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The Interactive Roles of Frustrations and Religious Attitudes on Aggression

Saldırganlık Üzerindeki Hayal Kırıklıkları ve Dini Tutumların Etkileşimsel Rollerini

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Abstract: Recent data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) reveal a worrisome escalation in aggression rates among young individuals, including incidents of injury, criminal involvement, and criminal activity. In this context, the basic objective of the present study is to examine the moderating effect of religious attitudes on the relationship between frustration and aggressive behavior. The study data were collected through an online cross-sectional survey conducted with 729 participants (523 female, 206 male) randomly selected between the ages of 18 and 25. To collect the data, the Aggression Scale, the Religious Attitude Scale, and the Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale were used. The results showed that frustration was positively related to physical aggression, hostility, anger, and verbal aggression. In contrast, religious attitudes were negatively related to physical aggression, hostility, anger, verbal aggression, and frustration. Additionally, religious attitudes played a moderating role in the relationship between frustration and physical aggression and hostility. However, the findings indicated that religious attitude failed to reduce the effect of frustration on anger and verbal aggression. The results of the study indicate that religious attitudes significantly influence the impact of frustrations on tendencies toward anger and verbal aggression. These findings reveal a complex relationship between frustration and aggression, which depends on the degree of religious inclination. In light of these findings, it is recommended that guidance programs based on religious values be developed—within the framework of the existing literature—to help reduce aggression levels among individuals experiencing need frustration.

Keywords: Psychology of Religion, Frustration, Religious Attitude, Aggression, Self-Determination Theory.

Öz: TÜİK verilerine göre, genç nüfusta yaralanma, suça karışma ve suç işleme gibi saldırganlık eğilimlerinin oranlarının son yıllarda artış göstermesi, toplumsal düzeyde endişe verici bir tablo ortaya koymaktadır. Özellikle ergenlikten erken yetişkinliğe geçiş dönemindeki bireylerde saldırganlık davranışlarının artması, hem bireysel hem de sosyal uyum açısından olumsuz sonuçlar doğurabilmektedir. Saldırganlık, yalnızca fiziksel zarar verme davranışlarıyla sınırlı olmayıp; düşmanlık, öfke ve sözel saldırganlık gibi farklı boyutları da içeren çok boyutlu bir olgudur. Literatürde, dini tutum düzeyinin saldırgan temelli davranışlarla negatif ilişkili olabileceği yönünde çeşitli bulgular yer alsa da, bu ilişkinin altında yatan temel mekanizma henüz tam olarak açıklığa kavuşmamıştır. Bu çalışmanın kuramsal temeli, Öz Belirleme Kuramı çerçevesinde ele alınmıştır. Kuramın temel kavramlarından biri olan “temel psikolojik ihtiyaçlar”, bireyin psiko-sosyal gelişimi ve iyi oluşu için kritik öneme sahiptir. Bu ihtiyaçlar; özerklik, yeterlik ve ilişkilendirme olarak üç temel boyutta tanımlanmaktadır. Hayal kırıklığı ise bu ihtiyaçların engellenmesi veya tatmin edilememesi durumunda ortaya çıkan, bireyde stres, huzursuzluk ve gerginlik gibi olumsuz duygulara yol açan bir deneyimdir. Günlük yaşamda,

beklenen ödüller ile elde edilenler arasındaki tutarsızlık ya da hedefe ulaşma çabalarının engellenmesi, hayal kırıklığının en yaygın nedenleri arasında yer alır. Öz Belirleme Kuramı bağlamında, bu tür engellenmelerin saldırganlık gibi uyumsuz başa çıkma stratejilerini tetikleyebileceği düşünülmektedir. Araştırmanın birinci amacı, temel psikolojik ihtiyaçlardaki hayal kırıklığının saldırganlık üzerindeki etkisini incelemektir. İkinci amacı ise, dini tutum düzeyinin hayal kırıklıkları ile saldırganlık temelli davranışlar arasındaki ilişkide düzenleyici rol oynayıp oynamadığını ortaya koymaktır. Çalışmanın verileri, 18-25 yaş aralığında, rastgele seçilen 729 katılımcıdan çevrimiçi anket yöntemiyle elde edilmiştir. Kullanılan veri toplama araçları; Saldırganlık Ölçeği, Dini Tutum Ölçeği, , Temel Psikolojik İhtiyaçların Tatmini ve Engellenmesi Ölçeğidir. Verilerin analizinde IBM SPSS 29 ve Amos paket programlarından yararlanılmıştır. Analiz sonuçları, ihtiyaç hayal kırıklıklarının saldırganlığın tüm alt boyutları üzerinde anlamlı ve pozitif yönde ilişkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Fiziksel saldırganlık, düşmanlık, öfke ve sözel saldırganlık düzeyleri, katılımcıların hayal kırıklıkları arttıkça anlamlı şekilde yükselmiştir. Bu bulgu, engellenmenin saldırganlık davranışlarının ortaya çıkmasında önemli bir tetikleyici olabileceğini doğrulamaktadır. Ayrıca, dini tutum ile saldırganlığın tüm alt boyutları arasında anlamlı ve negatif korelasyon bulunmuştur; dini tutumu yüksek olan bireylerin saldırgan tepkilerinin daha düşük düzeyde olduğu görülmüştür. Araştırmanın en dikkat çekici bulgularından biri, dini tutumun düzenleyici rolüne ilişkindir. Dini tutum, ihtiyaç hayal kırıklıkları ile fiziksel saldırganlık ve düşmanlık arasındaki ilişkide anlamlı bir şekilde koruyucu etki göstermiştir. Bu durum, dini değerlerin, bireylerin bilişsel ve davranışsal saldırganlık tepkilerini azaltmada etkili olabileceğine işaret etmektedir. Ancak dini tutumun öfke ve sözel saldırganlık üzerindeki etkisi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmamıştır. Bu sonuç, öfke ve sözel saldırganlık gibi daha duygusal tepkilerin farklı psikolojik ve sosyal faktörler tarafından şekillendirilebileceğini düşündürmektedir. Bulgular, dini tutumun bazı saldırganlık türleri üzerinde tamponlayıcı bir işlev gördüğünü ve engellenmenin olumsuz etkilerini hafiflettiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çerçevede, dini değerleri merkeze alan, aynı zamanda öfke yönetimi ve duygusal düzenleme becerilerini geliştiren psiko-eğitim programlarının geliştirilmesi, özellikle genç yetişkinlerde saldırganlık eğilimlerini azaltma açısından faydalı olabilir. Üniversiteler, gençlik merkezleri ve toplumsal eğitim programları bu tür müdahalelerin uygulanabileceği etkili alanlar olarak değerlendirilebilir. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma Öz Belirleme Kuramı bağlamında, temel psikolojik ihtiyaçların karşılanmaması ile saldırganlık arasındaki ilişkinin dini tutum tarafından nasıl şekillendiğini ortaya koyarak literatürdeki boşluğu doldurmuştur. Bulgular, engellenme yaşayan bireylerin saldırganlık düzeylerini azaltmaya yönelik dini temelli rehberlik ve psikososyal destek programlarının planlanmasının, toplumsal huzur ve bireysel iyi oluş açısından stratejik bir öneme sahip olabileceğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din Psikolojisi, Hayal Kırıklığı, Dini Tutum, Saldırganlık, Öz Belirleme Teorisi.

Introduction

According to the World Health Organization, aggressive behaviours represent a significant public health problem, responsible for injury and death to millions of people on an annual basis.¹ Furthermore, aggressive behaviours are among the most common reasons for adults being referred to mental health services.² In this context, it can be said that the increase in aggression has led to simultaneous increases in criminal behaviour and global health issues.³ A comprehensive review of the extant literature reveals a consistent observation of aggression as a significant component of externalising behaviour problems. Concurrently, it is evident that aggression is intricately linked to social adaptation challenges, as evidenced by studies highlighting its capacity to influence individuals' self-perception and social interactions.⁴ In essence, individuals with elevated levels of aggression are predisposed to perpetrate violent acts and crimes, thereby jeopardising social order and manifesting behaviours that compromise social stability. Aggressive behaviours impose substantial economic and medical expenses. It is therefore both theoretically and practically important to examine the factors affecting aggression. Furthermore, the identification of psychosocial factors in aggressive behaviours provides critical information that facilitates a more profound understanding of the mechanisms of aggression. These factors will also provide insights that can be used to design better theoretical and practical strategies for managing and preventing aggressive behaviour.

Self-Determination Theory posits that, just as air, water, and sunlight are essential for plant life, humans require fundamental psychological nutrients to maintain optimal mental health. This concept has been extensively debated and researched by psychologists, who have identified and defined the specific number and types of needs that are essential for human well-being.⁵ Basic Psychological Needs Theory, a sub-theory of Self-Determination Theory, posits that three fundamental psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are pivotal for human development. Research conducted across diverse populations has highlighted the critical role of fulfilling these needs in the psychosocial development⁶ of individuals. The deprivation of these needs has been shown to give rise to feelings of anger and anxiety, as well as contribute to the emergence of antisocial behavioral tendencies such as aggression.⁷

¹ Christopher R. Mikton etc., “Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014”; *Global status report*.

² Armbruster Paula etc., “The Impact of Managed Care on Children’s Outpatient Treatment”.

³ Robert F. Valois etc., “Aggressive and Violent Behavior and Emotional Self Efficacy”.

⁴ Idean Ettekal and Gary W. Ladd, “Developmental Continuity and Change in Physical, Verbal, and Relational Aggression and Peer Victimization from Childhood to Adolescence.”

⁵ Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary, “The Need to Belong”; Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*.

⁶ Edward L. Deci and Ryan, “The ‘What’ and ‘Why’ of Goal Pursuits”.

⁷ Zeynep Changir Çankaya, “Özerklik Desteği, Temel Psikolojik İhtiyaçların Doyumu ve Öznel İyi Olma: Öz-Belirleme Kuramı”; Doğan Cüceloğlu, *İnsan ve Davranışı*.

However, individuals' levels of religious attitudes have also been shown to have a significant impact on aggressive behaviours. A limited number of studies in the field of religious psychology have suggested that religion reduces aggression levels⁸, yet the underlying mechanism linking the two remains unclear. Addressing this gap in the existing literature, the present study aims to explore the complex interplay between frustrations arising from the deprivation of basic psychological needs and religious attitudes in relation to aggression-based behaviors, which pose a risk to both physical and mental health as well as social stability. The current study aims to identify the complex interaction of frustrations arising from the obstruction of basic psychological needs and religious attitudes on aggression-based behaviors, which are a risk factor for health (physical and mental) and social issues, considering this gap in the literature. The central issue the study seeks to examine is the relationship between frustration and aggression and the extent to which religious attitudes influence this dynamic. The study recommends identifying antisocial behaviors exhibited by individuals facing frustrations and obstacles and developing preventive measures to mitigate their effects. Furthermore, it is anticipated that this research will make valuable contributions to the development of counseling programs rooted in spiritual values.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Aggression and Frustration

The term 'aggression' is employed to denote a wide range of behaviours, yet within the domain of psychology, it is defined as all actions and behaviours that directly or indirectly inflict physical or psychological harm upon an object, animal, or human being with the intent to avoid inflicting harm upon oneself.⁹ This definition encompasses physical aggression, verbal aggression, and hostile thoughts and behaviours associated with negative emotions.¹⁰ The consequences of aggressive behaviour are manifold, encompassing both immediate and long-term mental¹¹ and physical health complications.¹² A review of the extant literature reveals a plethora of explanations for aggression. For instance, instinct theorists conceptualise aggression as an instinct that fosters the perpetuation of the

⁸ Necmi Karşlı, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Saldırganlık ve Dindarlık İlişkisi"; Ulu ve İkis, "Lise Öğrencilerinde Saldırganlık ve Din İlişkisi".

⁹ Robert Baron, *Human Aggression*; Geen, "Processes and Personal Variables in Affective Aggression".

¹⁰ Raymond DiGiuseppe and Raymond Chip Tafrate, *Anger Disorders Scale*; Buss and Perry, "The Aggression Questionnaire."

¹¹ Clarice S. Madruga etc., "Early Life Exposure to Violence and Substance Misuse in Adulthood - The First Brazilian National Survey"; Elizabeth P. Lockington etc., "Intimate Partner Violence Is a Significant Risk Factor for Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes".

¹² Mikton etc., "Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014"; Velotti etc., "Faces of Shame".

species and the enhancement of status and power within one's social network.¹³ Conversely, social learning theorists, who do not subscribe to the notion of aggression as a motivational trait, posit that it is a behaviour that can be acquired through environmental influences and modelled, akin to other behaviours.¹⁴ Conversely, cognitive theorists argue that deficiencies in social problem-solving, social cognition, and learning abilities lead to aggressive behavior, emphasizing the crucial role of thought processes in the onset of aggression.¹⁵

The frustration and aggression hypothesis posits that aggressive behaviour emerges as a consequence of the alleviation of tension engendered by frustrations. In essence, the hypothesis suggests that the manifestation of aggression is precipitated by the impediment of individuals in fulfilling their needs and engaging in their activities. The frustration hypothesis posits that the restriction of desired activities or the imposition of undesired activities can serve as catalysts for aggression.¹⁶ The frustration-aggression hypothesis accentuates that aggression is a hostile reaction to perceived frustration, with hostility serving as the predominant emotion.¹⁷ In a similar vein, Buss and Perry (1992) conceptualised hostility and anger as the primary components of aggression, thereby challenging the established link between frustration and aggression. Their seminal research posited that aggression is, in fact, a reaction to an attack on oneself, rather than being a consequence of frustration.¹⁸ Buss and Perry developed an aggression questionnaire in which they characterised the cognitive dimension of behaviour as hostility, the emotional dimension of behaviour as anger, and the instrumental and main components of behaviour as physical aggression and verbal aggression.¹⁹

In their recent study, Kruglanski and colleagues²⁰ emphasised that frustration can lead to aggressive reactions towards one's sense of honour and social value. The importance-seeking theory, which defines aggressive behaviour as an action resulting from the inhibition of needs, describes the act of aggression as a sign of strength, courage, and

¹³ Vldas Griskevicius etc., "Aggress to Impress"; Anne Campbell, "The Evolutionary Psychology of Women's Aggression"; Lorenz, *İşte İnsan Saldırganlığın Doğası Üzerine*.

¹⁴ Rita L Atkinson etc., *Psikolojiye Giriş*; Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*.

¹⁵ Albert Ellis, *Anger: How to Live with and Without It*; Beck, *Prisoners of Hate: The Cognitive Basis of Anger, Hostility, and Violence*.

¹⁶ Leonard Berkowitz, "Some Effects of Thoughts on Anti- and Prosocial Influences of Media Events"; Berkowitz, "Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis"; Dollard etc., *Frustration and Aggression*.

¹⁷ Kenneth A. Dodge, "Translational Science in Action".

¹⁸ Arnold H. Buss, "Instrumentality of Aggression, Feedback, and Frustration as Determinants of Physical Aggression."; Arnold H. Buss and Mark Perry, "The Aggression Questionnaire."

¹⁹ Buss and Perry, "The Aggression Questionnaire."

²⁰ Arie W. Kruglanski etc., "Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis Reconsidered".

determination that generally gains respect and importance.²¹ Indeed, the need for importance in individuals can be activated through various mechanisms, including exclusion, disenfranchisement, and the experience of failure and defeat.²²

Self-determination theory (SDT) posits that the motivation and personality of the individual to meet their needs in social situations can be explained by the theory. According to SDT, there are three basic organismic (innate) and psychological needs in humans: autonomy, competence and the need to establish relationships.²³ Autonomy is defined as the need to act independently, have free will and experience choice.²⁴ In essence, autonomy signifies the capacity for self-regulation and organisation of behaviours.²⁵ The need for competence pertains to the sense of efficacy and self-efficacy that propels individuals to engage in actions that foster their personal growth in the face of internal and external challenges.²⁶ Conversely, relationship need signifies an inclination to cultivate and sustain connections, characterised by a sense of interpersonal belonging.²⁷ It has been posited that these needs represent fundamental components of proactive optimal development, integrity, and well-being in living beings. While it is acknowledged that fundamental psychological needs are distinctive and universal to humans,²⁸ it is also posited that these needs are not universally met in the same manner across diverse cultures, thereby underscoring the existence of cultural variations.

When individuals' social environments and internal processes (such as self-concept and personal values) allow them the freedom to make choices, demonstrate competence, and form personal, emotional connections with others, it fosters optimal psychological development, activates intrinsic motivation, and enhances their social interactions.²⁹ In the event of an absence of fulfilment of these psychological needs, an energetic situation³⁰ is created that gives rise to a psychological imbalance, and antisocial behaviours may develop, including a lack of self-confidence, unhealthy self-destructive tendencies, anxiety,

²¹ Campbell, "The Evolutionary Psychology of Women's Aggression".

²² Kruglanski etc., "Significance-Quest Theory".

²³ Deci and Ryan, "The 'What' and 'Why' of Goal Pursuits".

²⁴ Deci and Ryan, "Facilitating Optimal Motivation and Psychological Well-Being Across Life's Domains."

²⁵ Deci and Ryan, "The 'What' and 'Why' of Goal Pursuits".

²⁶ Deci and Ryan, "Facilitating Optimal Motivation and Psychological Well-Being Across Life's Domains."

²⁷ Deci and Ryan, "The 'What' and 'Why' of Goal Pursuits"; Chen etc., "Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction, Need Frustration, and Need Strength Across Four Cultures".

²⁸ Deci and Ryan, "The 'What' and 'Why' of Goal Pursuits".

²⁹ Deci and Ryan, "Facilitating Optimal Motivation and Psychological Well-Being Across Life's Domains."

³⁰ Wei Zhang etc., "A Cross-Sectional Study on Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and General Psychiatric Morbidity Among Adult Survivors 3 Years After the Wenchuan Earthquake, China"; Deci and Ryan, "The 'What' and 'Why' of Goal Pursuits"; Maarten Vansteenkiste and Richard M. Ryan, "On Psychological Growth and Vulnerability".

anger,³¹ stress³² and aggression.³³ A paucity of empirical studies has confirmed that the frustration of basic psychological needs does indeed lead to antisocial behaviours.³⁴ This forms the basis of the present hypothesis that frustrations will be a predictor of aggression, which is one of the aforementioned antisocial behaviours in individuals. The question, therefore, arises as to whether the experience of frustrations affects aggression-based reactions. Furthermore, it is crucial to ascertain whether the relationship is unidirectional and direct, or whether it is influenced by other variables.

In view of the paucity of research on psychological need related to frustrations and aggression, which forms the core of the Self-Determination Theory, the objective of the present study is to examine the existence of a link between both variables. Aggressive behaviors are associated with frustrations, and frustrations appear to be a significant antecedent in the emergence of aggressive behaviors. In addition to examining the relationship between frustrations and aggressive behaviors, the study investigates whether the effect of frustrations on aggressive behaviors is reduced when the level of religious attitude is high. These hypotheses were formulated based on the literature. Hypothesis 1 (H₁). There is a statistically significant positive relationship between levels of frustration and physical aggression.

Hypothesis 2 (H₂). There is a statistically significant positive relationship between frustration and hostility.

Hypothesis 3 (H₃). There is a statistically significant positive relationship between levels of frustration and anger.

Hypothesis 4 (H₄). There is a statistically significant positive relationship between levels of frustration and verbal aggression.

1.2. Aggression and Religious Attitudes

The frustration-aggression theory posits that individuals resort to aggression in order to resolve tensions and conflicts arising from frustrations.³⁵ However, it is unlikely that each individual reacts to every experience in the same way; that is, the capacity to tolerate

³¹ Deci and Ryan, "Autonomy and Need Satisfaction in Close Relationships".

³² Anja H. Olafsen etc., "On the Dark Side of Work".

³³ Nesrullah Şahin and Yahya Korkut, "Psikolojik İhtiyaçları Farklı Lise Öğrencilerinin Saldırganlık Düzeyleri".

³⁴ Peizhen Sun etc., "Cumulative Ecological Risk and Problem Behaviors Among Adolescents in Secondary Vocational Schools"; Choe and Read, "Perceived Parental Psychological Control Has İndirect Effects on Aggression Via Need Satisfaction and Motivation for Revenge"; Şahin and Korkut, "Psikolojik İhtiyaçları Farklı Lise Öğrencilerinin Saldırganlık Düzeyleri".

³⁵ Berkowitz, "Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis".

and struggle with processes is different.³⁶ People's response to stressful events largely depends on their resilience capacity, frustration tolerance tendencies, and self-control levels. A meta-analysis study, conducted in accordance with the view that self-control prevents aggressive actions, revealed that poor self-control is associated with aggression.³⁷ Indeed, the review of extant literature reveals a body of evidence that suggests that religions can reduce³⁸ the level of antisocial behaviours by providing believers with more self-control skills.³⁹ In essence, adherents of a sacred system are inclined to structure their lives in accordance with the principles they uphold, thereby mitigating aggressive behaviours across the cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains.⁴⁰ For instance, numerous verses in Islam instruct believers to refrain from aggressive behaviours and to embody patience and dignity.⁴¹ In the Christian religion⁴² and Judaism,⁴³ it is similarly advised to avoid aggressive behaviours, and those who exhibit aggressive behaviours are condemned. In previous studies, it has been suggested that spiritual meaning and support from religious communities, as well as religious beliefs and practices, directly affect the level of aggression negatively.⁴⁴ Conversely, a different study posits that individuals with a propensity for aggressive behaviour often resort to religious practices such as prayer.⁴⁵

For instance, nationally representative studies of adolescents in Turkey have found that those with higher levels of religiosity are involved in fewer physical fights, gang fights, armed assaults, and stabbings. Similarly, people with higher levels of religious attitudes have been reported to commit fewer acts of violence against their spouses and relatives. The role of religion in deterring antisocial behaviours can be explained by the belief in supernatural punishment/rewards ('I cannot go to heaven if I harm others'),⁴⁶ sociali-

³⁶ Katharine R. Parkes and Emily L. Hughes, "Individual Differences in Coping with Stress".

³⁷ Hao Lei etc., "Effect of Self-Control on Aggression among Students in China".

³⁸ P. Elizabeth Kelly etc., "Religion, Delinquency, and Drug Use".

³⁹ Michael E. McCullough and Brian L. B. Willoughby, "Religion, Self-Regulation, and Self-Control"; McCullough etc., "Religious Involvement and Mortality"; Kartopu, "Öz Yeterlilik Algısında Dindarlık Eğiliminin Rolü".

⁴⁰ Faruk Karaca, "Dindarlığın Fonksiyonelliği Üzerine"; Brian J. Zinnbauer and Kenneth I. Pargament, "Dindarlık ve maneviyat"; Hüseyin Certel, "Dini suçluluk and Savunma Mekanizmaları".

⁴¹ Şuara, 37; Maide, 30; Al-i İmran, 134; Nisa 78

⁴² Matthew 5: 21-22; Matthew 21: 12-17

⁴³ Ecclesiastes 9; Ecclesiastes 10: 4

⁴⁴ Robert Marsh and Rudi Dallos, "Roman Catholic Couples"; Nathaniel M. Lambert and David C. Dollahite, "How Religiosity Helps Couples Prevent, Resolve, and Overcome Marital Conflict"; Erdal Baykan, "Ahi-ret İnanıcının Ortaöğretim Gençliği Üzerindeki Anlamı ve Etkileri".

⁴⁵ Ryan H. Bremner etc., "Pray for Those Who Mistreat You".

⁴⁶ Travis Hirschi and Rodney Stark, "Hellfire and Delinquency".

sation,⁴⁷ social support⁴⁸ and encouragement of healthy behaviours and attitudes.⁴⁹ Based on this extant literature, it is hypothesised that religious attitude can reduce the effect of frustrations on aggressive behaviours. The present study aims to demonstrate that the effect of religious attitude on frustrations can result in a reduction in aggression. It is hypothesised that religious attitude will reduce the level of aggression and thus play a regulatory role by softening the relationship between frustration and aggressive behaviours, as illustrated in Figure 1. The study may add value to the extant literature by evaluating the effect of religious attitude on antisocial behaviours. Furthermore, the findings may assist in the design and implementation of preventive strategies to improve public health. According to the literature, these hypotheses were constructed.

Hypothesis 5 (H_5). There is a statistically significant negative relationship between religious attitude and levels of physical aggression.

Hypothesis 6 (H_6). There is a statistically significant negative relationship between religious attitude and hostility.

Hypothesis 7 (H_7). There is a statistically significant negative relationship between religious attitude and levels of anger.

Hypothesis 8 (H_8). There is a statistically significant negative relationship between religious attitude and levels of verbal aggression.

Hypothesis 9 (H_9). The moderating effect of religious attitude on the relationship between frustrations and physical aggression is statistically significant.

Hypothesis 10 (H_{10}). The moderating effect of religious attitude on the effect of frustrations on hostility is statistically significant.

Hypothesis 11 (H_{11}). The moderating effect of religious attitude on the effect of frustrations on anger is statistically significant.

Hypothesis 12 (H_{12}). The moderating effect of religious attitude on the relationship between frustrations and verbal aggression is statistically significant.

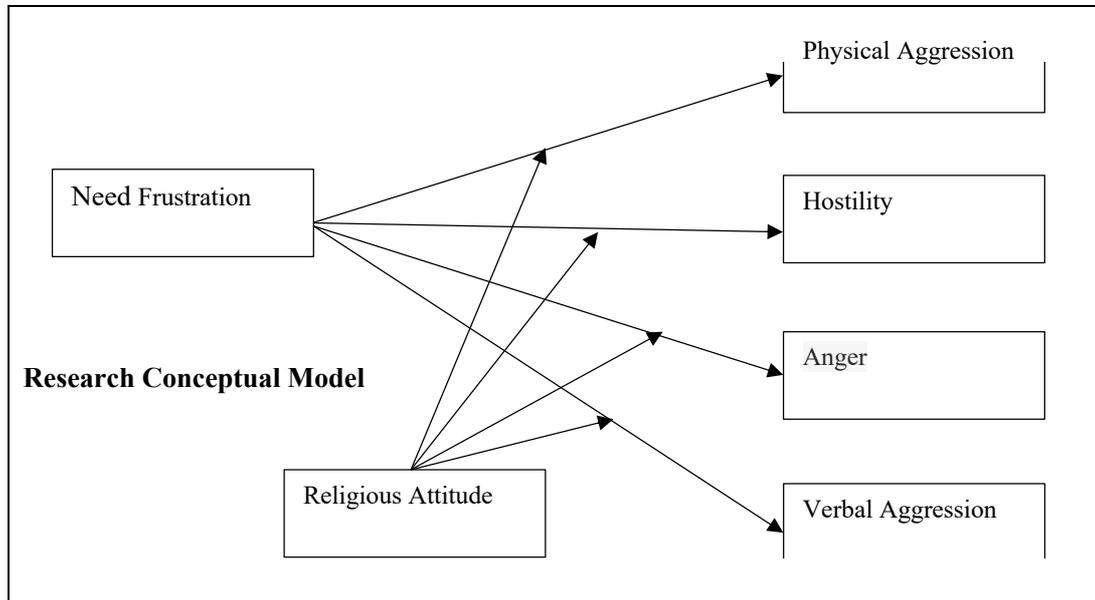
Direct moderation effect analyses were performed on each path in the model to examine the proposed hypotheses, as illustrated in Figure 1. In the next step, the moderating role of religious attitudes was assessed, specifically in terms of its influence on the relationship between frustration and various forms of aggression—namely, physical aggression, hostility, anger, and verbal aggression

⁴⁷ Steven R. Burkett and David A. Ward, “A Note on Perceptual Deterrence, Religiously Based Moral Condemnation, and Social-Control”; Bradley R. Entner Wright etc., “Low Self-Control, Social Bonds, and Crime”.

⁴⁸ Anastasios C. Marcos etc., “Test of a Bonding/Association Theory of Adolescent Drug Use”.

⁴⁹ Certel, *Suçlulara Dine Dönüş*; Tokur, *Stres ve Din*; Ayten, *Din ve sağlık*.

Figure 1. The Moderating Role of Religious Attitude in the Effect of Frustrations on Aggression.



2. Method

2.1. Research Design and Model

The main purpose of this study is to determine whether religious attitudes play a moderating role in the effect of individuals' frustration on aggressive behaviors. In order to achieve this purpose, the research model has been provided with the necessary conditions for the effective and appropriate collection and analysis of data. In the study, a quantitative research method was used, which adopted the relational screening model, which aims to evaluate the existence and strength of the relationship between two or more variables. The main research question of the study is to determine whether religious attitudes play a role as a moderating variable in the effect of frustration on aggression-related behaviors. In particular, the study examines how different levels of religious attitudes affect the relationship between frustration or anger felt due to frustration and aggressive behaviors such as physical aggression.

2.2. Research Sample and Procedure

The present study was conducted with a sample of 729 participants enrolled at a university in Turkey. In this study, participants were selected using a convenience sampling approach, a non-probability sampling method. Data were collected online from individuals who voluntarily agreed to participate, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. It was explained to them that the responses to the questionnaire would

be anonymous, and the study took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the ... University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (24/01/2024, approval number: 2024/1, E-95674917-108.99-282528). The study sample comprised 729 participants (523 females and 206 males) aged between 18 and 26 years with an average age of 21 years (SD = 1.28). The data were collected between 4 November and 12 December 2024 using the following instruments: the Personal Information Form, the Religious Attitude Scale, the Basic Psychological Needs Scale, and the Buss-Perry Aggression Scale, which were prepared by the researchers.

The data were analysed using IBM SPSS and AMOS, as well as the PROCESS package programme (Hayes Model 1) add-on module for SPSS. The reliability and normality assumptions of the scales were then checked. The analyses revealed that all sub-dimensions of the scales, which function as data collection tools, exhibited statistically significant internal consistency and reliability. Furthermore, it was observed that the research data followed a normal distribution, and the scales had the necessary validity coefficients. The moderating analysis of the hypothetical model created in the study was carried out using the front-loading method (IBM SPSS Statistics PROCESS Macro). In this direction, regulatory mediation modelling was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, goodness-of-fit values were tested with confirmatory factor analysis, and it was seen that the assumptions were met. In the second stage, physical aggression, anger, hostility, and verbal aggression scores were tested as independent variables; frustration scores were tested as dependent variables and Religious Attitude was tested as a mediator variable.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

Sociodemographic Information Form: This form comprises a series of open-ended questions whose purpose is to ascertain the characteristics of the study group. The characteristics in question include, but are not limited to, gender, age, and faculty of study.

Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction and Frustration Scale: The Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale (BPNSFS) was developed to assess the satisfaction of psychological needs as well as the frustration that arises when these needs are not met.⁵⁰ The scale was adapted into Turkish by Selvi and Bozo.⁵¹ The scale consists of 24 items and six subscales. Three of the subscales (Autonomy Satisfaction, Competence Satisfaction, and Relatedness Satisfaction) target the level of satisfaction of psychological needs, while the other three (Autonomy Frustration, Competence Frustration, and Relatedness Frustration) measure the level of frustration. In this study, three subscales measuring psychological need related to frustration were used. The Cronbach's alpha internal

⁵⁰ Chen etc., "Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction, Need Frustration, and Need Strength Across Four Cultures".

⁵¹ Kerim Selvi and Özlem Bozo, "The Dark Side of Bodybuilding".

consistency coefficients of the scale dimensions were .74 for autonomy frustration, .79 for competence frustration and .84 for relatedness frustration. In this study, the internal consistency coefficients were calculated as .77, .77 and .79, respectively. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), $\chi^2/df = 4.093$, RMSEA= 0.065, GFI= 0.952, AGFI= 0.926, CFI=0.998, TLI=0.934, SRMR= 0.04. These values indicate that the scale is reliable and valid.

Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ): The survey was developed by Buss and Perry⁵² as a five-point Likert-type scale, based on the Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory, and consists of 29 items categorized under four factors: physical aggression, verbal aggression, hostility, and anger. Items 9 and 16 are reverse-scored. The validity and reliability study of the Turkish version of the survey was conducted by Demirtaş-Madran, whose findings supported a four-factor structure consistent with the original version, confirming that the Turkish adaptation is both valid and reliable.⁵³ The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.85 for the overall scale, 0.78 for the physical aggression factor, 0.48 for the verbal aggression factor, 0.76 for the anger factor, and 0.71 for the hostility factor (Demirtaş-Madran, 2013). In the present study, the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .90 for the overall scale, .78 for the physical aggression factor, .78 for the verbal aggression factor, .78 for the anger factor, and .77 for the hostility factor. Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were found to be $\chi^2/df = 4.277$, RMSEA = 0.064, GFI = 0.954, AGFI = 0.930, CFI = 0.950, TLI = 0.935, and SRMR = 0.041.

Religious Attitude Scale: In this study, the Religious Attitude Scale, developed by Ok⁵⁴ was used to assess the religious attitudes of the study group. The scale was designed to measure cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and relationship with God dimensions related to religion. The items are structured as a five-point Likert-type scale. The scale consists of 8 items across four factors, with 6 positive and 2 negative items. The total score ranges from 8 to 40, where a higher score indicates a stronger religious attitude, and a lower score indicates a weaker religious attitude. In the current study, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .80 for the entire scale, .80 for the emotion factor, .80 for the relationship factor, .80 for the cognition factor, and .81 for the behavior factor. However, due to the small number of items, it was deemed appropriate to report composite reliability (CR) and McDonald's Omega (ω) values as a more reliable indicator of internal consistency. The calculations revealed that both the CR and Omega coefficients of the scale were approximately 0.946, indicating that the scale has high internal consistency. Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were found to be $\chi^2/df = 1.177$, RMSEA = 0.016, GFI = 0.994, AGFI = 0.986, CFI = 0.998, TLI = 0.996, and SRMR = 0.016.

⁵² Buss and Perry, "The Aggression Questionnaire."

⁵³ Demirtaş-Madran, "Reliability and Validity Studies of Turkish Version of Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire".

⁵⁴ Üzeyir Ok, "Dini Tutum Ölçeği: Ölçek Geliştirme ve Geçerlik çalışması".

2.4. Analysis of Data

The data collected within the scope of this study were analyzed using the IBM SPSS 29 statistical package program. Preliminary analyses were conducted using SPSS software, and no missing values were detected in the dataset. The statistical analyses primarily included sample distribution, descriptive statistics for variables, normality tests, reliability analyses, and correlation analysis using the Pearson coefficient. Additionally, to examine the moderating role of religious attitude in the relationship between frustrations and aggression, the SPSS add-on module PROCESS was utilized.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Analyses at the Level of Sub-Dimensions of Frustrations, Aggression, and Religious Attitude

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables used in the study. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed to assess whether the dataset conformed to a normal distribution, using skewness and kurtosis values as indicators. The fact that the skewness and kurtosis values of the scales fell within the range of ± 1 suggests that the data followed a normal distribution. Upon confirming the normality of the measured variables, it was determined that further statistical analyses could be conducted without modifying the dataset.

Table 1. Basic Descriptive Statistics and Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Results

Variable	N	Min	Max	SD	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis
Religious Attitude Scale	729	3	5	0.398	4.37	-0.212	-0.876
Emotion	729	3	5	0.603	4.00	-0.193	-0.780
Relationship	729	3	5	0.506	5.00	-0.796	-0.467
Cognitive	729	4	5	0.452	4.50	-0.408	-0.674
Behavioral	729	3	5	0.645	4.00	-0.224	0.714
Frustration Scale	729	1	5	0.691	2.41	0.265	0.142
Autonomy	729	1	5	0.819	2.75	0.346	0.188
Competence	729	1	5	0.829	2.50	0.279	-0.095
Relatedness	729	1	5	0.774	2.00	0.571	0.212
Aggression Scale	729	1	5	0.590	2.68	0.250	0.123
Physical Aggression Scale	729	1	5	0.743	2.33	0.570	0.391

Hostility	729	1	5	0.737	2.87	-0.01	0.07
Anger	729	1	5	0.800	2.71	0.285	-0.232
Verbal Aggression	729	1	5	0.737	2.87	-0.017	0.076

Note. SD: Standard Deviation.

3.2. Descriptive Correlation Analysis of Frustration, Aggression, and Religious Attitude Sub-Dimensions

To examine the relationship between frustration, aggression, and religious attitude, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. In correlation analysis, coefficients between 0 and ± 0.3 indicate a low-level relationship, coefficients between ± 0.3 and ± 0.7 indicate a moderate-level relationship, and coefficients between ± 0.7 and ± 1 indicate a high-level relationship. The results revealed a moderate, statistically significant positive correlation between aggression and frustration ($r = .433$, $p < .01$). Additionally, a weak but statistically significant negative correlation was found between aggression and religious attitude ($r = -.138$, $p < .01$). The relationships between the sub-dimensions of the aggression, frustration, and religious attitude scales are presented in Table 2. The statistical correlation values obtained between frustration, religious attitude, and aggression confirm the absence of multicollinearity and further validate the testing of hypothetical mediator variable models.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis Between Variables

Variable	RAS	B	E	C	R	FS	A	RE	CO	AS	PA	AN	H	VA
RAS	r 1													
B	r .778**	1												
E	r .770**	.461**	1											
C	r .764**	.850**	.417**	1										
R	r .755**	.407**	.470**	.429**	1									
FS	r -.119**	-.153**	-.020	-.151**	-.073*	1								
A	r -.061	-.101**	.004	-.081*	.018	.855	1							
RE	r -.142**	-.148**	-.038	-.163**	.097**	.848**	.587**	1						
CO	r -.106**	-.145**	-.019	-.145**	-.074*	.865**	.603**	.609**	1					
AS	r -.138**	-.186**	-.061	-.144**	-.065	.433**	.380**	.413**	.323**	1				
PA	r -.156**	-.204**	-.075*	-.172**	-.082*	.210**	.187**	.225**	.129**	.817**	1			
AN	r -.077*	-.120**	-.043	-.082*	-.014	.297**	.282**	.259**	.223**	.833**	.586**	1		
H	r -.119**	-.149**	-.026	-.126**	-.083*	.568**	.467**	.525**	.469**	.744**	.374**	.486**	1	
VA	r -.053	-.076*	-.043	-.032	.002	.283**	.259**	.286**	.185**	.736**	.509**	.527**	.458**	1

** $p < 0,001$, * $p < 0,5$. RAS; Religious Attitude Scale; Subdimensions of RAS: B; Behavior, E; Emotion, C; Cognition, R; Relationship; FS; Need Frustration Scale; Subdimensions of FS: A; Autonomy, RE; Relatedness, CO; Competence; AS; Aggression Scale; Subdimensions of AS: PA; Physical Aggression, AN; Anger, H; Hostility, VA; Verbal Aggression.

3.3. Moderation Analysis

The moderating role of religious attitude in the relationship between frustration and aggression was examined using the bootstrap method. In the analysis of the first moderation model (Figure 2), a 95% confidence interval and 5,000 random samples were utilized. The proposed model explains 7% of the variance in physical aggression among the dependent variables ($R^2 = 0.07$), while the variance in hostility is explained by 29% in the H_9 model ($R^2 = 0.29$), and increases by 4% with the addition of the frustrations \times religious attitude interaction to the H_{10} model, reaching a total of 33% ($R^2 = 0.33$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.04$). This result clearly demonstrates the additional explanatory effect of the interaction variable on hostility. The detailed results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypothesis Analysis

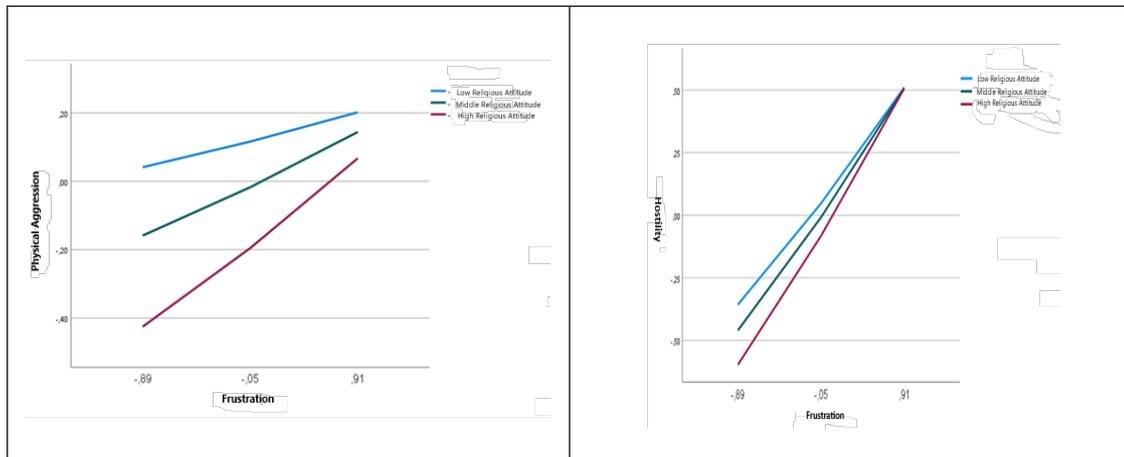
Hypotheses	β	SE	t	R^2	ΔR^2	Solution
Frustration ---> Physical Aggression	0.15**	0.035	4.82			H_1 Acceptance.
Frustration ---> Hostility	0.53**	0.030	17.6			H_2 Acceptance.
Frustration ---> Anger	0.29**	0.038	7.75			H_3 Acceptance.
Frustration ---> Verbal Aggression	0.27**	0.037	7.13			H_4 Acceptance.
Religious Attitude ---> Physical Aggression	-0.17**	0.036	-3.83			H_5 Acceptance.
Religious Attitude ---> Hostility	-0.07*	0.036	-1.82			H_6 Acceptance.
Religious Attitude ---> Anger	-0.050	0.043	-1.15			H_7 Rejected.
Religious Attitude ---> Verbal Aggression	-0.025	0.043	-5.85			H_8 Rejected.
Ways of Moderation						
Need Frustration x Religious Attitude ---> Physical Aggression	0.10*	0.043	2.34	0.068	0.07*	H_9 Acceptance.
Frustration x Religious Attitude ---> Hostility	0.073*	0.037	1.97	0.33	0.04*	H_{10} Acceptance.
Frustration x Religious Attitude ---> Anger	-0.017	0.043	-4.00	0.090	0.002	H_{11} Rejected.
Frustration x Religious Attitude ---> Verbal Aggression	0.015	0.043	.367	0.080	0.002	H_{12} Rejected.

Not: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$. β = Standardized Regression Coefficient; SE = Standard Error; R^2 = Coefficient of Determination; ΔR^2 = Change in R^2

The hypothesis analysis confirms the validity of H_1 . The hypothesis proposed a positive correlation between frustrations and physical aggression, and path analysis revealed a significant positive effect with a path coefficient of .17, a t statistic of 4.82, and a p value below 0.001. Similarly, H_2 , which posits a positive relationship between frustrations and hostility, was supported ($\beta = .54$, $t = 17.6$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, H_3 , which hypothesises that religious attitude exerts a negative influence on physical aggression, was substantiated. Path analysis disclosed a significant negative effect with a path coefficient of -.17, a t statistic of -3.83 and a p value of 0.001. In a similar vein, the hypothesis positing a negative relationship between religious attitude and hostility (H_4) was corroborated, with a path coefficient of .54, a t statistic of 17.6, and a p value of <0.01 . Examining the moderation analysis, the negative effect of frustrations on physical aggression is reduced by the regulatory effect of religious attitude level $\beta = 0.10$, $t = 2.34$, $p < 0.05$. This finding supports the H_5 hypothesis and reveals that religious attitudes may play a functional role in limiting individuals' need frustration-related aggressive behaviors. Similarly, the negative effect of frustrations on hostility was reduced by the moderating effect of religious attitude ($\beta = .073$, $t = 1.97$, $p < 0.05$), thereby supporting H_6 . The results of the analysis showed that the effect of religious attitude on anger levels was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.050$, $t = -1.15$, $p > 0.05$). This finding revealed that religious attitude did not significantly predict anger, leading to the rejection of hypothesis H_7 . Similarly, the effect of religious attitude on verbal aggression was found to be insignificant ($\beta = -.025$, $t = -0.59$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, it was concluded that religious attitude does not predict levels of verbal aggression, and hypothesis H_8 was rejected.

As shown in Figure II, this form of interaction is illustrated. Table III shows that the interaction between frustrations and religious attitude significantly affects physical aggression ($\beta = .10$, $t = 2.34$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that religious attitude moderates and reduces the impact of frustrations on physical aggression. Thus, Hypothesis H_9 is supported. Similarly, the interaction between frustrations and religious attitude was significant in predicting hostility ($\beta = .073$, $t = 1.97$, $p < .05$), indicating that religious attitude functions as a moderating variable that mitigates the negative effect of frustrations on hostility and confirms Hypothesis H_{10} . However, religious attitude was ineffective in reducing the negative impact of need frustration on anger ($\beta = -.017$, $t = -.400$, $p = .688$) or verbal aggression ($\beta = .015$, $t = .367$, $p = .713$), leading to the rejection of hypotheses H_{11} and H_{12} . For descriptive purposes, levels of physical aggression and hostility were plotted separately for low, medium and high religious attitudes (see Figure 2). However, no statistically significant moderating effects of religious attitude were observed for anger or verbal aggression.

Figure 2. Slope Analysis on the Regulatory Role of Religious Attitude in the Relationship between Frustration, Physical Aggression, and Hostility



Physical Aggression. (b) Hostility

Discussion and Conclusion

A review of the literature on aggressive behaviours, as reported by the World Health Organization and Tüik, reveals that aggression is a common behaviour that can be experienced or observed by any individual. While a substantial body of research has been dedicated to studying aggression, there is a notable absence of literature investigating the mechanisms that underpin the relationship between frustrations and aggressive behaviours. The present study, therefore sought to verify whether frustrations are positively correlated with aggressive behaviours (physical aggression, anger, hostility, and verbal aggression) (H_1 , H_2 , H_3 , and H_4) and whether religious attitudes are negatively correlated with aggressive behaviours (physical aggression, anger, hostility and verbal aggression) (H_5 , H_6 , H_7 , and H_8). Furthermore, the study sought to contribute to the extant literature by investigating whether the level of aggression-based behaviours resulting from frustrations would differ significantly from the level of religious attitudes. The study found that all hypotheses were confirmed. In accordance with the objectives and hypotheses of the study, this section will analyse the data on frustrations, aggression-based behaviours and religious attitudes within the context of the extant literature.

Assessing the Relationship Between Frustrations and Aggression

The findings of the present study demonstrate a statistically significant positive relationship between all sub-dimensions of frustrations/obstruction of basic psychological needs and aggression-based behaviours (H_1 , H_2 , H_3 , and H_4). This finding indicates that individuals who experience higher levels of frustration tend to feel a higher degree of

aggression. This finding serves to provide robust confirmation of the frustrations/frustration and aggression theory⁵⁵ and the self-determination theory.⁵⁶

The findings of the present study are consistent with those of several preceding studies, which have demonstrated that elevated levels of frustration can result in increased aggressive behaviour by rendering individuals more vulnerable to a variety of emotional biases.⁵⁷ Consequently, it can be posited that the sentiment of frustrations constitutes a significant factor in psychological perception and behaviour. For instance, a study investigating frustrations that jeopardise the sense of importance and social value revealed that significant frustrations can provoke aggression as a defensive mechanism against humiliation.⁵⁸ A study conducted on high school students further demonstrated that frustrations can trigger psychological defences by positively predicting negative emotions.⁵⁹ A further study demonstrates that frustrations have consistent indirect effects on aggression.⁶⁰ A review of the literature reveals that the relationship between the inhibition of basic psychological needs and aggressive behaviours has been studied to a limited extent, particularly in relation to Turkish individuals.⁶¹ Consequently, individuals with low basic psychological need satisfaction may exhibit higher levels of aggressive behaviours. In this context, effective reduction of aggressive behaviours in individuals necessitates measures to assist them in coping with their frustrations.

Evaluating the Relationship Between Religious Attitudes and Aggression

The study shows that there are different relationships between levels of religious attitude and certain sub-dimensions of aggression-based behaviours. The findings reveal a generally negative, albeit weak, relationship between religious attitudes and physical aggression and hostility (H_5 and H_6). The findings indicate that the importance of religious beliefs and their influence on decision-making are associated with a significantly lower likelihood of aggression towards others. In essence, this suggests a direct relationship between

⁵⁵ John Dollard etc., *Frustration and Aggression*; Berkowitz, "Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis".

⁵⁶ Deci and Ryan, "Facilitating Optimal Motivation and Psychological Well-Being Across Life's Domains."; Wei Zhang etc., "A Cross-Sectional Study on Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and General Psychiatric Morbidity Among Adult Survivors 3 Years After the Wenchuan Earthquake, China".

⁵⁷ S. Alexandra Burt and M. Brent Donnellan, "Personality Correlates of Aggressive and Non-Aggressive Antisocial Behavior".

⁵⁸ Elena Resta etc., "Ambition-Driven Aggression in Response to Significance-Threatening Frustration"; Arie W. Kruglanski etc., "Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis Reconsidered".

⁵⁹ Sun etc., "Cumulative Ecological Risk and Problem Behaviors Among Adolescents in Secondary Vocational Schools".

⁶⁰ Choe and Read, "Perceived Parental Psychological Control Has Indirect Effects on Aggression Via Need Satisfaction and Motivation for Revenge".

⁶¹ Şahin and Korkut, "Psikolojik İhtiyaçları Farklı Lise Öğrencilerinin Saldırganlık Düzeyleri".

an individual's religious attitudes and their propensity for aggressive behaviour. The findings of this study support the notion that religious beliefs and the influence of religion on believers serve as effective factors in the reduction of aggressive behaviours. Indeed, the religious commitment theory posits that the more significant and committed an individual is to their religion, the more protective it is against behaviours that could harm the individual and society, such as aggression. According to this theory, religion has the capacity to empower individuals by equipping them with the means to cope with setbacks and adversity, thereby fostering resilience.⁶² In a similar vein, social integration theory posits that individuals who are members of cohesive groups, such as mosques, may be shielded from aggressive behaviour due to the fear of social exclusion, which is facilitated by enhanced peer connections and social support.⁶³

The findings of the present study are consistent with those of several other studies, which have indicated that religious beliefs function as variables that promote patient personality and reduce aggression. For instance, a qualitative study revealed the belief schemas that were effective in deterring participants from engaging in negative behaviours, namely: these include the conviction that Allah will not pardon transgressions committed in the hereafter; the belief that disgrace in this life will result in eternal damnation; the anticipation of divine retribution for injustices committed in this life; and the commitment to rectify such injustices, with the assurance of divine intervention in the hereafter.⁶⁴ Schemas are defined as cognitive structures that are formed through the process of categorising information and experiences. They have been identified as an integral component of the cognitive, affective and behavioural repertoires of individuals who adhere to specific belief systems. These schemas have been observed to exert a significant influence on the behaviour of believers, guiding their actions in various situations. A study conducted on adolescents revealed a negative correlation between religiosity and aggression.⁶⁵ A further study identified a statistically significant negative relationship between religious attitudes and hostility.⁶⁶ An examination of the relationship between anger and religiosity concluded that religiosity reduces the feeling of anger.⁶⁷ Literature on the subject suggests that individuals with high religious attitudes who encounter frustrations may resort to positive religious coping activities more frequently than those with lower religious attitudes by making sense of their experiences. On the other hand, the current study found

⁶² Steven Stack, "The Effect of Religious Commitment on Suicide".

⁶³ Matthias Jongkind etc., "Dimensions of Religion Associated with Suicide Attempt and Suicide Ideation in Depressed, Religiously Affiliated Patients".

⁶⁴ Baykan, "Ahiret İnancının Ortaöğretim Gençliği Üzerindeki Anlamı ve Etkileri".

⁶⁵ Mustafa Ulu and Mehmet İkis, "Lise Öğrencilerinde Saldırganlık ve Din İlişkisi".

⁶⁶ Turgay Şirin, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Dini Tutumları İle Ruh Sağlığı İlişkisinin Çeşitli Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi".

⁶⁷ Karşlı, "Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Saldırganlık ve Dindarlık İlişkisi".

no statistically significant relationship between religious attitudes and anger and verbal aggression (H_7 and H_8). This indicates that religious attitudes do not have an equal effect on all dimensions of aggression. A similar study conducted on high school students shows that there is generally a negative correlation between religiosity and aggressive behaviors, but that it has no significant effect on internal and emotional dimensions such as anger and verbal aggression. These findings indicate that religious beliefs and attitudes are effective in regulating observable behaviors such as physical aggression, but have a limited effect on internal emotional experiences and social interaction-based dimensions, consistent with the results of the present study.

Interaction Effects

The findings of the present study demonstrate that levels of physical aggression and hostility resulting from frustrations are significantly reduced as religious attitude levels increase (H_9 and H_{10}). These results appear to support the notion that religious attitude can function as a protective factor between risk (frustration) and consequence (aggression). Indeed, higher levels of religious attitude may serve as an adequate factor to defend individuals against the negative impact of frustrations, consequently leading to reduced levels of aggression experienced. This finding lends further support to the notion that an understanding of the role of religious attitude in coping with frustrations may facilitate the implementation of therapeutic plans among diverse groups of people affected by elevated frustration due to various normative and non-normative crises. This result corroborates earlier studies; for instance, a study conducted on university students revealed that individuals with high religious attitudes exhibited reduced aggressive behaviours.⁶⁸ However, the findings demonstrate that religious attitude does not exert a moderating effect in reducing the negative impact of frustrations on anger, thereby rejecting H_{11} and H_{12} . The result of the study corroborates extant literature on the subject. For instance, it has been established that individuals with elevated levels of religiosity in a sample encompassing a wide age range also exhibit high levels of aggression.⁶⁹ Conversely, a positive relationship was identified between levels of religiosity and aggressive behaviours in studies conducted on adolescents.⁷⁰ However, another study failed to establish a significant relationship between anger control and religiosity.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Meryem Firat and Papatya Karakurt, "Association between Religious Attitudes and Aggression Levels in Turkish University Students".

⁶⁹ Ali Ulvi Mehmedoğlu, *Kişilik ve Din (Dindarlık Düzeyi ile Kişilik Özellikleri Arasındaki İlişki Üzerine Bir Araştırma)*.

⁷⁰ Selahattin Yakut, "Lise öğrencilerinde Dindarlık-Şiddet Eğilimi İlişkisi, Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi"; Kaya Tayfur, "Ergenlerde Saldırganlık ve Dindarlık İlişkisi".

⁷¹ Osman Özkan, "Öfke Kontrolü ve Dindarlık İlişkisi".

The findings of the present study contradict the initial hypotheses; however, they suggest that religious attitudes may play a significant role in shaping individuals' tendency to use anger and verbal aggression in response to frustrations during early adulthood. For instance, the interaction between religious attitude and frustrations indicates that participants with high levels of religious attitude may be more prone to experience anger and verbal aggression in response to frustrations compared to those with low levels of religious attitude. This phenomenon may be attributed to divergent beliefs associated with religious convictions. Individuals with pronounced religious attitudes may possess steadfast convictions regarding how others should interact with them in situations perceived as unpleasant, unfair, and negative, particularly when these situations are attributed to the actions of another person and result in the failure to achieve personal objectives. Consequently, they may exhibit a heightened negative response compared to those with less pronounced religious attitudes when confronted with circumstances that appear to violate their religious principles. Furthermore, studies have identified a positive correlation between the violation of a sacred aspect of life (i.e. disrespect) and emotional distress.⁷² Consequently, for participants who perceive their life rights, responsibilities and sense of justice as sacred, anger and verbal aggression may be perceived as a violation of a sacred being, potentially leading to negative behaviours.

In summary, religious attitudes have been shown to facilitate the cognitive processing of frustrations, thereby enabling individuals to adopt positive coping strategies in the face of negative emotions arising from frustrations. Indeed, the cognitive schema provided by religion enables believers to find meaning in challenging personal experiences and life events.⁷³ Furthermore, religious attitudes are regarded as a reality that provides believers with certain perspectives, termed theodicy, which enable them to explain and cope with challenging circumstances. Consequently, individuals with stronger religious convictions, who may experience a greater threat to their sense of self-worth, are likely to ascribe more significance to their personal experiences than their less devout peers. Moreover, religious individuals are often more inclined than non-religious people to hold the belief that their existence holds value in the eyes of a divine entity, even if this value is not acknowledged by others.

This study is pioneering in its exploration of the moderating influence of religious attitude on the relationship between frustration and aggression. The confirmation of hypotheses H₉ and H₁₀ on the moderating role of religious attitude in the study holds two practical implications. Primarily, it demonstrates that intervention programmes designed to reduce aggression will be most beneficial to individuals with low levels of religious

⁷² Pargament etc., "Sacrilege".

⁷³ Avital Laufer etc., "Posttraumatic Growth in Adolescence"; Kartopu, "Dini Yaşayıta Hayatı Sorgulama ve Anlam Arayışı".

attitude. Secondly, it is suggested that intervention programmes designed to prevent individuals with high levels of anger and verbal aggression from exhibiting aggressive behaviours will be particularly beneficial for those with high levels of religious attitudes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study examined the relationship between frustrations and aggressive behaviour, as well as the role of religious attitudes in regulating this relationship. The findings suggest that frustrations can significantly increase aggressive behaviour, but that strong religious attitudes can mitigate the severity of this effect. The moderating effect of religious attitudes on hostility and physical aggression reveals that faith-based tendencies can balance individuals' emotional responses. The results suggest that religiosity can act as a protective psychological mechanism for regulating negative emotions such as anger and aggression. It can be concluded that internalising religious values strengthens spiritual fulfilment, emotional adjustment, and self-control skills. In this regard, it is recommended that psychoeducation, values education and guidance programmes, especially for young adults, adopt a holistic approach that incorporates religious and moral dimensions. Future research should test similar models on samples with different religious orientations and cultural contexts. In-depth investigations into how individuals interpret their religious attitudes, using longitudinal or qualitative research methods, would also increase the generalisability and explanatory power of the findings.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the research is limited to university students aged 18–25. The responses of participants regarding their frustrations, religious attitudes and levels of aggression are limited by the scope of the scales used and the characteristics of the sample. Furthermore, while the Religious Attitude Scale is defined as having four factors, its eight items reduce the number of items per factor, leading to a structurally weak model. This may have limited the stability of the model and its construct validity in confirmatory factor analysis. Consequently, future studies should include adolescents and/or individuals in middle and late adulthood to determine whether the findings obtained in the specified age group can be replicated in different developmental periods. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the current study precludes the establishment of causal relationships between variables. Therefore, future studies should use experimental or longitudinal designs to gain a deeper understanding of relational processes.

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