shift from a state of estrangement to one of integrated, fulfilling, and authentic living.

Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical arguments and empirical findings discussed throughout the theoretical framework and hypothesis development section, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: External effect acceptance negatively predicts general well-being.

H2: Self-alienation negatively predicts general well-being.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to investigate the relationships between external effect acceptance, self-alienation, and general well-being among Turkish young adults. This design was chosen as it allows for the efficient collection of data on perceptions, attitudes, and reported behaviors from a relatively large sample at a single point in time, making it suitable for examining the proposed associations between the variables of interest. Furthermore, the cross-sectional approach facilitates the use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized model (Figure 1). SEM was selected as the analytical strategy due to its ability to simultaneously examine complex relationships among multiple observed and latent variables, providing a robust test of the theoretical framework (Kline, 2011).

This article utilizes the same dataset as a previous publication, which investigated the impact of competence and relatedness needs on authenticity using SEM (related article under review in Journal of Society & Social Work). In this study, however, we explore a distinct research question and examine the effects of self-alienation and acceptance of external influence on general well-being, also using SEM. The decision to extract two separate studies from the same dataset is rooted in the unique research hypotheses that drive each paper.

To further clarify the distinction between the two studies, key differences include: Firstly, regarding the primary focus and dependent variable, while the previous study focused on authenticity as the primary outcome and investigated its antecedents, the current study focuses on general well-being as the primary outcome. Secondly, concerning the independent/predictor variables, the previous study examined competence and relatedness needs (from SDT) as predictors of authenticity. In contrast, this study examines external effect acceptance and self-alienation as predictors of general well-being. Thirdly, the theoretical grounding differs significantly; the previous study was primarily situated within SDT, whereas the current study is explicitly framed by Existential Social Work theory. These distinct research questions, outcome variables, predictor variables, and theoretical framings ensure that each paper offers a unique contribution to the literature.

This separation allows for: comprehensive examination of each theoretical model without overwhelming complexity, detailed discussion of specific theoretical mechanisms in each paper, and in-depth interpretation of distinct sets of findings. These focused research questions, grounded in

different theoretical perspectives, justify the use of the same dataset to advance unique insights into related yet independent areas of study. This approach of utilizing the same dataset for multiple publications, while maintaining full transparency, aligns with accepted practices in social science research when the analyses address distinct research questions (Hox & Boeije, 2005; Nosek et al., 2015).

Participants and Procedure

Data were collected in the last two weeks of August 2024. The investigation was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards set forth by the Bartın University Social and Humanities Sciences Ethics Committee Date: (30.05.2024 / Protocol Number: 2024-SBB-0343). Participant selection utilized a purposive sampling technique, specifically criterion sampling. The inclusion criteria mandated that participants be Turkish nationals, aged 18-28 years, and current residents of Turkey. This specific age range was selected as it typically represents a critical period of young adulthood characterized by significant developmental tasks such as identity formation, transition into higher education or early career stages, and navigating societal expectations relevant to the study's constructs of external influence and self-alienation (e.g., Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968). While definitions of 'young adulthood' can vary, this range captures a key transitional phase pertinent to the research hypotheses. Participants were reached primarily through online social media platforms popular among young adults in Turkey and university student networks. A survey instrument, developed using the Microsoft Office Form platform, was disseminated to 320 eligible individuals. The final sample consisted of 310 respondents who completed the survey in its entirety. The sample demographics revealed a gender distribution of 32.3% male and 67.7% female participants, with a mean age of 20 years (SD = 1.65) (Table 1). A post hoc power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1 to evaluate whether the sample size was appropriate for the research. The analysis incorporated the following parameters: 310 participants, two predictor variables, a moderate effect size, and an alpha level of 0.05. The results revealed a power of 99, demonstrating that the study possessed an adequate number of participants and predictor variables to attain sufficient statistical power for identifying the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable (Faul et al., 2007).

Table 1. *Demographic information*

Variables	Frequency (Percent)	Mean	SD
Gender	310 (100)		.46
Female	210 (67.7)		
Male	100 (32.3)		
Age	310 (100)	20.00	1.65
Marital Status	310 (100)		.12
Single	305 (98.4)		
Married	5 (1.6)		
Educational Status	310 (100)		.52
Illiterate	3 (1)		
Primary school graduate	10 (3.2)		
High school graduate	225 (72.6)		
Bachelor's degree	71 (22.9)		
Master's degree and PhD	1 (.3)		
Monthly İncome	**310 (100)**	**9601.13**	**10444.28**

The data collection process adhered strictly to the APA ethical guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from all participants in both verbal and written formats prior to their involvement in the study. Participants were apprised of the confidentiality measures protecting their information, their autonomy to withdraw from the study at any point, and the limited circumstances under which their data might be disclosed to third parties. This research was conducted in full compliance with the ethical principles delineated in the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its subsequent revisions.

Materials

Demographic characteristics

The investigator constructed a survey instrument to gather demographic data, including age, gender, and marital status, from young adult participants.

External effect acceptance and self-alienation

External effect acceptance and self-alienation are measured through the Authenticity Scale (AS) (Wood et al., 2008). The Turkish adaptation of the AS comprises 12 items, as established by İlhan and Özdemir (2013). One example item is: " I think it is better to be yourself than to be popular." Respondents rate the items on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (does not describe me at all) to 7 (describes me very well). The scale organizes into three sub-dimensions: external effect acceptance, self-alienation and authentic life. Each sub-dimension captures specific aspects of authenticity. The present study employs specific subfactors to assess key constructs. External effect acceptance is evaluated using the external effect acceptance subfactor, while self-alienation is measured through the self-alienation subfactor. Concerning validity and reliability, the Turkish version of the scale demonstrates satisfactory results (χ^2/sd = [82.76/53] 1.56 RMSEA = .06, CFI = .96, IFI = .96, GFI = .92; Cronbach's alpha for External effect acceptance: .67, for self-alienation: .79) (İlhan & Özdemir, 2013). In the present study, the scale's subfactor internal consistency coefficients are .83 for self-alienation and .79 for external effect acceptance.

General well-being

General well-being is measured through the General Well-Being Scale (GWS) (Longo et al., 2018). The Turkish adaptation of the GWS was conducted by Odacı et al. (2021), comprising 14 items. An example item is: " I feel happy " Respondents rate the items on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (never true) to 5 (always true). The scale organizes into one dimensions. A higher total score on the scale indicates a greater level of general well-being. Regarding validity and reliability, the Turkish version of the scale demonstrates satisfactory results (χ^2/Sd: 4,49, NFI: .92, CFI: .93, RMSEA: .086, SRMR: .066;Cronbach's alpha for all scale: .84) (Odacı et al., 2021). In the present study, the scale's overall internal consistency coefficient in the present study is .85.

Data Analysis

The researcher initially conducted outlier detection using Mahalanobis distance values via SPSS (version 26), with no data points requiring removal. Subsequently, the scales' internal consistency coefficients and expected distributions underwent evaluation. All scales exhibited internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) exceeding the conventionally accepted threshold in the literature. The normality assessment revealed skewness and kurtosis values for all variables within the ±1.5 range (Kline, 2011). AMOS software (version 23) was utilized for both measurement and structural model analyses. The initial hypothesized measurement models were tested. To achieve an improved and theoretically sound model fit, modification indices were consulted. Based on these indices and strong theoretical justification, an error covariance was added between items GIO1-GIO2, GIO1-GIO3 and GIO2-GIO3 of general well-being scale. No other data-driven modifications were made. Model fit was assessed using widely recognized fit indices in empirical research, including χ^2/df, CFI, RMSEA, SRMR, and GFI (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2011).

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis) were used to examine the distribution and central tendency of each variable. Pearson correlation analysis was used to assess

the bivariate relationships among key study variables, as it is appropriate for determining the strength and direction of linear associations between continuous variables. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to assess the internal consistency of each scale, which is a widely accepted method for estimating reliability of psychometric instruments. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized model involving latent variables, as this technique allows for the simultaneous estimation of multiple relationships and offers advantages in accounting for measurement error (Kline, 2011).

RESULT

Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations

Table 2 presents the study variables' means, standard deviations, and correlations. The correlation analysis indicated that general well-being has a moderate negative association with external effect acceptance and a strong negative association with self-alienation. External effect acceptance has a moderate positive association with self-alienation (Table 2). Statistical indicators of multicollinearity reveal that all correlations are below .70 and VIF values are all below 2.00 (1.27-1.27). These results indicate that there is no multicollinearity problem in the study.

Table 2. *Mean, standard deviations (SD), and intercorrelations among study measures*

	M	SD	1	2
1. **External Effect Acceptance**	3.76	1.43		
2. **Self-Alienation**	3.74	1.63	.46**	
3. **General Well-Being**	3.71	.56	-.33**	-.50**

**Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Analysis of The Measurement Model

The current study conducted CFA to evaluate the fit of the scales utilized in the study with the data. The CFA results for the external effect acceptance and self-alienation indicated a strong and satisfactory fit: $\chi^2 = 36.03$; df = 19; $\chi^2/df = 1.89$; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .03; CFI = .98; GFI = .97. All variables adequately represented their respective latent factors (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *CFA results in external effect acceptance and self-alienation*
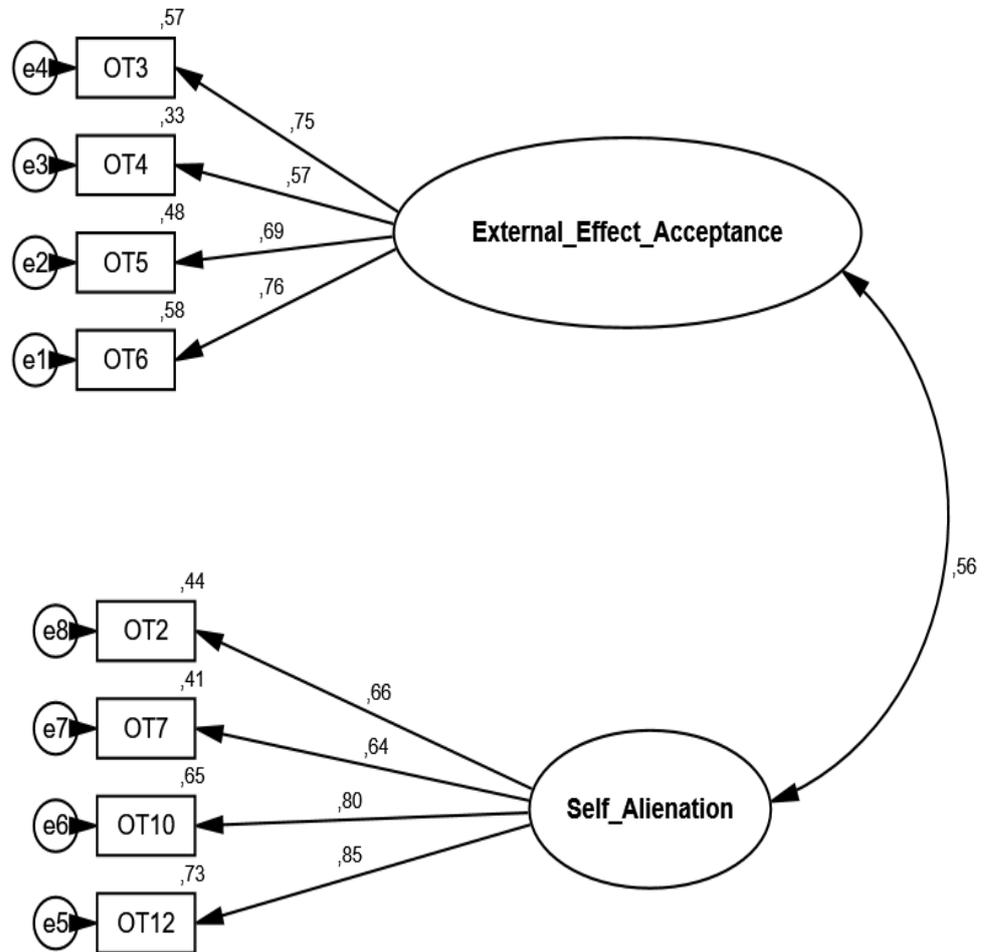
Regarding the general well-being, the CFA indicated an acceptable level of fit with the data: $\chi 2 =$ 242.98; df = 74; $\chi 2$/df = 3.28; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .06; CFI = .87, GFI = .90. All variables adequately represented their respective latent factors (Figure 3).

Figure 3. *CFA results in general well-being*
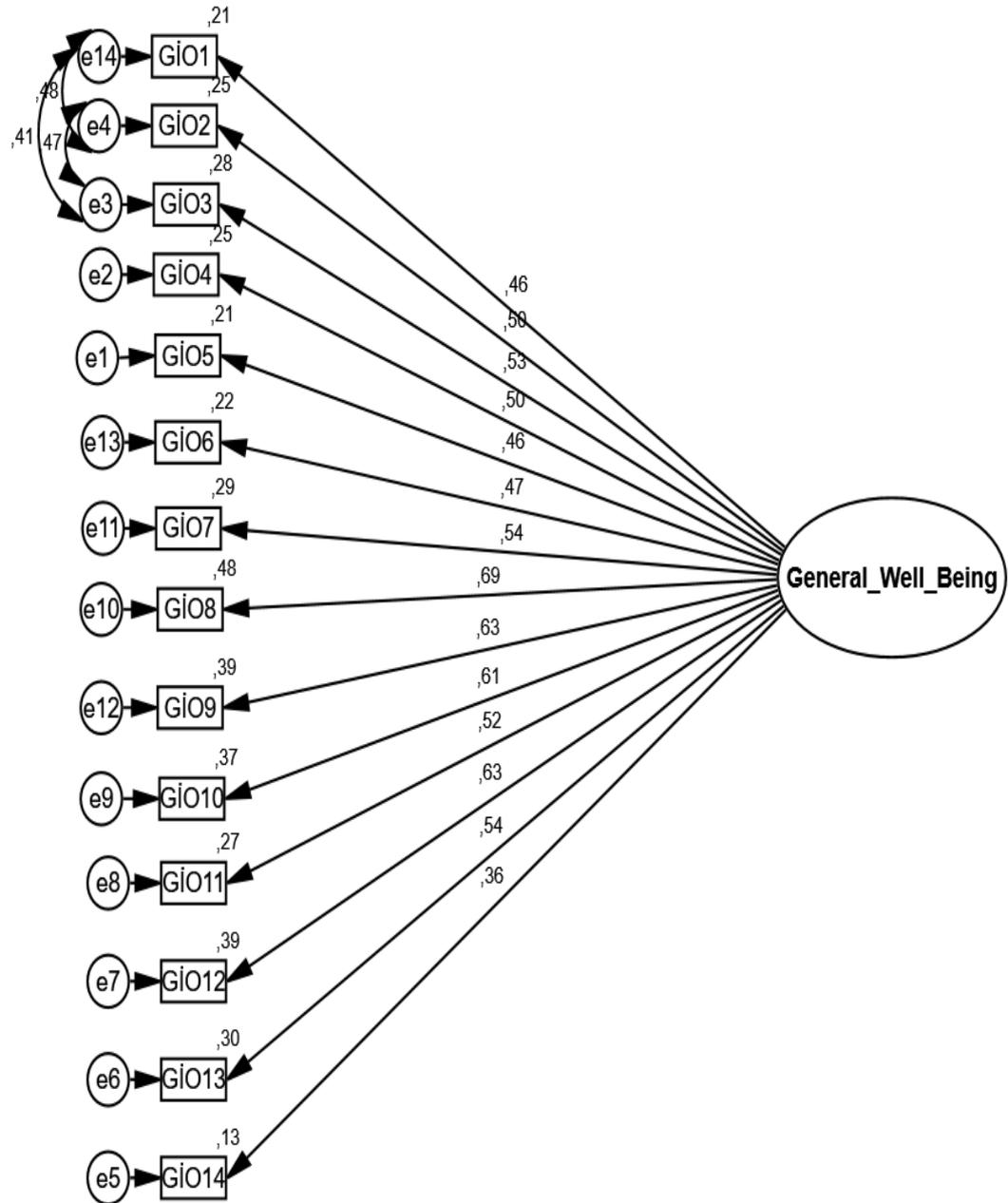
Relationships Between External Effect Acceptance, Self-Alienation, and General Well-Being.

Figure 4 displays the results of the structural model test. The analysis results indicate that the proposed structural model is consistent with the data obtained from the research: $\chi2 = 466.97$; df = 203; $\chi2/df = 2.30$; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .06; CFI = .89; GFI = .88. The findings indicate that external effect acceptance lowly, negatively, and significantly predicts general well-being (-.16.; p<.05). This supports H1. The self-alienation strongly, negatively, and significantly predicts general well-being (-.50.; p<.001). This supports H2. The squared coefficient of multiple correlation results indicates that 37% of general well-being is explained through external effect acceptance and self-alienation.

Figure 4. *Structural model results*
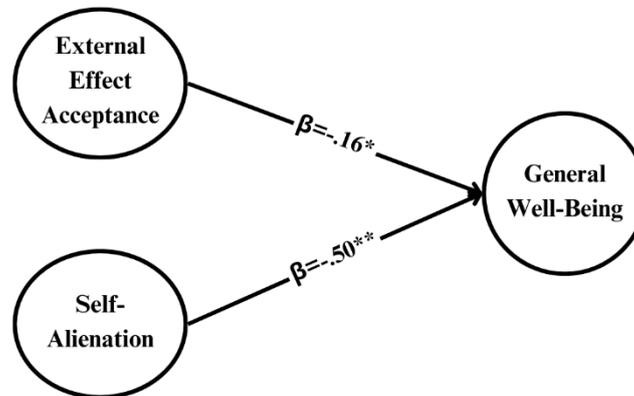
Note: All paths depict the standardized coefficient's effects. **p<.001, * p<.05

DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the relationships among external effect acceptance, self-alienation, and general well-being in young adults in Türkiye from an ESW perspective. The study tested two main hypotheses concerning these variables.

The results derived from the SEM analysis revealed that external influence negatively predicts general well-being in a low and significant manner (H1). This finding indicates that individuals who experience substantial external influence in their daily lives -whether through societal pressures, norms, or expectations- report lower levels of well-being. From a psychological standpoint, external influence can compromise autonomy, a fundamental aspect of SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The inability to make choices consistent with one's authentic self due to external pressures can result in feelings of dissatisfaction and disconnection from intrinsic goals, thereby diminishing overall well-being (Buchinger et al., 2024). Developmentally, young adulthood is a period of significant identity exploration and establishment (Erikson, 1968; Arnett, 2000), where individuals strive to define themselves apart from earlier dependencies. When young adults excessively accept external influences, it can stifle this crucial individuation process, leading to a sense of inauthenticity and reduced well-being. Socially, young adults often face intense pressures related to academic achievement, career choices, peer acceptance, and societal expectations for relationship formation and lifestyle, often amplified by social media (Vogel et al., 2014). In the Turkish cultural context, while strong family and community ties can be supportive, they might also contribute to pressures for conformity (Kagitcibasi, 2005), making the navigation of external influences a delicate balance. Numerous studies corroborate the negative impact of external influence on well-being. For example, Kernis and Goldman (2006) found that individuals who prioritize extrinsic motivations, such as seeking approval from others or conforming to societal standards, typically experience reduced life satisfaction. Similarly, Chirkov et al. (2003) identified a connection between cultural conformity driven by external pressure and poorer general well-being. These findings underscore the adverse effects of external influence on psychological health and substantiate the hypothesis that such pressures negatively impact general well-being. Furthermore, recent studies by Podsakoff et al. (2007) elaborated on these insights, indicating that environments characterized by heightened

external control, such as workplaces with rigid hierarchical structures, lead to diminished employee well-being. Their findings suggest that external expectations, particularly in contexts with limited autonomy, undermine self-determination and intrinsic motivation—key predictors of well-being. Additionally, Vogel et al. (2014) investigated the role of social media in perpetuating external influence, revealing that individuals frequently exposed to comparison-based content tend to experience lower well-being. The pressure to conform to online standards regarding success, appearance, and lifestyle exacerbates feelings of inadequacy and stifles authentic self-expression, ultimately detracting from overall life satisfaction.

The ESW theory posits that individuals must navigate external forces while striving to maintain their authenticity. Existential philosophers such as Kierkegaard and Sartre argue that authentic existence necessitates the rejection of external influences that limit personal freedom and autonomy (Schneider & Krug, 2017). When individuals yield to external pressures, they risk alienation from their authentic selves, leading to existential crises that negatively affect well-being (van Deurzen, 2018). Consequently, ESW emphasizes the importance of assisting clients in resisting oppressive societal norms, aligning with the finding that external influence undermines well-being (O'Hara, 2021). The confirmation of H1 has several practical implications for social work. Given the negative effects of external influence on well-being, social workers should prioritize empowering clients to resist societal pressures and foster a stronger sense of personal agency. Interventions aimed at enhancing autonomy, such as motivational interviewing and strengths-based approaches, can assist clients in regaining control over their life choices and improving their well-being (Miller & Rollnick, 2012). Practically, this could involve social workers utilizing values clarification exercises to help young adults identify what truly matters to them, separate from external dictates. Cognitive techniques can assist in deconstructing internalized societal 'shoulds,' while assertiveness training can empower them to set boundaries. For young adults heavily influenced by peer or online pressures, interventions might focus on developing critical media literacy and fostering a stronger internal locus of evaluation. Moreover, social workers can advocate for systemic changes that alleviate societal pressures, particularly in marginalized communities where such influences are often pronounced (Saleebey, 2016). The validation of H1 contributes to the field of social work by enriching the understanding of how external influences interact with well-being from an existential perspective. While previous research has examined the impact of societal pressures on mental health, this study integrates these findings within the ESW framework, emphasizing the necessity for interventions that prioritize authenticity and personal freedom (Cooper, 2017). This integration highlights the relevance of existential concepts in contemporary social work, particularly concerning identity, autonomy, and well-being.

The SEM results indicate that self-alienation negatively predicts general well-being in a strong and significant manner (H2). This result suggests that the more self-alienated people are - that is, the more they feel out of touch with their authentic selves - the less well they feel. Psychologically, self-alienation induces dissonance between inner values and external behaviors, resulting in feelings of inauthenticity, unhappiness and impaired mental health (Deci & Ryan, 2017). People experience themselves as following the opinions of others rather than their own, which is greatly detrimental to well-being as a whole (Wood et al., 2008). This life stage is critical for consolidating a coherent sense of self and purpose (Schlegel et al., 2011). For young adults, self-alienation—feeling disconnected from their inner values and authentic self—can be particularly damaging as it undermines the core developmental tasks of this period, such as forming intimate relationships, making autonomous career decisions, and establishing personal values (Arnett, 2000). Culturally, in contexts where there might be strong emphasis on collective identity or adherence to traditional roles, the internal struggle leading to self-alienation could be intensified if individual aspirations clash with societal or familial expectations. For Turkish young adults, this might involve navigating expectations around education, career paths, marriage, or social conduct. When such pressures lead to a suppression of the authentic self, the resultant self-alienation, as our findings indicate, severely compromises their overall well-being. The negative relationship between self-alienation and wellbeing is supported by empirical evidence. For instance, Moller et al. (2006) found a close relationship between self-alienation and depression and anxiety symptoms, because people who feel self-alienated tend to repress their true selves in social situations. Additionally, Lenton et al. (2013)

discovered that self-alienation hinders meaningful activity involvement, a key predictor of flourishing. Their conclusion is that those who are separated from the core of their identities fail to find meaning and so experience less satisfaction with their lives. A recent study by Legate et al. (2017) showed that self-alienation magnifies the negative impact of stress on general well-being. When people lose touch with their truer self, they become less resilient to external stressors, and so less well in general. The research confirms that self-alienation doesn't just negatively impact mental health directly but also exacerbates the effects of other negative agents. Similarly, Leary et al. (2007) found that those with high self-alienation were more likely to avoid, which in turn prevented them from seeking out 'meaningful and satisfying experiences'.

The ESW theory provides a powerful lens to conceptualize the way in which self-alienation negatively affects wellbeing. Building on the work of existentialist thinkers such as Heidegger and Sartre, the theory suggests that alienation from the self is part of an existential crisis at the heart of human experience (van Deurzen, 2018). Existential social workers highlight the importance of helping individuals to reconnect with their authentic selves through the development of self-awareness and the encouragement of authenticity in everyday life (Schneider Krug, 2017). This view is consistent with the fact that self-alienation is a negative experience, as existential theory holds that wellbeing is the result of living by one's values and inner self (Cooper, 2017). The confirmation of H2 has significant implications for social work practice. Interventions aimed at self-alienation should be a priority for social workers, and these interventions can be best undertaken by developing self-awareness and authenticity. Other methods, like existential counselling, which helps people examine their own values and live in accordance with their authentic selves, can be especially useful in lowering self-alienation and promoting wellbeing (Yalom, 1980). Social workers can integrate mindfulness-based practices to enhance clients' connection to their inner experiences and reduce the dissonance characteristic of self-alienation. Narrative approaches can help young adults' re-author their life stories around themes of authenticity and personal meaning, countering feelings of estrangement. Techniques derived from logotherapy, such as Socratic dialogue around sources of meaning or dereflection, can be particularly useful in helping them discover purpose. These interventions might be especially beneficial for young adults at critical decision-making junctures (e.g., career choices, relationship commitments) where a strong connection to the authentic self is vital. Further, social workers should help clients recognize and resist external forces that cause self-alienation, such as cultural norms and limiting gender roles (Krill, 2011). If social workers can create conditions where people can be authentic, then they can help clients address self-alienation and achieve better mental health. The confirmation of H2 in this study further advances social work science by highlighting the essential nature of authenticity and self-alienation in mental health outcomes. Although the vast majority of the social work literature focuses on the external social causes of well-being, this study draws attention to the importance of internal, existential aspects of the mental health that social work tends to overlook (Cooper, 2017). In drawing the concept of self-alienation into the practice of social work, this research indicates that existential approaches could offer new ways to promote wellbeing, especially for clients who are struggling with questions of identity and authenticity. This emphasis on self-alienation also highlights the need for social work interventions beyond the management of external circumstances, to delve into clients' inner world (van Deurzen, 2018).

The present study is subject to several methodological limitations that warrant consideration. Primarily, the cross-sectional design employed in this investigation precludes the establishment of causal relationships among the variables under scrutiny. Future research should adopt longitudinal or experimental methodologies to facilitate a more comprehensive examination of causal links. The exclusive reliance on subjective assessments may introduce biases related to social desirability, potentially compromising the internal validity of the findings. Future studies could mitigate this limitation by incorporating multiple evaluation methods, such as peer or parental reports, to provide a more comprehensive and triangulated assessment. It is essential to recognize that the study's sample was limited to young adults, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research should broaden its scope to include working professionals or older adults to achieve a more representative view across different life stages and socio-economic contexts. Another limitation of this study is the gender distribution of the sample, with approximately 68% of participants

identifying as women. This gender imbalance may limit the generalizability of the findings, particularly to male or more gender-diverse populations, as prior research suggests that gender may influence the experience and expression of constructs such as well-being, self-alienation, and responsiveness to external influence. One possible explanation for this disproportion is the greater willingness of female participants to engage in psychological or self-reflective research, especially in online survey formats—a trend also observed in prior studies with young adult samples (e.g., Smith, 2008; Sax et al., 2003). Future research should aim to include more gender-balanced samples to enhance representativeness and comparative insight. Additionally, the current study did not gather information on possible pre-existing mental disorders within the sample; addressing this gap in future research could yield a more nuanced and complete understanding by controlling for potential confounding variables. Notwithstanding these limitations, this study enhances the understanding of the intricate interplay between family economic well-being, emotional well-being, and psychological symptoms. Future research that addresses these methodological constraints will further illuminate these critical relationships.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides valuable insights into the complex relationships between external effect acceptance, self-alienation, and general well-being among Turkish young adults. Our findings elucidate that both external effect acceptance and self-alienation significantly predict general well-being. These results demonstrate that the path to well-being is intimately connected to one's capacity for authentic living and resistance to excessive external influences, highlighting the fundamental importance of authenticity in human flourishing.

These results have profound implications for theory, practice, and policy. They lend empirical support to ESW theory, underscoring the critical role of authentic existence and self-connection in promoting well-being. The findings particularly reinforce existential social work's emphasis on authentic living as a cornerstone of psychological health and its conceptualization of self-alienation as a fundamental barrier to human flourishing. For social workers, our findings highlight the imperative for interventions that address both internal disconnection from self and excessive susceptibility to external pressures. This dual focus suggests the need for comprehensive therapeutic approaches that help clients reconnect with their authentic selves while developing resilience against societal pressures that promote inauthenticity. Practitioners should consider implementing integrated support programs that strengthen authentic living while acknowledging cultural contexts. These programs might include individual and group interventions that facilitate self-discovery, authentic decision-making, and the development of stronger internal evaluation systems. The study's limitations, including its cross-sectional design and focus on Turkish young adults, suggest important directions for future research. Longitudinal studies across diverse populations could further illuminate the temporal dynamics of authenticity development and its impact on well-being. Such research could help clarify how authenticity evolves over time and how cultural factors influence this development. Future studies might also explore protective factors that help individuals maintain authenticity in the face of societal pressures and examine how different social work interventions affect both dimensions of inauthenticity.

In conclusion, this research significantly contributes to our understanding of authenticity and well-being from an ESW perspective, highlighting the intricate interplay between external influences, self-connection, and general well-being. The findings underscore the importance of addressing both internal and external barriers to authentic living in social work practice. They also suggest that while resistance to external pressures is important, helping individuals reconnect with their authentic selves may be particularly crucial for promoting well-being. As we navigate an increasingly complex social world where external pressures and expectations continue to multiply, these insights can inform more effective and nuanced strategies for promoting authentic living and general well-being across diverse populations. The study's findings provide a foundation for developing more targeted and effective interventions that support individuals in their journey toward authentic existence and greater well-being.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared that there is no conflict of interest regarding the research.

Compliance of Ethical Standard Statement

The present study was carried out following the ethical principles of the local university and in compliance with the Ethical Standards of the Declaration of Helsinki from 1964.

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Uzun Öz

Genel iyi oluş kavramı, optimal insan işlevselliğini destekleyen fizyolojik, duygusal ve bilişsel sağlık bileşenlerini içeren, sosyal hizmet alanında temel bir kavramı temsil etmektedir. Sosyal hizmet müdahaleleri, psikososyal faktörler, sosyoekonomik koşullar ve kişilerarası ilişkileri ele alan kapsamlı stratejiler aracılığıyla iyi oluşu artırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu durum özellikle kimlik oluşumu, mesleki yönelim ve sosyal uyum konularında gelişimsel zorluklarla karşılaşan genç yetişkin popülasyonlarında önem kazanmaktadır (Hatano ve ark., 2022). Psikoloji ve sosyal bilimler içindeki çoklu kuramsal çerçeveler, iyi oluş yapısını aydınlatmaktadır. Maslow'un İhtiyaçlar Hiyerarşisi, kendini gerçekleştirmeyi önemli bir iyi oluş bileşeni olarak kuramlaştırmakta ve iyi oluşun fizyolojik, güvenlik, ait olma, saygınlık ve kendini gerçekleştirme ihtiyaçlarının hiyerarşik tatmini yoluyla ortaya çıktığını öne sürmektedir (Maslow, 1943). Öz-Belirleme Kuramı ise, iyi oluşun tezahürünün üç temel psikolojik ihtiyacın karşılanması yoluyla gerçekleştiğini varsaymaktadır: özerklik, yetkinlik ve ilişkisellik (Ryan & Deci, 2000). ÖBK'nın sosyal hizmet müdahalelerindeki uygulamaları, özellikle savunmasız popülasyonlarda özerklik ve sosyal bağlantı geliştirmeye öncelik vermektedir. Genel iyi oluş, özellikle bireysel etkinliği ve psikolojik dayanıklılığı teşvik etmeyi amaçlayan sosyal hizmet müdahalelerinde kritik bir sonuç ölçütü olarak işlev görmektedir (Saleebey, 2016). Modern toplumsal bağlamlar, sıklıkla bireylerin dış beklentilere ve sosyal normlara uyum sağlaması yönünde baskılar oluşturarak genel iyi oluşu potansiyel olarak zayıflatmaktadır. Varoluşsal sosyal hizmetin merkezi bir teması olan özgünlük, dış etkilere direnirken kişinin gerçek benliğiyle bağlantı kurmasını içerir. Genel iyi oluşun belirleyicileri kapsamlı şekilde araştırılmış olsa da, dış kabul ve öz-yabancılaşmanın etkisi, varoluşsal sosyal hizmet çerçevesinde yetersiz araştırılmıştır. Dış kabul, bireylerin toplumsal baskıların davranışlarını ne ölçüde belirlediğini ifade ederken, öz-yabancılaşma kişinin özgün benliğinden kopukluğunu tanımlamaktadır. Önceki araştırmalar hem dış kabulün hem de öz-yabancılaşmanın iyi oluş üzerinde önemli etkileri olduğunu göstermektedir; örneğin, dış baskılara aşırı uyum gösterme düşük yaşam doyumuyla ilişkilendirilirken (Kernis & Goldman, 2006), öz-yabancılaşma genellikle yüksek depresyon ve anksiyete belirtileriyle bağlantılıdır (Moller ve ark., 2006). Daha güncel çalışmalar bu görüşleri derinleştirmekte; Podsakoff ve ark. (2007) güçlü dış kontrolle karakterize edilen ortamların çalışan iyi oluşunu azalttığını, Vogel ve ark. (2014) ise sosyal medya maruziyetinin dış etkiyi artırarak yaşam doyumunu düşürdüğünü göstermektedir. Kierkegaard ve Sartre gibi varoluşçu filozofların teorilerine dayanan varoluşsal sosyal hizmet, özgün bir yaşamın kişisel özgürlük ve özerkliği kısıtlayan dış etkilerin reddedilmesini gerektirdiğini vurgulamaktadır (Schneider & Krug, 2017). Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki genç yetişkinlerde dış etki kabulü, öz-yabancılaşma ve genel iyi oluş arasındaki ilişkileri varoluşsal sosyal hizmet perspektifinden inceleyerek, bu değişkenlerin genel iyi oluşu nasıl öngördüğünü değerlendirmektedir. Çalışmanın örneklemi, gönüllülük esasına dayalı olarak katılan Türkiye'deki genç yetişkinlerden oluşmaktadır. Veriler, dış etki kabulü, öz-yabancılaşma ve genel iyi oluş için standardize edilmiş ölçüler kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Bu değişkenler arasındaki yordayıcı ilişkileri araştırmak için Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi (YEM) uygulanmıştır. Analiz öncesinde, veri seti kayıp değerler ve aykırı değerler açısından değerlendirilmiştir. (a) normallik, (b) çoklu doğrusallık olmaması ve (c) model uyum indeksleri gibi temel YEM varsayımları değerlendirilmiştir. Normallik, çarpıklık ve basıklık katsayıları kullanılarak doğrulanmış, tüm çarpıklık değerleri normal dağılımı gösterecek şekilde kabul edilebilir aralıklarda bulunmuştur. Tüm faktörler için VIF değerleri 2 eşiğinin altında olup, çoklu doğrusallık sorunu olmadığını doğrulamıştır. Model uyum indeksleri (CFI, TLI, RMSEA ve SRMR) belirlenen standartları karşılayarak modelin uygunluğunu doğrulamıştır. YEM analizi sonuçları, çalışma değişkenleri arasında anlamlı ilişkiler olduğunu göstermiştir. Dış etki, genel iyi oluşun düşük düzeyde, negatif bir yordayıcısı olarak bulunmuştur (β = -.16, p < .05); bu durum, yüksek düzeyde dış etki yaşayan

bireylerin daha düşük iyi oluş bildirdiklerini göstermektedir ve bu bulgu, Chirkov ve ark. (2003) tarafından dış baskı kaynaklı kültürel uyumun azalmış psikolojik iyi oluşla bağlantılı olduğunu gösteren bulgularla tutarlıdır. Öz-yabancılaşma genel iyi oluşu güçlü düzeyde negatif ve anlamlı şekilde yordamıştır (β = -.50, p < .001); bu da yüksek öz-yabancılaşma düzeylerinin düşük iyi oluşla ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Öz-yabancılaşma ve iyi oluş arasındaki bu güçlü negatif ilişki önceki kanıtlarla uyumludur; örneğin, Moller ve ark. (2006) öz-yabancılaşma ile artmış depresyon ve anksiyete arasında bir ilişki belgelemiştir, çünkü öz-yabancılaşmış bireyler genellikle sosyal bağlamlarda özgün benliklerini bastırmaktadır. Lenton ve ark. (2013) ayrıca öz-yabancılaşmanın, gelişmenin önemli bir yordayıcısı olan anlamlı aktivitelere katılımı engellediğini bulmuştur. Bu çalışma, varoluşsal sosyal hizmet perspektifinden dış etki kabulü ve öz-yabancılaşmanın psikolojik iyi oluştaki rollerine ilişkin değerli içgörüler sunmaktadır ve hem dış etki kabulünün hem de öz-yabancılaşmanın genel iyi oluşun önemli yordayıcıları olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bu bulgular, insan gelişimini desteklemede özgün yaşamın temel rolünü vurgulamakta ve sosyal hizmet uygulaması için önemli çıkarımlar taşımaktadır. Bulgular hem benlikten iç kopukluğu hem de dış baskılara aşırı duyarlılığı ele alan müdahaleler için acil bir ihtiyacı göstermektedir. Sosyal hizmet uygulayıcıları, kültürel bağlamlar içinde özgün yaşamı destekleyen kapsamlı destek programları uygulamayı düşünmelidir. Bu tür programlar, öz-keşif, özgün karar verme ve daha sağlam iç değerlendirme sistemlerinin geliştirilmesine odaklanan bireysel ve grup temelli müdahaleleri içerebilir. Özellikle bulgular, bireylerin toplumsal beklentiler ve kültürel normlar içinde özgünlüklerini korumalarını sağlayan kültürel duyarlılığa sahip müdahalelerin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Sosyal hizmet uzmanları, danışanların dış baskılara karşı dayanıklılık geliştirmelerine yardımcı olurken, daha derin benlik bağlantısı ve özgün ifadeyi teşvik etmeye öncelik vermelidir. Çalışmanın sınırlılıkları arasında nedensel yorumlamayı kısıtlayan kesitsel tasarımı ve bulguların genellenebilirliğini sınırlayabilecek Türkiye'deki genç yetişkinlere odaklanması yer almaktadır. Yalnızca öz-bildirim ölçümlerine dayanması potansiyel ortak yöntem varyansı ortaya çıkarmakta, ancak istatistiksel testler minimal etki göstermektedir. Ayrıca çalışma, özgünlük ve iyi oluş arasındaki ilişkiyi şekillendirebilecek kültürel değerler veya kişilik özellikleri gibi olası düzenleyici değişkenleri dikkate almamıştır. Gelecekteki araştırmalar, özgünlük ve iyi oluş üzerindeki etkilerinin zamansal dinamiklerini daha doğru bir şekilde yakalamak için çeşitli popülasyonlarla boylamsal tasarımlar kullanmalıdır. Toplumsal baskılar karşısında özgünlüğü destekleyen koruyucu faktörlerin incelenmesi de müdahale tasarımı için pratik içgörüler sağlayabilir. Kültürler arası çalışmalar, özellikle farklı kültürel ortamların özgünlük ve iyi oluş arasındaki ilişkiyi nasıl şekillendirebileceğini anlamak için değerlidir. Pratik açıdan bu bulgular, sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının özgün yaşamı ve psikolojik iyi oluşu kolaylaştıran müdahaleler geliştirmesine rehberlik edebilir. Sonuçlar özellikle özgünlüğün hem iç hem de dış engellerinin ele alınması gerekliliğini vurgulamakta, dış baskılara direnmenin önemli olmasının yanı sıra, bireylerin özgün benlikleriyle yeniden bağlantı kurmalarına yardımcı olmanın genel iyi oluşu teşvik etmek için kritik olduğunu göstermektedir. Sosyal hizmet eğitim programları, gelecekteki uygulayıcıları dış etkiler, öz-yabancılaşma ve iyi oluş arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi yönetme bilgisiyle donatmak için özgünlüğe odaklanan içerik dahil etmelidir. Bu bulgulardan politika çıkarımları da ortaya çıkmakta, eğitim ortamları ve işyerleri dahil olmak üzere sosyal bağlamlarda özgün benlik ifadesini destekleyen ve aşırı dış baskıları azaltan örgütsel ve kurumsal reformlar çağrısında bulunmaktadır. Toplumlar daha bağlantılı ve karmaşık hale geldikçe, özgün yaşamın anlaşılması ve teşvik edilmesi hem bireysel hem de kolektif iyi oluşu desteklemek için giderek daha hayati hale gelmektedir.