

Perspectives of Academics and Professionals in the Field of Women's Welfare in Türkiye on Fighting against Femicide

Türkiye’de Kadın Refahı Alanında Çalışan Akademisyenlerin ve Meslek Elemanlarının Kadın Cinayetleriyle Mücadeleye İlişkin Düşünceleri

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Highlights:

- This study offers original contribution to policy and intervention models in combating femicide.
- Participants stress strengthening preventive and protective policies.
- Pre-marital and marital education and counseling are recommended.
- Capacity and staffing shortages in shelters and ŞÖNİM centers identified.
- Effective intervention programs for violent men are urgently needed.

Abstract: The objective of this study is to investigate the perspectives of academics and professionals within the field of women's welfare in Türkiye regarding fighting against femicide. In this context, online in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 participants actively engaged in the field of women's welfare from different provinces of Turkey in 2020-2021. The themes identified through the analysis include the enhancement of protective and preventive services and the enhancement of intervention services. It highlights a notable lack of knowledge among women regarding available services and their rights. There is a pressing need for protective and preventive planning that specifically addresses men's risk of committing femicide. Politicians ought to prioritize combating femicide on their political agendas. The enhancement of counseling and training services is crucial for early intervention in the lead-up to femicide. Furthermore, concerns are raised regarding the temporary nature of work in women's shelters, confidentiality issues regarding these shelters, and the vulnerability of women leaving shelters, potentially making them targets for further harm. It was suggested that increasing the number of ŞÖNİMs (Violence Prevention and Monitoring Center) would ensure more effective operations, along with expanding efforts to work with men/perpetrators. Additionally, it was noted that women returning to their partners after experiencing violence pose a risk of femicide. Finally, it was stated that ŞÖNİMs should take a more active role in divorce and family counseling and that the quantity and quality of professional staff in ŞÖNİMs and women's shelters should be increased.

Keywords: Femicide, Social Policy, Violence Against Women, Gender Inequality.

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Öne Çıkanlar:

- Bu çalışma kadın cinayetleriyle mücadelede politika tasarımına ve müdahale modellerine özgün katkı sağlar.
- Katılımcılar koruyucu-önleyici politikaların güçlendirilmesi gerektiğini belirtmiştir.
- Evlilik öncesi ve evlilik sürecinde eğitim ve danışmanlık önerilmektedir.
- ŞÖNİM ve kadın konukevlerinin kapasite ve personel eksiklikleri tespit edilmiştir.
- Şiddet uygulayan erkeklerle etkin müdahale programlarına ihtiyaç vardır.

Öz: Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye’ de kadın refahı alanında çalışan akademisyenlerin ve meslek elemanlarının kadın cinayetlerine yönelik hizmetlere ilişkin görüşlerini keşfetmektir. Bu kapsamda, 2020-2021 yıllarında Türkiye'nin farklı illerinden kadın refahı alanında aktif olarak çalışan 15 katılımcı ile çevrimiçi derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Analiz sonucunda belirlenen temalar; koruyucu ve önleyici hizmetlerin geliştirilmesi ve müdahaleye yönelik hizmetlerinin geliştirilmesidir. Kadınların hizmetler ve haklar konusunda yeterli bilgisi yoktur. Erkeğin cinayet riskine odaklanan koruyucu ve önleyici politikalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Siyasi gündem olarak politikacılar kadın cinayeti ile mücadeleyi benimsemelidir. Cinayete giden süreçte erken müdahale edebilmek için danışmanlık ve eğitim hizmetleri geliştirilmedir. Kadın konukevindeki çalışmaların geçici olabildiği, kadın konukevlerinin gizliliği noktasında sorunlar yaşandığı, kadın konukevini terk eden kadınların potansiyel kurban olabileceği vurgulanmıştır. ŞÖNİM (Şiddet Önleme ve İzleme Merkezi)’lerin sayısının artırılarak daha etkin çalışmasının ve sadece kadınlar/mağdur ile değil erkekler/failler ile de çalışmasının önemine değinilmiştir. Ayrıca kadınların yaşadığı şiddet sonrası eşe geri dönme süreçlerinin de cinayet için bir risk olduğu belirtilmiştir. Öneri olarak ise ŞÖNİM’lerin boşanma ve aile danışmanlığında daha etkin yer alması gerektiği, ŞÖNİM ve kadın konukevlerindeki meslek elemanlarının niceliği ve niteliğinin artırılması gerektiği ifade edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın Cinayeti; Sosyal Politika, Kadına Yönelik Şiddet; Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitsizliği.

Genişletilmiş Özet

Kadın cinayeti kadınların kadın olmaları nedeniyle erkekler tarafından öldürülmesi şeklinde tanımlanmaktadır. 2024 yılında yayımlanan Birleşmiş Milletler Kadın Cinayetleri Raporuna göre 2023 yılında dünya çapında yaklaşık 51.100 kadın ve kız çocuğu, birlikte oldukları partnerler veya diğer aile üyeleri tarafından öldürülmüştür. Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformunun 2024 raporuna göre ise Türkiye’de 2024 yılında 394 kadın cinayeti ve 259 şüpheli kadın ölümü gerçekleşmiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye’ de kadın refahı alanında çalışan akademisyenlerin ve meslek elemanlarının kadın cinayetleri ile mücadeleye ilişkin görüşlerini keşfetmektir. Bu kapsamda, 2020-2021 yıllarında Türkiye'nin farklı illerinden kadın refahı alanında aktif olarak çalışan 15 katılımcı ile çevrimiçi derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmaya katılacak meslek elemanlarının kadın refahı alanında çalışmakta

olması akademisyenlerin ise kadın refahı alanında çalışmaları olması önemli bir kriterdir. Bu çerçevede araştırmada ölçüt örnekleme ve maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Farklı disiplin ve farklı meslek gruplarının katılımı sağlanarak bu çeşitlilik içerisinde ortak olan durumlar keşfedilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu kapsamda ŞÖNİM’ de çalışmakta olan psikolog, sosyal hizmet uzmanı ve sosyologlar arasından 6 meslek elemanı araştırmaya dahil edilmiştir. Ayrıca araştırmada ŞÖNİM müdürü ve Kadın Konukevi müdürü, avukat, psikiyatrist, STK temsilcisi ve farklı bölümlerden akademisyenler (Polis Akademisi Başkanlığı, Sosyal Hizmet Bölümü ve Psikoloji Bölümü) yer almaktadır. Analiz sonucunda belirlenen temalar; koruyucu ve önleyici hizmetlerin geliştirilmesi ve müdahaleye yönelik hizmetlerinin geliştirilmesidir. Katılımcılar kadınların kadın refahı alanında sağlanan hizmetler ve kadınların sahip olduğu haklar konusunda yeterli bilgi sahibi olmadıklarını, kadınlara sağlanan hizmetlerin de kadın cinayetlerini önleme noktasında yetersiz olduğunu düşünmektedirler. Hizmetlerin önleme noktasında geliştirilmesi gerektiği vurgulanarak daha kapsamlı bir politikaya ihtiyaç duyulduğu düşünülmektedir. Ek olarak koruyucu önleyici çalışmaların daha ön planda tutulması gerektiği paylaşılmıştır. Kadın cinayetleri ile mücadelede erkeklerin bu mücadeleyi benimsemesi ve ona katılması gerektiği gibi erkek yöneticilerin de önemli roller üstlenmesi gerektiği düşünülmektedir. Katılımcılar tarafından koruyucu önleyici çalışmaların evlilik gerçekleşmeden önce başlaması gerektiği, bireylerin evlilik öncesi sağlıklı bir ilişkinin nasıl yürütüleceği hakkında eğitim almasının önemli olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Evlilik öncesi eğitimlerin yanı sıra evlilik sürecinde de çiftler arasında yaşanan sorunlar hakkında bireylere destek olunması gerektiği ifade edilmektedir. Kadın konukevine gelen kadınlar ile gerçekleştirilen çalışmaların geçici olabildiği, yapılan çalışmaların etkisiz kalabildiği ve bu yüzden kadınların kadın konukevine gelmek istemedikleri belirtilmektedir. Katılımcılar kadın konukevlerinde gizliliğin ihlal edilmesinin kadınların can güvenliği riskini arttırdığını ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca kadının kadın konukevinden ayrılmasının kolluk kuvvetlerine bildirilmesinin can güvenliği açısından önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Katılımcılar nüfus yoğunluğu olan şehirlerde ŞÖNİM hizmet sunumunun yetersiz kaldığını belirtmekte ve ŞÖNİM sayısının arttırılarak daha etkin çalışmaların sağlanması gerektiğini düşünmektedir. Kadınların yaşadıkları şiddet sonrasında eşlerine geri dönmelerinin cinayetin gerçekleşme riskini arttırdığı unutulmamalıdır. Kadınların içinde olduğu psikolojik durum baz alınarak kadınların bilgilenmesi, bilinçlenmesi ve onlara destek sağlanması noktasında ŞÖNİM’lerin önemli işlevleri olduğu belirtilmektedir. Katılımcılar kadınların boşanma isteklerinin kadın cinayeti açısından için bir risk unsuru olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Aile ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı tarafından ŞÖNİM meslek elemanlarına yönelik Aile ve Boşanma Danışmanlığı eğitimlerinin verildiği, bunun önemli bir uygulama olduğu ancak her ilde uygulanmadığı ifade edilmektedir. Şiddet uygulayan erkeklerle

alışmaların yrtlmesinin altı izilmektedir. Sorunlu davranıřı ortaya ıkaran erkek iken hizmetlerin kadın zerinde yoğunlařtıęı, erkeęin sorunlu davranıřına ynelik bir alıřmanın olması gerektięi belirtilmektedir. řiddet uygulayan kiři ile alıřmaların etkin bir řekilde yrtlemedięi, kiřilerin destek alma taleplerinin olmadıęı ve bu anlamda grřmelerin sreklilięinin saęlanamadıęı gibi saęlıklı grřmelerin de gerekleřtirilemedięi belirtilmektedir. řiddet uygulayan erkeklerle alıřmalar gerekleřtiren illerin olduęu ancak bu hizmetin standardizasyonunun her ilde saęlanamadıęı, burada alt yapı engelini olduęu, kadın ve erkeęin farklı binalardan destek almasının saęlanması gerektięi vurgulanmaktadır. Meslek elemanlarının kadın cinayetleri konularındaki alıřmalarında yetkinlik kazanmalarının ve uzmanlařmalarının hizmetlerin etkinlięi aısından nemli olduęu dřnlmektedir. Kadına ynelik řiddet ve kadın cinayeti alanında gerekleřtirilecek hizmetlerde yer alacak olan meslek elemanlarının eęitimlerle desteklenmesi gerektięi, bu durumun grřme ve mdahale srecinin ynetmeleri aısından kolaylık saęlayacaęı ifade edilmektedir. řNİM ve kadın konukevlerinde meslek elemanlarının nicelik olarak yetersiz olduęu vurgulanmaktadır. Sonu olarak kadın cinayetinde risklere ve řiddet/cinayet iliřkisine odaklanan ve erkek politikacıların sahipleneceęi politikalar oluřturulmalıdır. Erken mdahale iin danıřmanlık ve eęitim hizmetleri geliřtirilmedi. Kuruluřların sayıları ve personel kapasiteleri arttırılmalıdır.

Introduction

According to the 2024 United Nations Femicide Report, approximately 51,100 women and girls worldwide were murdered by intimate partners or other family members in 2023 (UNODC, 2024). According to the 2024 report of the We Will Stop Femicide Platform, there were 394 femicides and 259 suspicious deaths of women in Turkey in 2024 (We Will Stop Femicide Platform ,2025). Femicide stands not only as the most extreme manifestation of gender-based violence against women but also as the utmost form of discrimination against them (Naudi et al., 2022).

According to Russell (2001), femicide is defined as “the killing of women by men because they are women”. The World Health Organization (2012) categorizes femicide under 4 headings. These are femicides perpetrated by intimate partners, honor killings (killing of a woman by a man or a family member in relation to honor), killing of a newly married woman due to a dowry dispute, and non-intimate partner femicides (The killing of a woman by someone with whom she is not intimate. It is also known as sexual femicide). Intimate partner femicide, referring to the killing of a woman by her intimate partner, is regarded as the most severe form and outcome of intimate partner violence (Shanaz, 2008; McPherson, 2023). The absence of standardized definitions of

femicide, the identification of contributing variables, and the evaluation of risk factors are perceived as pivotal topics for discourse (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021). From a policy standpoint, the adoption of comprehensive laws and policies on gender equality, a victim-centered approach, preventive and coordinated interventions, and engaging with men (OECD, 2021) are deemed crucial policy priorities for tackling femicide. Measures to prevent stalking and the deprivation of liberty are underscored to enable risks to be identified early. The importance of addressing social and cultural norms and beliefs related to violence against women through gender awareness and education is emphasized. Finally, policy recommendations regarding the provision of long-term support to women victims, the enforcement of protection order violations, mandatory reporting of suspected domestic violence cases, holding professionals accountable for their duties, and enhancing penalties for repeat crimes are proposed (Naudi et al., 2022).

Femicide in Türkiye

According to the 2024 Report of the We Will Stop Femicide Platform, 394 cases of femicide were reported to have been committed in Türkiye in 2024. Among the cases of femicide with known motives, close to 111 of women were killed by men due to women making decisions about their own lives. 42% of the victims were murdered by their husbands, and 12% were killed by their dating partners. 222 of the women killed this year were killed with firearms. Additionally, it is noteworthy that a total 5% of the women were murdered despite being under protection orders (We Will Stop Femicide Platform, 2025). An in-depth analysis of the cases of femicide in Türkiye unveils a spectrum of motives behind these crimes, encompassing women's intentions to seek divorce or end relationships (Karbeyaz et al., 2018; Cavlak et al., 2023), manifestations of possessiveness and jealousy (Koç, 2022), and factors linked to infidelity, unfaithfulness, and the concept of dishonor ascribed to women by men (Sayar, 2015; Arın, 2001). The heightened incidence of femicide involving intimate partners, especially during the separation or post-separation phases (Dinçer, 2022), coupled with the finding that half of these cases of femicide are committed by intimate partners (Toprak & Ersoy, 2017), emphasizes the importance of gender as a critical political agenda.

Another characteristic of femicide in Türkiye is their categorization into either planned or impulsive acts. Despite studies suggesting that murders are often committed impulsively without premeditation, as a result of momentary nervous breakdowns and without consideration for the consequences of the crime (Tosun Altınöz et al., 2018; Cavlak et al., 2023), an examination of murders in the first six months of 2020 indicates that 63% of the cases of femicide were premeditated (Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Türkiye, 2020). It is imperative to

formulate policies and practices that specifically address both premeditated and spontaneous instances of femicide.

Gender-based cultural interpretations of femicide in Türkiye involve the conceptualization of women's resistance to male dominance, men's assertion of control over women (Koç, 2022), and the intensification of conflicts between women seeking to transcend traditional norms and men conditioned by these norms. Specifically, Çetin (2015) highlights the clash between tradition and modernity through the concept of "Revolt Killing", asserting that femicide in Türkiye is intricately linked to the shift in women's status towards modernity rather than the perpetuation of men's status within tradition.

Institutional Services Addressing Femicide in Türkiye

An important situation that should be mentioned in the context of Türkiye in terms of femicide and politics is Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention in 2021. It can be said that Türkiye, as the first signatory of the convention, has gained a strong and reliable impression in terms of the country's reputation, especially with its stance on human and women's rights. On 20 March 2021, it was decided to terminate the convention (Üçler & Büyükçelikok, 2023). Regarding this decision, Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of Communications stated that "the Istanbul Convention, which initially aimed to promote the strengthening of women's rights, has been manipulated by a group of people trying to normalize homosexuality, which is incompatible with Türkiye's social and family values. Türkiye's decision to withdraw from the convention is based on this reason" (Presidency of Communications of the Republic of Türkiye, 2021). The objective of Law No. 6284 on the Protection of the Family and Prevention of Violence against Women, is to safeguard women, children, other family members, and victims of unilateral stalking who are either exposed to or face the risk of violence (Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye, 2021). Since 2007, National Action Plans have been formulated to combat violence against women, serving as a blueprint to direct relevant institutions and organizations in their efforts (OHCHR, 2021). The IVth National Action Plan of Türkiye articulates a core principle of zero tolerance towards violence and the prevention of all forms of violence against women, emphasizing the annual preparation of action plans to delineate policy priorities (Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye, 2021). Within this framework, the 2023 activity plan identifies access to justice and legislation, policy and coordination, protective and preventive services, social awareness, and data and statistics as key indicators (Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye, 2023).

Consequently, both violence against women in general and femicide in particular are focal points in policy and planning efforts.

In Türkiye, services addressing violence against women and femicides are provided through collaboration between the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (ŞÖNİM) and Women's Shelters, both of which are operated under the Ministry of Family and Social Services. These services encompass a coordination service for processing applications and implementing measures, psycho-social support, legal assistance, educational and vocational guidance, health support, economic support, intervention and counseling, and finally, preventive measures including social awareness-raising initiatives in order to prevent violence. In cases where women's lives are in imminent danger, urgent and expedited protective and preventive measures (injunctions) are sought. The issuance of a confidentiality order ensures the preservation of privacy regarding information concerning women who are victims of violence. Furthermore, perpetrators of violence are provided training, counseling, and rehabilitation services, as well as health monitoring and treatment options (Ministry of Family and Social Policies of the Republic of Türkiye, 2013; 2016).

The Women's Support Application, known as KADES, enables women who have been or are likely to be subjected to violence to utilize their smartphones to access the Women's Emergency Support reporting system, prompting the dispatch of the nearest police team and patrol to the scene. A total of 620,829 individuals have registered for this application by downloading it to their phones, and 48,600 women have reported incidents through this platform (Ministry of the Interior, 2020). Additionally, the Ministry of the Interior offers another service known as the electronic handcuff system. In 2021, Electronic Monitoring Centers across 81 provinces in Türkiye monitored a total of 794 perpetrators using electronic handcuffs (Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye, 2021; OHCHR, 2021). The We Will Stop Femicide Platform is a prominent non-governmental organization dedicated to addressing femicide in Türkiye. It is committed to stopping femicide, safeguarding women from violence, and preventing violations of women's rights (Ministry of the Interior, 2020).

Nevertheless, significant criticism exists regarding all these policies and services. As per a report by Human Rights Watch (2002), there were instances where women were killed despite authorities being aware of the risks they faced, and notwithstanding previous preventive measures taken against the perpetrators. Additionally, in a study covering 1699 cases of femicide between 2000 and 2019, it was found that 75% of the perpetrators were reported to the police, and 64.9% were involved in judicial proceedings (Cavlak et al., 2023). In this context, GREVIO (Group of

Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence) (2018) underscores the significance of holding the public accountable for any negligence or shortcomings in cases where women are not adequately protected.

Furthermore, it highlights that qualitative research in the field of femicide offers advantages such as the possibility of preventing femicide, exploring the contextual background of femicide, identifying risk factors and proposing appropriate policies (Vives et al., 2016; Matias et al., 2020; Weil, 2017). The objective of this study is to investigate the perspectives of academics and professionals engaged in the field of women's welfare in Türkiye regarding institutional services aimed at addressing the issue of femicide. As highlighted by Weiss-Gal (2013), professionals working in the realm of social welfare may play a role in perpetuating deficiencies in social welfare services and competencies in practice. For instance, in their study, Diner & Toktaş (2013) analyzed issues pertaining to policy and practice concerning women's shelters in Türkiye, focusing on the perspectives of professional staff.

Methodology

The aim of this study is to investigate participants' perceptions of services addressing femicide by examining the following research questions:

How do participants assess institutional services for women's welfare in relation to femicide?

What activities do the participants think need to be developed for an effective state policy on femicide?

A qualitative research design employing a descriptive phenomenological approach (Morrow et al., 2015) was utilized, as it was deemed conducive to exploring participants' experiences, thoughts, and suggestions regarding services addressing femicide. The central aim of descriptive phenomenology is to use first person accounts to clarify the essential meanings of defined phenomena (Sinfield et al., 2023). In this study, descriptive phenomenology was used to examine first-person accounts and thoughts on the fight against femicide. Femicide narratives thus provide understanding into women's subjective experiences, the ways they understand events, and the episodes they are trying to organize in their heads. Sometimes this is coincidental with a phenomenological approach in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experience about femicide as described by the participant in the study (Weil, 2017). This study, the narratives of professionals contributed to the understanding of important shortcomings, obstacles and risks in the field of the fight against femicide through the sharing of experiences.

Participants

One of the primary criteria was that professionals participating in the research should work in the field of women's welfare, while academics should be engaged in women's welfare studies. In this context, criterion sampling and maximum diversity sampling methodologies were employed. By ensuring the participation of individuals from various disciplines and professional backgrounds, the aim was to uncover common themes amidst this diversity (Suri, 2011). Consequently, the study included six professionals working in ŞÖNİM, comprising psychologists, social workers, and sociologists. Additionally, participants consisted of the director of ŞÖNİM (Violence Prevention and Monitoring Center), the director of the Women's Shelter, lawyers, psychiatrists, NGO representatives, and academics from various departments (i.e. Turkish National Police Academy, Department of Social Work, and Department of Psychology). Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 individuals who met the research criteria and consented to participate. Upon reaching the 13th interview, it was observed that the new data mirrored what had been previously discussed (Saunders et al., 2018). To ensure the data saturation, an additional 2 interviews were conducted. Of the participants, 9 were married and 6 were single. As for the educational backgrounds of the participants, it was found that 4 participants held a PhD, 10 participants held undergraduate degrees, and 1 participant was a high school graduate. The average age of the participants is 36 years, with an average of 11.62 years of professional experience. Introductory information about the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Introductory Information about the Participants

Pseudonym	Profession	Sex/Age	Field Experience (Year)
P1	NGO Representative	Female/56	35
P2	Lawyer	Male/26	3
P3	Social Worker	Male/31	7
P4	Psychologist	Female/28	5
P5	Sociologist	Female/28	5
P6	Psychologist	Female/50	28
P7	Sociologist	Female/33	6
P8	Social Worker	Female/27	3
P9	Lawyer	Female/26	3
P10	Psychiatrist	Female/56	31
P11	Director of ŞÖNİM	Male/32	10
P12	Director of Women's Shelter	Female/38	15
P13	Academician	Female/44	3
P14	Academician	Female/34	11
P15	Academician	Female/37	9

Data Collection

The study employed a semi-structured, in-depth interview form created by the researcher. The questions underwent evaluation by two social work academics specializing in women's welfare research. Additionally, a preliminary interview with the director of a women's shelter was conducted. This preliminary interview was conducted solely for question evaluation purposes and was not included in the study itself. The interview form is detailed in Table 2. Professionals working in the field of women's welfare were contacted either by phone or email through the Turkish Association of Social Workers. Academics were reached via email, and interviews were scheduled with those who responded. Given the pandemic circumstances (2020-2021), interviews were conducted via Zoom. On average, the interviews lasted 63 minutes. The interview guide is presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Interview guide

1. Can you provide some background information about yourself? (sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, occupation, and total years of professional experience)
2. How do you assess the institutional services designed to safeguard women's welfare concerning the issue of femicide?
3. Which activities need to be developed to create an effective state policy on femicide?

Prior to commencing the research, ethical approval from the Ethics Committee for the study. Participants were provided with information about the research, and their consent was obtained for the use of a voice recorder during the interviews.

Data Analysis

MAXQDA 2020 was utilized for data analysis. The study utilized Collaizzi's descriptive phenomenological data analysis method, which consists of 7 steps. During the first step, transcripts of interviews with 15 participants were transcribed and analyzed. In the second step, significant statements relevant to the research were identified. In the third step, important expressions were selected, and the meanings of these selected expressions were revealed and defined. The fourth step involved thematizing the defined and formulated meanings, leading to comprehensive explanations of the phenomena derived from the statements based on these themes. Subsequently, a brief and concise explanation of the data obtained from the research was presented. These steps were carried out through interaction between the two researchers. While establishing code, sub-theme and theme connections, first, it was tried to determine what the problem was in a concrete way (deficiencies, obstacles, risks). A title covering concrete needs was created in the sub-theme. Finally, the perspectives expressed in the code and sub-theme were expressed as a policy and

practice proposal. However, due to constraints, the step of having participants verify the themes created by the researchers was not feasible in this study (Morrow et al., 2015). An example of the process of data analysis is provided in Table 3.

Table 3.
Example of Process of Data Analysis.

Meaning Units	Codes	Subtheme	Theme
When a woman leaves the guest house, her life is at risk. When she departs from the shelter, it's merely recorded, and that's it. So, as I said, even if she leaves voluntarily, she remains vulnerable to violence.	Risk to women's safety after leaving the women's shelter	Rectification of Service Shortcomings for Women/Victims	Enhancement of Intervention Services
There is only one ŞÖNİM in İstanbul. When I inquire about how they manage their workload, they express their inability to keep up.	Deficiencies in institutional capacity		
We aim to shift women's perspectives and uncover their strengths. However, we see that many of them end up reconciling with the men who have subjected them to violence. They often justify the abuse by saying things like 'he hits me because he drinks' or 'he wouldn't hit me if he weren't angry'.	Obstacles encountered by institution staff in intervention procedures		
While I was in another province, I was already involved in implementing Family and Divorce Counseling at the ŞÖNİM where I worked. However, it would be beneficial if the ministry could expand this initiative to all 81 provinces, enhance training opportunities, ensure that 80% of the professional staff are trained, and establish a dedicated counseling unit based on this model.	Expansion of the provision of counseling services		

Trustworthiness

In this study, several measures were implemented to ensure credibility. Firstly, the interview form was subjected to evaluation by expert opinion. During the interviews, participants' responses were redirected to them for confirmation, ensuring the accuracy of the data before incorporating the answers into the research. Subsequently, participants' responses were directly integrated into the findings section following the interviews. Finally, the codes and themes derived from the data were reviewed by two independent social work academics.

Theme 1: Enhancement of Protective and Preventive Services

Participants highlighted that women lack awareness about the available services in the field of women's welfare and their rights. Preventing women from being uninformed about the support services they can access is crucial in halting the process that leads to femicide.

Sadly, many people still don't know about these rights, even though we've been putting up posters, sharing brochures, running training sessions, hosting awareness events, using the media, visiting homes, and offering really helpful services to spread the word about social services. While women might have heard about social services here and there, they often don't know exactly what they entail. (P3)

It is considered that the services provided are insufficient to prevent femicide. It is underscored that there is a pressing need to enhance these services in terms of prevention and to develop a more comprehensive plan. Participant 11 stated that, in general, services started after the violence.

We've trained thousands of individuals, and all of them have been women. Our training focuses specifically on domestic violence and violence against women, where we provide guidance on what to do if they experience such situations. We inform them about their options and the resources available to them in case they encounter violence. Unfortunately, our process operates under the assumption that they will face violence first, meaning they will have to endure it before turning to those centers for help. (P11)

Furthermore, there is a prevailing belief that cases of femicide mark the culmination of a series of events, highlighting the urgency of prioritizing preventive and protective measures to be implemented before femicide occurs. Participant 8 states that there are contradictions between the names of violence prevention and monitoring centers, and the services they offer:

Even though our Directorate is named 'violence prevention', as a ministry, we aren't very proactive in the preventive aspect. Typically, we only intervene after an incident has occurred. However, we face challenges in providing proactive training in villages because of the lack of willingness among the people. They are not very willing to participate. (P8)

Considering the predominance of male managers, there is a widespread belief in the necessity for men to actively adopt and engage in the battle against femicide, with male senior managers playing pivotal roles in this effort:

Men also need to be part of the solution to these issues. I felt it was important to mention, because most of our leaders are men, especially in top positions. They need to understand and embrace this perspective. (P1)

Given that the majority of cases of femicide in Türkiye are perpetrated by spouses within the family, there is a strong emphasis on the need for preventive and protective measures to commence prior to marriage; it is highlighted that individuals should undergo training on fostering healthy relationships before entering into marriage. Participant 13 shares the compulsory marriage preparation school as a preventive service:

It would be beneficial to have mandatory training for those seeking marriage. For instance, a compact program lasting 4-5 weeks or even just one week could be implemented, like a marriage preparation school to attend before getting married. (P13)

In addition to pre-marriage training, there is also a recognized need for supporting individuals through marital challenges and facilitating the maintenance of a healthy family union, as it is believed that only through such comprehensive support can the progression towards femicide be effectively prevented.

I believe the government should facilitate discussions between the man and the woman, addressing all necessary topics. These discussions should involve experts who can guide them on finding solutions and resolving issues. In my opinion, all married individuals need expert support. (P2)

Considering the statements in the theme Enhancement of Protective and Preventive Services, it is understood that women are not fully aware of the services offered, perhaps women are not fully reached, and services in the field of women's welfare are not active enough in the preventive dimension. Especially when the logic of the establishment of violence monitoring and prevention centers is taken into consideration, a contrast stands out here. However, as an important finding, the participants draw attention to the fact that men should also play a part in preventing femicides. Finally, the participants emphasized that education and counseling services before and during marriage are also important in terms of prevention. When the statements of the participants are evaluated in general, it is understood that there is an intention to prevent femicides, but this can be achieved through a more internalized and planned political agenda.

Theme 2: Enhancement of Intervention Services

The interviewees highlighted that the assistance provided to women in women's shelters is occasionally temporary and ineffective, resulting in situations where women may be reluctant to seek refuge in these shelters. Participant 4 states that the women's shelter is not preferred by women:

(The support we offer) is temporary, not permanent. That's why most women are hesitant to stay in shelters. You see, I might say, 'Let's take you to the shelter because the man hasn't been arrested

yet, and there's a risk he might show up at your house at night.' But then the woman answers, 'How long can I stay there? Eventually, I'll have to leave eventually.' (P4)

One major issue in women's shelters is regarded as breaches of confidentiality, which are believed to heighten the risk to women's safety. Participant 1 emphasizes the open-door system and the fact that the location of the women's shelter is known by everyone:

Our women's shelters operate on an open-door system, meaning there's a constant flow of people coming in and out. This setup ensures that not all 200 residents are present simultaneously. Due to this frequent turnover, security can be compromised. Individuals who leave the shelter may unintentionally put its confidentiality at risk. This can lead to the shelter's presence becoming widely known in the neighborhood. (P1)

It is thought that both entering and leaving women's shelters may pose some risks, which emphasizes the importance of notifying law enforcement officers when women leave the shelters, to ensure their safety.

When a woman leaves the guest house, her life is at risk. When she departs from the shelter, it's merely recorded, and that's it. So, even if she leaves voluntarily, she remains vulnerable to violence. We can't be sure whether she left by choice or was compelled to do so, or what might have happened to her afterwards. Therefore, all instances of women leaving shelters be reported to the police, without exception. Just a week after I raised this concern, a woman left, and tragically, she was found dead ten days later. (P1)

Participants indicated that the provision of ŞÖNİM services is inadequate in densely populated cities and advocate for an increase in the number of ŞÖNİM facilities to enhance the effectiveness of their work. Participant 4 states that they cannot keep up with the cases:

Interestingly, there is only one ŞÖNİM in Istanbul. When I inquire about how they manage their workload, they express their inability to keep up. They mention that they only send brochures to women who have received a cautionary decision, without verifying whether the woman has actually visited the center or not. Clearly, there is a need to increase the number of ŞÖNİMs. (P4)

It is imperative to consider that women may return to their husbands after experiencing violence, which poses a risk for femicide. It is emphasized that ŞÖNİMs played crucial roles in informing, raising awareness, and providing support to women, tailored to their psychological states. Participant 4 states that they are trying to realize an empowerment-based service delivery:

We provide counseling support. We aim to shift women's perspectives and uncover their strengths. However, we see that many of them end up reconciling with the men who have subjected them to violence. They often justify the abuse by saying things like 'he hits me because he drinks' or 'he

wouldn't hit me if he weren't angry'. They have this tendency to search for reasons behind the violence and rationalize it. I'm dedicated to breaking down this viewpoint. (P4)

When analyzing femicide, it becomes clear that there are cases where a woman's desire for divorce can result in murder. In such cases, addressing the divorce situations of spouses becomes crucial. It is noted that the Ministry of Family and Social Services provides training on Family and Divorce Counseling for ŞÖNİM staff, which constitutes an important practice, albeit not uniformly implemented across all provinces:

While I was in another province, I was already involved in implementing Family and Divorce Counseling at the ŞÖNİM where I worked. However, it would be beneficial if the ministry could expand this initiative to all 81 provinces, enhance training opportunities, ensure that 80% of the professional staff are trained, and establish a dedicated counseling unit based on this model. (P3)

The interviewees involved in the research emphasize that preventive efforts against femicide should involve work with men who perpetrate violence. It is noted that while problematic behavior is typically attributed to men, services often focus on women, highlighting the need for a concerted effort to address the problematic behavior of men. Participant 4 states that the main focus should be on rehabilitation of men:

We're always working to safeguard women from harm. However, male perpetrators of violence often face no consequences and carry on with their lives as usual. Unfortunately, divorce is still stigmatized in our society. This leads to a cycle where women may reconcile with their abusers, only to experience violence again. Offering temporary support to women isn't sufficient; we need to tackle the root of the problem by addressing the perpetrators of violence. (P4)

It is stated that effectively engaging with perpetrators of violence is challenging due to the lack of demand from them to seek support, resulting in difficulties in ensuring the continuity of interviews and conducting healthy interactions.

Efforts to address perpetrators of violence often face challenges in effectiveness. Professionals at ŞÖNİM seek to involve them in an 'anger management group'. However, many of those men deny having such issues, saying 'I don't have an anger management problem. Why am I being called?' However, when the court directs the man to ŞÖNİM, these professionals possess slightly more authority to impose sanctions on the perpetrators. (P14)

It is noted that while some provinces offer services for men who perpetrate violence, the provision of such services is not standardized across all provinces; additionally, it is emphasized

that the physical setting plays a crucial role, suggesting that support for women and men should be provided from separate facilities:

Currently, these initiatives are undergoing pilot programs in several provinces, including Ankara, where ŞÖNİM is notably effective. In Ankara, there are two separate buildings situated in different areas: one exclusively dedicated to assisting victims, and the other focusing solely on perpetrators of violence. Regrettably, we lack similar resources. Due to our small size, along with limited professional staff and inadequate facilities, we encounter challenges in delivering comprehensive support. (P8)

The interviewees within the scope of the research believe that it is crucial for professional staff to acquire competence and specialization in their work on femicide to enhance the effectiveness of the services they provide. Participant 5 particularly emphasizes the importance of experience in the field of women's welfare:

I believe that there is a significant deficiency in the qualifications of our staff, particularly in terms of experience. In my opinion, individuals working in a women's shelter should have at least 2-3 years of prior experience in the field. We have some staff members who were appointed to our shelter without adequate experience, which makes it challenging for them to effectively support women. (P5)

It is emphasized that professional staff participating in initiatives against violence against women and femicide should receive support through training, as this will not only enhance their interactions with victims but also enhance their competence to effectively manage the process. Participant 6 evaluates the contribution of in-service trainings:

The quality needs to be improved. While I only have a bachelor's degree and no master's, I've received extensive training over my 18 years here that I couldn't have afforded on my own. It's essential to adequately equip those we hire in the field. (P6)

It is noted that the insufficiency of personnel at ŞÖNİM and Women's shelters, along with the shortage of adequately trained staff, poses a significant challenge to the effective delivery of services within public institutions aimed at preventing violence against women and femicide:

(The issue with ŞÖNİMs is) the insufficient number of staff. Personally, I can't recall how many files I handled last time or how many women I interviewed. There are instances where I even question if I provided certain information, as it slips my mind. This leads to situations where you have to call the woman again and ask, 'Did I inform you about this?' . (P8)

Considering the statements in the Enhancement of Intervention Services theme, participants pointed out that women's shelters are not a popular institution for women. Although women's shelters can be an instant solution in terms of the risk of homicide, this solution both restricts

women spatially and women do not know what their next steps will be. Participants also discussed the confidentiality of women's shelters. In fact, this situation poses significant risks both in terms of women settling in the shelter, wanting to go out for a short time after settling in the shelter, and wanting to leave the shelter. Unfortunately, violence prevention and monitoring centers are unable to provide adequate services, particularly in densely populated areas. This situation brings to the agenda again the contrast between the name of the institution and the services it provides. Participants also drew attention to working with the perpetrator/man as an important gap in service provision for femicides in Turkey. In fact, it can be concluded from the statements of the participants that without this type of intervention, other services cannot be effective. Finally, in parallel to the inadequacy of violence prevention and monitoring centers mentioned earlier, participants also drew attention to the lack of personnel and work intensity. The fact that Participant 6 participated in many free training courses with public resources suggests that there is an intention to prevent and intervene in practice, but the deficiencies cannot be eliminated.

Discussion

This study delves into the perspectives of academics and professionals engaged in women's welfare in Türkiye regarding services addressing the issue of femicide. It highlights a notable lack of knowledge among women regarding available services and their rights. There is a pressing need for protective and preventive planning that specifically addresses men's risk of committing femicide. Politicians ought to prioritize combating femicide on their political agendas. The enhancement of counseling and training services is crucial for early intervention in the lead-up to femicide. In 2015, a report from the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (the Ministry of Family and Social Services, since 2018) revealed that a mere 11 percent of women experiencing violence actually file reports. This low reporting rate can be attributed to several factors, including women not recognizing violence as a serious issue, hoping for change in their partners, lacking awareness of where to seek help, and harboring negative perceptions of institutional support. At this point, online platforms and social media serve as vital resources for women to access information about available services, in addition to the public service announcements by the Ministry of Family and Social Services on women's rights and services (Caylı Messina, 2021). The literature underscores the importance of preventive measures, emphasizing the critical need for their effective implementation (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Policies should specifically target the issues of "stalking" and "threats". Stalking, experienced by nearly 3 out of every 10 women, constitutes a prevalent form of violence (Yapar et al., 2023; Ministry of Family and Social Policies of the Republic of Türkiye, 2015). Moreover, both stalking and threats play crucial roles in intimate

partner femicide (Toprak & Ersoy, 2017). One in every three femicides exhibits risk factors that serve as preludes to the act itself (Erükçe Akbaş & Karataş, 2024). The preventive and protective efforts mentioned by the participants, which center on men, are expected to emphasize aspects such as facilitating healthy divorces and terminating emotional relationships in a constructive manner, promoting gender equality, and providing resources for anger management (Ministry of Family and Social Policies of the Republic of Türkiye, 2015; Karbeyaz et al., 2018; Sayar, 2015; Tosun Altınöz et al., 2018). It is indicated that the willingness of high-level politicians to embrace the fight against femicide is hindered by obstacles rooted in stereotyped social, political, and hegemonic masculinity (Aka, 2022; Atuk, 2020).

Furthermore, concerns are raised regarding the temporary nature of work in women's shelters, confidentiality issues regarding these shelters, and the vulnerability of women leaving shelters, potentially making them targets for further harm. It was suggested that increasing the number of ŞÖNİMs would ensure more effective operations, along with expanding efforts to work with men/perpetrators. Additionally, it was noted that women returning to their partners after experiencing violence pose a risk of femicide. Finally, it was stated that ŞÖNİMs should take a more active role in divorce and family counseling. It was also recommended that the number of professional staff at ŞÖNİMs and women's shelters should increase. The importance of confidentiality in women's shelters is highlighted, with concerns that problems related to confidentiality may compromise security (Diner & Toktaş, 2013). Due to a shortage of professional staff in the field of women's welfare, there is an increase in workload, and a decline in the quality of services provided (Yalçın, 2021; Diner & Toktaş, 2013). Women returning to environments of violence are identified as significant risk factors (Erükçü Akbaş, Karataş, 2022). It is suggested that services aimed at empowering women (e.g. vocational training, etc.) should be developed within women's shelters. Additionally, there is a recognized need for specialized women's shelters capable of catering to various needs, including those of individuals with special requirements (Yalçın, 2021). Given men's violent tendencies, issues with anger management (Dinçer, 2022) and the occurrence of suicide attempts following intimate partner femicides (Cavlak et al., 2023), it is crucial to expand ŞÖNİM's institutional efforts in working with men, and this initiative should not be contingent upon the perpetrator's willingness (Öztürk, 2017). Although Tosun Altınöz et al. (2018) did not identify a specific psychopathology associated with femicide, the issue of femicide also raises concerns about men's mental health in Türkiye (Erükçe Akbaş & Karataş, 2024).

Implications

The objective of this research is to assess the institutional provisions aimed at tackling the issue of femicide in Türkiye. It is imperative that protective measures and services concerning femicide extend their reach to a wider spectrum of women, offering supportive and empowering resources. Given the pressing need to address men's risk of committing femicide, there is an imperative to develop protective and preventative strategies, which should be coupled with the practical provision of marriage and divorce counseling services; furthermore, it is crucial for influential male figures in politics, especially those at senior levels, to endorse and advocate for the adoption of such policies and services. Specifically, the establishment of a “risky divorce category” and the provision of institutional services and legal support throughout divorce proceedings (Erükçü Akbaş, Karataş, 2022; Matias et al., 2020) are anticipated to decrease instances of intimate partner femicide.

Women's shelters and ŞÖNİMs (Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers) offer support to women in alignment with Law No. 6284, and based on research findings, personnel within these institutions prioritize the safety and well-being of women's lives. Furthermore, as a political priority, there is a need to augment the number of such organizations, enhance the caliber and quantity of their personnel, and upgrade the infrastructure for engaging with male perpetrators of violence. Emphasizing healthy divorce, concluding relationships in a constructive manner, promoting gender equality, and providing anger management resources stand out as pivotal areas for attention. Additionally, it is crucial to implement measures safeguarding the confidentiality of women in shelters and addressing the phenomenon of women returning to their spouses after experiencing violence.

Limitations and Future Directions

The findings of this study need to be considered within the context of certain limitations. Primarily, the phenomenon of femicide is influenced by various factors including public services, media portrayal, legal frameworks, and cultural barriers. This study specifically focuses on assessing public services. Despite femicide being a global issue (UNODC, 2024), this research primarily reflects the socio-cultural and socio-legal dynamics specific to Türkiye. Another limitation of this study is the predominance of female participants. Future research should include male professionals working in the field to provide a more comprehensive understanding. Particularly in the context of Türkiye, it is essential to conduct studies involving men who perpetrate violence as well as policymakers, aiming to generate systematic knowledge in the field of femicide and enhance evidence-based practices (Tekindal et al., 2018). There is a pressing need

to elevate the importance of femicide on academic, social, political, and legal agendas (Vives et al., 2016). Therefore, it is crucial to develop periodic research focusing on both qualitative and quantitative analyses of cases of femicide (Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye, 2021).

Author's Notes

The study reported in this article is based on portions of a master's thesis by the first author under the supervision of the second author.

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