

Examining the Impact of 'No Entry Without a Female Companion' (NEWFC) Policy on Young Male Consumers: Self-determination Needs, In-group Tendency, Social Conformity, and Well-being

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Damsız Girilmez Politikasının Genç Erkek Tüketiciler Üzerindeki Etkisinin İncelenmesi: Öz Belirleme İhtiyaçları, Grup İçinde Kalma Eğilimi, Sosyal Uyum ve İyi Oluş	Examining the Impact of 'No Entry Without a Female Companion' (NEWFC) Policy on Young Male Consumers: Self-determination Needs, In-group Tendency, Social Conformity, and Well-being
Öz Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki eğlence mekânlarında uygulanan damsız girilmez politikalarının psikolojik etkilerini incelemektedir. 490 genç erkek tüketiciye odaklanarak bu ayrımcı uygulamaların özsaygı, özerklik ve iyi oluşu nasıl zedelediği araştırılmıştır. Bulgular, damsız girilmez politikalarının dışlanma, hayal kırıklığı ve değersizlik duygularını artırarak aidiyet hissini zayıflatmış göstermektedir. Katılımcılar buna karşı alternatif mekân arayışı veya toplumsal normlara uyum gibi başa çıkma stratejileri geliştirmektedir. SmartPLS ile Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi (SEM) kullanılarak yapılan analiz, erkeklerin göz ardı edilen dışlanma deneyimlerini ortaya koymakta; ayrımcı politikaların sorgulanması ve kamusal alanlarda kapsayıcılığın teşvik edilmesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır.	Abstract This study investigates the psychological effects of "no entry without a female companion" (NEWFC) policies in Turkish entertainment venues. Focusing on 490 young male consumers, it examines how such discriminatory practices undermine self-esteem, autonomy, and well-being. Findings reveal that NEWFC policies foster exclusion, frustration, and diminished self-worth, while also compromising individuals' sense of belonging. In response, participants adopt coping strategies, such as seeking alternative venues or conforming to social norms. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS, this research highlights overlooked male experiences of exclusion, emphasizing the need to challenge discriminatory policies and promote inclusivity in public spaces.
Anahtar Kelimeler: pazaryerinden dışlanma, benlik saygısı, grup içinde kalma eğilimi, öz belirleme, tüketici iyi oluşu	Keywords: marketplace exclusion, self-esteem, in-group tendency, self-determination, consumer well-being
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1. Introduction

Gender power dynamics and sexism intersect with other oppressive systems, fueling social exclusion, yet the roles of men, both as perpetrators and as excluded individuals, are rarely addressed in public policies (Hearn et al., 2002). These intersections often manifest in structural inequalities that perpetuate marginalization and restrict access to resources and opportunities for certain groups. Marketplace exclusion, a multifaceted phenomenon with economic, cultural, and social dimensions, stems from systematic or individual barriers that limit marginalized consumers' involvement in the marketplace and their access to the resources and opportunities it offers (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013; Saren et al., 2019; Williams & Henderson, 2012). Exclusion can take on multiple forms, including economic constraints like limited access to economic resources, social impediments such as stigmatization and isolation, as well as product/service limitations like restricted product availability, all compounded by discriminatory practices such as stereotyping and sexism (Hutton, 2019; Burgess et al., 2017). Certain venues such as nightclubs enforce gender-based discrimination (Boogaarts, 2008) by implementing door policies like "no entry without a female companion (NEWFC)" (Thornton, 1995). This is purportedly done to balance the number of male and female guests and to foster a more comfortable environment for female attendees. However, this policy creates a major obstacle for men without female companions, perpetuating the stereotype that men may make women uncomfortable. Consequently, such policies reinforce societal biases, leading to the marginalization of specific groups. This can result in not only exclusion from the marketplace but also social alienation and broader societal margin.

Such exclusionary practices may also influence individuals' social behavior and adaptation strategies, often shaped by their need to conform to societal norms. Sowden et al. (2018) categorize individuals' social conformity into two types: public compliance and private acceptance. Public compliance involves conforming to social norms in the presence of others, often leading to approval or rewards for conformity and potentially resulting in exclusion or punishment for non-conformity, inducing feelings of shame. Conversely, private acceptance occurs when individuals internalize the gaze of others (Lacan, 1977), adopting societal norms and values under perceived scrutiny. This reflects a form of disciplinary power that governs behavior through internal self-regulation (Foucault, 1980). When seeking acceptance, individuals may undergo both public compliance and private acceptance simultaneously (Lascu & Zinkhan, 1999). However, when individuals no longer seek membership within the group, private acceptance becomes less probable (Allen, 1965). Additionally, those who are not part of a group or do not conform to mass preferences may face exclusion from the marketplace.

While the literature includes various studies that examine women's participation in nightlife leisure activities (e.g., Buvik & Baklien, 2015; Farina et al., 2021; Parikh, 2018), there is a notable lack of research on men's (non)participation, particularly in relation to door policies such as the NEWFC rule. This study aims to investigate the impact of the NEWFC policy on young male consumers' well-being. Focusing on a demographic in a critical period of identity formation and social integration (Erikson, 1968), it explores the emotional, psychological, and financial consequences of their exclusion from social nightlife spaces.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Marketplace Exclusion

Consumption, which encompasses social, psychological, cultural, and economic dimensions, serves as both a mode of expression and a means of communication. It significantly influences how individuals construct and maintain their identities while also delineating their social standing relative to others (Bocock, 1993; Baudrillard, 1998). Acts of authentication are those through which individuals manifest or establish their authentic identities. On the other hand, authoritative performances involve behaviors aimed at (re)shaping cultural traditions through shared presentations (Arnould & Price, 2003, p. 40). These authoritative performances, characterized by conformity to group norms and the endorsement of specific behaviors, play a crucial role within consumer culture. They facilitate social categorization and differentiation, akin to the communicative function of language (Baudrillard, 1998).

In this context, Lacan (1977) emphasizes the crucial role of the gaze in shaping how individuals present themselves in social interactions. It is not merely about physical sight but involves the scrutiny and potential objectification of the individual, often evoking the feeling of shame. In a social setting, the gaze is the projection that the individual envisions and adopts in the presence of others, shaping their self-perception and identity. According to Foucault (1979), individuals are subject to disciplinary mechanisms influenced by societal norms and power dynamics enforcing dominant discourse. Consequently, they relinquish autonomy and become objectified under the gaze. The internalization of dominant values during identity formation leads to self-surveillance, a manifestation of disciplinary power that is predicated on social dependence (Foucault, 1980). This interplay between identity formation and societal norms not only reinforces dominant cultural narratives but also perpetuates systems of exclusion that shape individual interactions within the marketplace.

Marketplace exclusion, a multifaceted phenomenon affecting consumers' economic, cultural, political, and social realms, involves the unequal distribution of marketplace resources and systemic or individual obstacles that hinder specific individuals or groups from fully participating in or benefiting from the market (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013; Saren et al., 2019; Rawat et al., 2022). Exclusion or marginalization of specific consumer segments occurs based on attributes such as race, gender, sexual orientation, income, age, disability, among others (Kaufman-Scarborough, 2015). These barriers impede consumers from fully engaging in diverse social relationships and activities, thus weakening their presence in the marketplace. Consequently, this is associated with emotional distress, material difficulties, and social isolation, ultimately affecting overall quality of life, social cohesion, and exacerbating consumer vulnerability (Hutton, 2019; Burgess et al., 2017). Marketplace exclusion may take the form of spatial segregation and social isolation resulting from stereotyping, misrepresentation, and discrimination (Saatcioglu & Corus, 2015; Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013). This can also include disparities in resource distribution and exclusion from various aspects of daily life.

Economic exclusion limits access to resources, financial services, and economic opportunities, leading to disparities in purchasing power and well-being (Bell and Burlin, 1993; Hutton, 2019). Limited product availability, such as the scarcity of gluten-free options (Bagolin do Nascimento et al., 2014) further exacerbates these disparities by hindering access to essential goods and services. Social segregation and isolation, often rooted in racial, ethnic, and class disparities, can limit access to resources and opportunities, as seen in the lack of public transportation for low-income individuals, restricted public spaces for the homeless

(Saatcioglu & Corus, 2015), and gender bias, such as the exclusion of men from entertainment venues under policies like NEWFC. Stereotyping and misrepresentation contribute to marketplace exclusion, with negative or inadequate representation in marketing messages, advertisements, or product offerings (Saren et al., 2019; Burgess et al., 2017). Discriminatory practices intensify exclusion by unfairly targeting groups (Levy & Barocas, 2017; Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013) like disabled or LGBTQ+ consumers, leading to frustration and alienation, despite a decline in overt manifestations (Rosenbaum et al., 2020; Mason & Pavia, 2006, p. 1017). Therefore, we suggest:

H1: Individuals experiencing marketplace exclusion are likely to show distinct evaluations associated with such exclusion.

2.2. In-Group Tendency and Customer Conformity

Social connectedness, encompassing belonging and closeness with others and the broader community (Yang et al., 2021) can be enhanced by the inclination to favor and identify with social groups, known as in-group tendency (Doosje et al., 1999). While in-group tendency nurtures a sense of belonging and shared experiences among members (Boothby et al., 2014) and group identification (Doosje et al., 1999) among members, it also has the potential to incite favoritism (Lin & Bruning, 2020), group-thinking and conformity (Harmeling et al., 2017; Moore & Mamiseishvili, 2012; Lascu & Zinkham, 1999), intergroup competition, conflict and discrimination (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013; Kilduff et al., 2010).

The dynamic relationship between conformity and in-group tendency significantly influences consumption practices and the phenomenon of marketplace exclusion among diverse consumer groups (Rawat et al., 2022). Lee and Shrum's (2012) study suggests that implicitly disregarded consumers gravitate towards conspicuous consumption, whereas explicitly rejected consumers lean towards increased charitable behavior in efforts to conform or deviate from the majority. Wang et al. (2012) found that when their preferences are subject to public scrutiny, excluded consumers, experiencing feelings of social isolation, conform to the majority to avoid negative social evaluations. Furthermore, Mead et al. (2011) discovered that excluded participants were more inclined to adjust their spending preferences to initiate social connections, thereby underscoring conformity's pivotal role in shaping purchasing decisions and preferences to fulfil the need for social connection.

The desire to belong to specific social groups (Lascu & Zinkham, 1999) drives the formation of in-groups based on shared traits like culture, ideology, and shopping habits, influencing consumption practices and fostering a sense of identity (Kang et al., 2019; Rehman & Jamil, 2016). Conformity, the drive to align with group norms for social acceptance, is a key motivator (Burnkrant & Coisineau, 1975; Allen, 1965). Within in-groups, conformity shapes distinct consumption patterns, potentially excluding outsiders. For example, individuals seeking acceptance in vegetarian groups may adjust their habits to align with group expectations, enhancing their image within the community (Bearden et al., 1989). Ultimately, social identity, conformity, and shared experiences help shape feelings of inclusion or exclusion within a group (Berger & Heath, 2008). In-group conformity can exclude those who do not align with dominant consumption practices, subjecting them to social pressure and potential ostracism, which negatively affects self-esteem and well-being (Saatcioglu & Corus, 2015). However, some individuals may resist conformity and express individuality through alternative consumption choices (Gong et al., 2021). Thus, we hypothesize:

H2: Customer evaluations of marketplace exclusion are associated with higher in-group tendency.

H3: Customer evaluations of marketplace exclusion are associated with greater consumer conformity.

H4: In-group conformity is positively related to customer conformity.

2.3. Consumer Well-Being and Self-Esteem

Self-esteem involves a cognitive and affective self-assessment of personal value or self-worth, linked to social well-being and connectedness (Rosenberg, 1965; Olsen et al., 2022). It involves assessing one's worth as a valuable individual, acting as a motivational force for consumers aiming to cultivate and negotiate a positive social identity, which may be achieved through actions like accepting or avoiding the symbolic meanings associated with products (Neff, 2011; Baumeister, 1982; Banister & Hogg, 2004). Given that self-esteem is significantly influenced by signals of interpersonal acceptance or rejection (Leary et al., 1995), it emerges as a defense mechanism against the fear of social exclusion (Baumeister & Tice, 1990). So:

H5: Customer evaluations of marketplace exclusion are related to lower self-esteem.

Consumer well-being, encompassing happiness, health, and life satisfaction, is shaped by both hedonic and eudaimonic factors (Ryan & Deci 2001). The hedonic view focuses on pleasure and pain avoidance, while the eudaimonic perspective emphasizes meaning and self-realization (Olsen et al., 2022). Beyond self-esteem, which is influenced by interpersonal acceptance (Rosenberg, 1965), the fulfillment of needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness drives overall well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Cultural and socio-economic factors, such as income and self-evaluation, further influence how well-being is perceived and experienced across different cultures (Diener & Suh, 2000; Ares et al., 2015).

Consumer well-being is essential for grasping the societal impact of marketplace interactions, as it encompasses life satisfaction, social connections, and overall quality of life beyond just health and happiness (Sirgy & Lee, 2006; Sirgy et al., 2007). Similar to Falguera et al. (2012), who argue that consumption serves as a tool for expressing identity and enhancing psychological well-being, Eshaghi et al. (2023) emphasize the multi-dimensional nature of consumer well-being. They stress its direct link to satisfaction across material, psychological, social, and physical realms, while also highlighting the importance of researching how social integration, acceptance, and coherence foster individual well-being through connection and belongingness on both individual and collective well-being. Furthermore, Diener and Suh (2000) point out that definitions of well-being can vary across cultures and socioeconomic contexts. Ares et al. (2015) found that income levels and self-perceptions of superiority can explain some of these cross-cultural differences. Understanding consumer well-being provides insight into the diversity of consumer experiences in the marketplace, as well as the societal costs and benefits associated with those experiences (Sirgy & Lee, 2006). Thus, we suggest:

H6: Customer evaluations of marketplace exclusion are negatively associated with psychological well-being.

H7: Self-esteem is negatively associated with psychological well-being.

H8: Customer conformity is positively associated with decreased psychological well-being

Self-determination theory argues fulfilling three core needs –autonomy, competence, and relatedness– boosts overall well-being for a better life (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomy,

characterized by self-endorsed actions driven by volition and a unified self-concept (Deci & Ryan, 2000), is a core factor in psychological well-being (Legault, 2020). The quest for lasting autonomy leads individuals to exhibit a self-directed disposition, consistently pursuing personal goals and actions (Legault, 2020). Oshana (2016) distinguishes between local personal autonomy, which pertains to individual actions, desires, or choices within specific contexts, and global autonomy, where individuals wield practical power and authority over significant aspects of their lives within self-established frameworks of rules or values. Autonomy's subjective experience relies on internally perceived causality, volition, and perceived choice (Reeve, 2018, p.113). Markus and Schwartz (2010) emphasize the complex interplay among consumer choice, freedom, autonomy, and well-being, whereas André et al. (2018) caution that technological advancements, while simplifying consumer tasks for convenience, could potentially undermine consumer autonomy, thus impacting overall well-being. Hyman et al. (2023) underscore true consumer autonomy as acting based on personal volition in a fully deterministic setting, contrasting with practical autonomy influenced by environmental factors.

Autonomy necessitates that an individual demonstrates epistemic competence by being introspective and self-aware (Oshana, 2016, p. 76). Individual competence (Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 2000; 2013) refers to utilizing skills and abilities for self-directed decision-making, including pursuing personal objectives and experiencing a sense of challenge and efficacy. Consumer competence (Grønhøj, 2007) integrates consumer skills, knowledge, and attitudes, encompassing financial literacy, exercising consumer rights, environmental awareness, healthy food choices, and utilizing product information for safety and quality. Competence is expected to enhance well-being by effectively achieving consumers' desired outcomes (Reis et al., 2000). Similar to Sharma et al. (2017), who observed a positive effect of self-efficacy and self-determination on customer well-being, Sheldon and Niemiec (2006) found that the happiest individuals endorse their actions, feel effective, and are socially connected, fulfilling their competence needs alongside autonomy and relatedness. However, even in Norway, a developed country, the scarcity of market information leads to a moderate level of consumer competence, thereby decreasing the likelihood of making well-informed, economically, environmentally, and ethically sound decisions (Berg, 2007). Bone et al. (2014) demonstrated that discriminatory practices can harm self-concept, resulting in feelings of constraint, isolation, discrimination, and subservience, as well as decreased self-esteem, autonomy, and efficacy. Therefore:

H9: Customer evaluations towards marketplace exclusion is negatively associated with perceived autonomy.

H10: Customer evaluations towards marketplace exclusion is negatively associated perceived competence.

H11: Lower perceived autonomy is associated with lower psychological well-being.

H12: Lower perceived competence is associated with lower psychological well-being.

Relatedness, a key human need for belonging and secure connections, involves feelings of closeness, approval, and interconnection with others (Baumeister and Leary, 2007; Ryan, 1995; Gao et al., 2020). These feelings are vital for building positive relationships and emotional bonds. Research by Guo et al. (2013) shows that involving consumers as co-producers in service experiences enhances well-being, emphasizing the value of social connection. Similarly, Guevarra and Howell (2015) associate experiential products that foster social connections with

improved well-being. Socially excluded consumers often seek to fulfill relatedness needs by forming new connections and joining brand communities (Rawat, 2022; Snyder & Newman, 2019). Thus, we hypothesize:

H13: Customer evaluations towards marketplace exclusion are associated with lower perceived relatedness.

H14: Lower perceived relatedness is associated with lower psychological well-being.

3. Research Methodology and Findings

Social interactions significantly influence consumer behavior, with individuals often conforming to the preferences of referent others, to gain acceptance within their social group (Venkatesan, 1966; Lascu & Zinkhan, 1999), a phenomenon particularly relevant in the context of marketplace exclusion. This study examines consumer attitudes toward marketplace exclusion experienced by men from night-time leisure venues due to the NEWFC door policy. It explores the influence of this exclusion on their need for group belonging, conformity behaviors, self-esteem, and the fulfilment of fundamental psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness), ultimately impacting overall well-being. By analyzing consumer evaluations, the research aims to reveal the psychological processes involved when well-being is threatened by specific marketplace exclusion practices to inform strategies promoting a more inclusive and psychologically healthy consumer experience.

Beyond government regulations, clubs in many countries self-regulate night-time leisure spaces to control access, establish ambiance, status, and order, aiming for an upgraded nightlife experience but often becoming more conflict-prone (May & Chaplin, 2008; Koren, 2024; Hobbs et al., 2003; Chatterton & Hollands, 2003). These profit-driven measures, encompassing entry prerequisites and subtle discriminatory practices, exploit prevailing social disparities, including gender, age, appearance, social class, ethnicity, race, and sexuality, perpetuating inequalities, and exclusions that impact customers both socially and spatially (Hollands, 2002; Grazian, 2009). The NEWFC door policy in Turkish night-time leisure spaces aims to achieve gender parity, resulting in the discrimination and exclusion of men. Due to the stereotype that unaccompanied men harass women, many men encounter discrimination and express concerns about encountering door supervisor, even if not outright rejected, at popular clubs, while female visitors are typically not denied access at the door, especially when unaccompanied by men (Boogaarts, 2008). Such discriminatory practices can heighten the social expectations on men to obtain a female companion for entry, influencing their social interactions and financial decisions, and reinforcing gender biases. Consequently, the pressure to seek or impress these companions may result in financial strains, social obstacles, and difficulties gaining entry, causing disappointment or exclusion, and impacting self-esteem and overall well-being. This study further delves into the relationship between conformity and group belonging, particularly in the context of discriminatory NEWFC policy. Marketplace exclusion is hypothesized to trigger a cascade effect, affecting self-determination needs, self-esteem, and conformity behaviors, potentially leading to adverse effects on psychological well-being, as depicted in Figure 1. Based on studies (Patrick et al., 2007; Wehmeyer and Shogren, 2017) suggesting that younger individuals tend to experience higher levels of self-determination needs fulfilment, and thus may face increased challenges such as exclusion. Also, Prior research suggests that younger adults may be more sensitive to interpersonal and institutional exclusion due to ongoing identity formation, whereas older individuals may draw on greater socio-emotional regulation capacities (Carstensen, 2006; Steinberg, 2008).

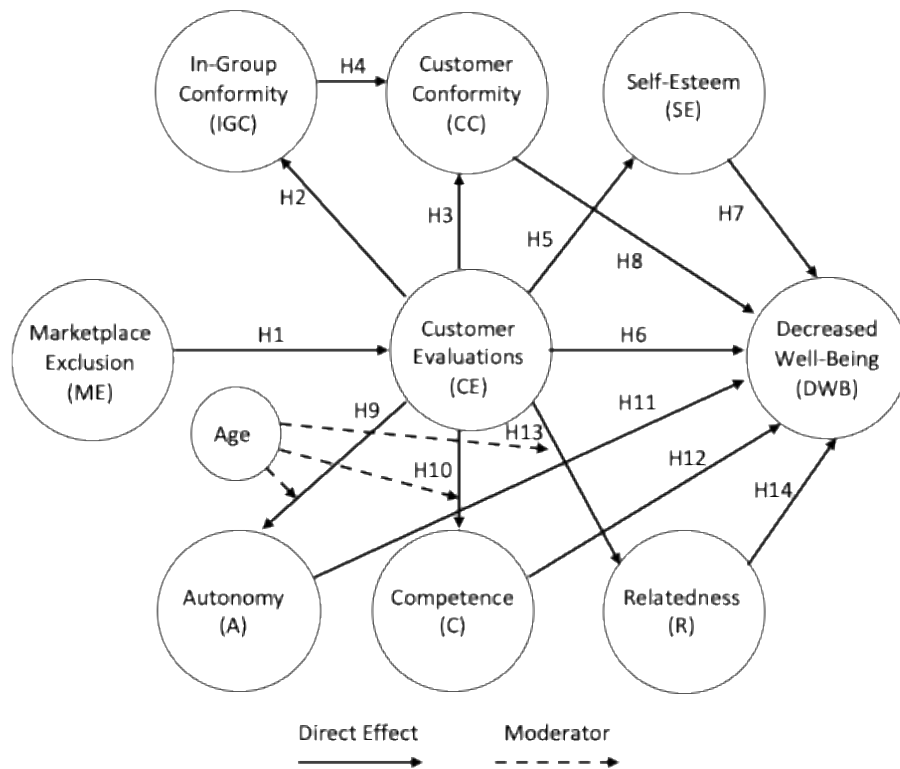
Therefore, age is included as a moderator in hypotheses H9, H10, and H13 to enhance the model's accuracy. This hypothesis suggests that as customer age decreases, the impact of customer evaluations regarding marketplace exclusion on perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness intensifies.

H9a: Age moderates the relationship between customer evaluations of marketplace exclusion and perceived autonomy.

H10a: Age moderates the relationship between customer evaluations of marketplace exclusion and perceived competence.

H13a: Age moderates the relationship between customer evaluations of marketplace exclusion and perceived relatedness.

Figure 1: Analytical Model: Marketplace Exclusion and Well-being



3.1. Sample and Data Collection

Because youth is subjective and young people often adopt different age categories such as biological, legal, or lifestyle age for various purposes and contexts, there is no universally accepted international definition. While the United Nations defines youth as individuals aged 15 to 24 for statistical purposes, the UN-Habitat (2012) extends this range to include those aged

15 to 32, recognizing the flexibility of the category. In accordance with the latter definition and considering the age limit of 18 in entertainment venues in Türkiye, the study population comprises male nightclub customers aged 18-32 residing in urban and suburban areas. The Address-Based Population Registration System (Turkstat, 2023) reported a population of 12,359,275 males aged 15-34 residing in urban and suburban areas as of 2022. While including these statistics could potentially increase the population size and allow for a larger sample size, due to restrictions in accessing data on the size of the 15-18 and 32-34 age groups that must be excluded from the primary population and sample calculation, the population size (N) is determined to be 12,359,275 individuals. To ensure a 5% error tolerance at a 95% confidence level for this population size, a minimum sample size of 385 individuals is required.

Data collection was conducted by a professional, third-party survey company contracted with external funding. The researchers instructed the firm to use a time-location sampling design in nightlife districts across Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. Following our protocol, interviewers performed intercept surveys during both peak and off-peak hours (18:00–02:00) across weekdays and weekends in order to maximize variation in participant characteristics. Consistent with our instructions, they used a systematic approach by inviting male individuals aged 18–32 within predefined public areas surrounding nightlife venues. Participation was voluntary, and no incentives were offered. These individuals may experience stronger negative emotions, lower well-being, or distinct coping strategies compared with men who continue to frequent nightlife areas. Therefore, the present findings may represent a conservative estimate of the psychological effects associated with marketplace exclusion.

To ensure the transparency and robustness of the measurement model, the study followed a multi-step scale development and validation process. Constructs for self-esteem as well as autonomy, competence, and relatedness were adapted from established scales grounded in the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Items assessing marketplace exclusion, customer evaluations, and customer conformity were developed for the specific context of the NEWFC policy following established guidelines for scale development (DeVellis, 2017). The development of context-specific items proceeded through (1) conceptual domain specification, (2) item generation by the researchers based on the relevant literature discussed above and, (3) pre-testing to refine clarity and content coverage. Content validity was evaluated using expert ratings of relevance and representativeness. All scales were translated into Turkish and then back-translated into English following Brislin's (1986) procedure to ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence. Discrepancies were resolved through iterative discussions among translators and domain experts. Based on these, survey form was generated through Google Forms, all employing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). To assess the validity and reliability of the scales for the present research context, a pre-test was conducted with 54 participants using the questionnaire provided in the appendix A. For the items measuring perceptions of marketplace exclusion related to the NEWFC policy, all skewness and kurtosis values fell within the acceptable range of $+1.5 / -1.5$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014), indicating that the normality assumption was met for Likert-type items. To examine construct validity, an exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation was performed. A high Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value indicates that each variable in the scale is adequately predicted by the others, whereas values close to zero suggest insufficient correlation structure, making factor analysis inappropriate. As noted by Çokluk et al. (2012), factor analysis should not proceed when KMO

< 0.50. In this study, all communality values exceeded 0.50, and the computed KMO and Bartlett's test values (KMO = 0.831, Bartlett's test = 926.27, $p = .000$) demonstrated the adequacy of the data for factor analysis. Following factor extraction, a reliability assessment using Cronbach's alpha yielded a value of 0.96, indicating excellent internal consistency (Kalaycı, 2010). Based on the results of this pre-test, the questionnaire in its current form was found to be statistically appropriate for use in the main study. Accordingly, data was collected from 490 individuals, with demographic details provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Participants

Age		Mean=25.58 Standard Deviation=3.982	
		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	490	100
	Female		
Marital Status	Married	125	25.5
	Single	357	72.9
	Not specified	8	1.6
Education Level	Elementary school	19	3.9
	Intermediate school	77	15.7
	High school	205	41.8
	Graduate degree	184	37.6
	Postgraduate degree	5	1.0
Income Status	Low	235	48.0
	Middle	191	39.9
	High	64	13.1
Employment	Employed in public sector	54	11.0
	Employed in private sector	158	32.2
	Self-employed	104	21.2
	Unemployed	152	31.0
	Student	22	4.5

3.2. Data Analyses and Results

SPSS and SmartPLS were used to analyze the data. All Likert scale measurements showed skewness and kurtosis within the normal range of +1.5/-1.5, ensuring normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014). To test the construct validity, exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation was employed (Watkins, 2018, p. 220). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett test results (KMO=0.928, Bartlett=15106.76 $df=1431$ $p=0.000$), with communalities above 0.5, indicate the suitability of the factor analysis. The factor loadings, ranging from 0.679 to 0.897 (Table 2), were deemed satisfactory (Hulland, 1999). With VIF values ranging from 1.262 to 3.178, the model was found to be free from collinearity problems (Hair et al., 2019), meeting the set threshold. The measurement model's reliability and validity are assessed through composite reliability ($CR>0.70$) and average variance extracted ($AVE>0.50$) (Wong, 2013; Ramayah et al., 2018;

Henseler et al., 2009). The analysis achieved good reliability (CR:0.821-0.931) and convergent validity (AVE:0.550-0.756), with all values exceeding the recommended thresholds (Hair et al., 2011). Exceeding the anticipated minimum of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2019), Cronbach's alpha values between 0.626 and 0.910 indicate satisfactory internal consistency.

Table 2: Factor Loadings, Construct Validity, and Reliability Statistics

Factors		Factor Loadings
Decreased Psychological Well-being (DWB) AVE=0.651 Cronbach's alpha=0.910 CR=0.929	Being turned away from a club due to a NEWFC policy damages my self-confidence.	0.833
	I feel inadequate when I'm turned away from a club with a NEWFC policy.	0.820
	Getting denied entry to a club with a NEWFC policy makes me feel like I have failed.	0.819
	Being excluded from a club with a NEWFC policy makes me feel useless	0.819
	Being denied entry to a club with a NEWFC policy embarrasses me.	0.813
	Getting turned away from a club with a NEWFC policy makes me feel inferior.	0.783
	Being rejected from a club with a NEWFC policy makes me doubt my worth.	0.757
Self-esteem (SE) AVE=0.582 Cronbach's alpha=0.821 CR=0.875	Despite being turned away from a club with a NEWFC policy, I still take pride in myself.	0.810
	Despite being turned away from a club with a NEWFC policy, I still believe in my positive qualities.	0.796
	I am just as capable as many others.	0.770
	Overall, I feel content with myself.	0.751
	Even after being denied entry to a club with a NEWFC policy, I still hold a positive outlook on myself.	0.681
Relatedness (R) AVE=0.756 Cronbach's alpha=0.678 CR=0.861	People in my life care about me.	0.883
	The people around me are friendly.	0.856
Marketplace Exclusion (ME) AVE=0.679 Cronbach's alpha=0.905 CR=0.927	Customer service practices can be discriminatory based on gender.	0.857
	Gender-based discrimination in the marketplace can occur in products and services.	0.852
	Gender-based discrimination and unfair marketing practices can occur in the marketplace.	0.845
	Gender-based discriminatory pricing practices can exist in the marketplace.	0.838
	Marketing practices can discriminate based on economic factors.	0.784
	I anticipate that businesses will take measures to prevent discrimination and exclusion of consumers from the market.	0.765
In-group Conformity (IGC) AVE=0.794 Cronbach's alpha=0.707	When my immediate circle approves my consumer preferences, it makes me feel like I belong.	0.868
	Adhering to socially accepted consumption behaviors helps me feel more connected to my community.	0.867

CR=0.878	I think socially unacceptable consumption behaviors can lead to social exclusion, which makes sense to me.	0.784
Customer Conformity (CC) AVE=0.732 Cronbach's alpha=0.908 CR=0.931	I bring a female partner to a club with a NEWFC policy to keep things smooth with those around me.	0.897
	I seek out a female companion to accompany me to popular clubs with a NEWFC policy to ensure my consumption habits are approved.	0.881
	I strive to make female friends to gain acceptance at clubs with a NEWFC policy.	0.879
	I am ready to spend extra, like covering the expenses of a female friend, to gain acceptance at clubs with a NEWFC policy.	0.845
	I develop positive connections with women who can accompany me to gain entry to clubs with a NEWFC policy.	0.770
Competence (C) AVE=0.726 Cronbach's alpha=0.626 CR=0.841	Most of the time, I do not feel very competent.	0.884
	I do not often get the chance to demonstrate my skills in my life.	0.819
Customer Evaluations (CE) AVE=0.587 Cronbach's alpha=0.859 CR=0.895	I protest against businesses that I perceive as discriminatory by boycotting and posting on social media.	0.790
	I avoid buying from businesses that exclude certain types of consumers.	0.775
	Discriminatory marketing practices worsen social inequality.	0.770
	I am willing to spend extra on products or services from businesses that value inclusivity and equality.	0.767
	Discriminatory marketing practices escalate social unrest.	0.755
	I appreciate businesses that openly share their inclusive practices with customers.	0.742
Autonomy (A) AVE=0.543 Cronbach's alpha=0.727 CR=0.830	Those familiar with me often say that I am good at what I do.	0.810
	People I interact with in daily life usually take my feelings into account.	0.748
	In my daily routines, I find myself frequently following instructions.	0.704
	I freely share my thoughts and ideas.	0.679

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio from the correlation matrix assesses the discriminant validity of the measurement model. A threshold below 0.90 or 0.85 is recommended for more conceptually distinct constructs (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2015). Table 3 confirms that discriminant validity is achieved, indicating the suitability of the data for structural analysis.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity - Heterotrait-Monotrait

	A	CE	C	CC	IGC	ME	R	SE	DWB
A									
CE	0.282								
C	0.097	0.306							
CC	0.236	0.685	0.478						
IGC	0.219	0.677	0.424	0.651					

ME	0.334	0.718	0.270	0.609	0.525		
R	0.788	0.272	0.074	0.170	0.148	0.296	
SE	0.827	0.215	0.101	0.113	0.139	0.306	0.751
DWB	0.165	0.248	0.660	0.525	0.342	0.194	0.076
							0.113

The bootstrapping technique was used with 5000 sub-samples ($p < 0.05$ and $t\text{-value} > 1.96$), and the significance of the path coefficient values was examined (Hair et al., 2022; Becker et al., 2023). The path analysis results, presented in Table 4, indicate that all hypotheses except H7 and H14 are supported. While the direct path for H7 and H14 was non-significant, the overall analysis revealed a strong and significant total indirect effect of customer evaluations on decreased well-being. This finding suggests the influence of relatedness on well-being is not absent, but is instead part of a full mediation process. Specifically, the variance associated with decreased well being is primarily accounted for by the significant parallel pathways, such as H12 ($C \rightarrow DWB$), thereby reducing the unique predictive power of relatedness when all mediators are analyzed simultaneously. Furthermore, the results indicate that exclusion due to a NEWFC policy prompts customers to either conform to the rules or avoid such venues altogether, opting instead for more inclusive alternatives, which ultimately led to lower well-being. Exclusion evaluations boost in-group tendencies, leading to a focus on approved purchases and greater conformity, prioritizing finding a female companion to navigate such policies, reflecting a desire for social acceptance through consumption habits. Exclusion-induced conformity leads to lower psychological well-being. Rejection from a NEWFC club diminishes self-confidence and fosters feelings of inadequacy and isolation. Exclusion intensifies the quest for self-determination needs like autonomy, competence, and relatedness, with age moderating this effect, suggesting a more significant impact of exclusion on these needs in younger individuals. However, it is worth noting that only the needs for autonomy and competence significantly account for the subsequent decline in psychological well-being. Path analysis yielded an unexpected result: neither self-esteem nor the need for relatedness directly influenced the decline in psychological well-being. This challenges existing assumptions in the field and highlights the need for further research to elucidate the underlying mechanisms.

Table 4: Results of the Structural Model Path Analysis

Hypotheses	Relationship	Path coefficient	Standard deviation	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	ME→CE	0.640	0.030	21.280	0.000	Supported
H2	CE→IGC	0.864	0.037	15.401	0.000	Supported
H3	CE→CC	0.427	0.051	8.319	0.000	Supported
H4	IGC→CC	0.327	0.052	6.307	0.000	Supported
H5	CE→SE	0.168	0.060	2.821	0.005	Supported
H6	CE→DWB	-0.110	0.049	2.260	0.024	Supported
H7	SE→DWB	-0.114	0.059	1.918	0.055	Not supported
H8	CC→DWB	0.394	0.044	8.873	0.000	Supported
H9	CE→A	0.347	0.052	4.765	0.000	Supported
H10	CE→C	0.230	0.046	4.976	0.000	Supported
H11	A→DWB	0.141	0.053	2.687	0.007	Supported

H12	C->DWB	0.371	0.040	9.277	0.000	Supported
H13	CE->R	0.232	0.054	4.286	0.000	Supported
H14	R->DWB	-0.025	0.051	0.500	0.617	Not supported
Moderators						
H9a	Age x CE->A	-0.161	0.042	3.857	0.000	Supported
H10a	Age x CE->C	0.130	0.046	2.804	0.005	Supported
H13a	Age x CE->R	-0.206	0.041	4.973	0.000	Supported

To evaluate the quality of the model, PLSpredict analysis was conducted, employing training and holdout samples to assess predictions derived from estimations of the PLS path model (Shmueli et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2019, 2022). The Q2 value, which should surpass zero, serves as a measure of predictive accuracy, with values of 0, 0.25, and 0.50 denoting different levels of predictive significance in the PLS-path model, classified as small, medium, and large respectively (Geisser, 1974; Shmueli et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2019). The Q2 values in this study, ranging from 0.040 to 0.404, signify established predictive relevance. Additionally, the R2 measurement is utilized to gauge the model's explanatory power, with values closer to 1 indicating better performance (Shmueli & Koppius, 2011; Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2009) and values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak respectively. Furthermore, f2 effect size, according to Cohen's (1988) criteria, quantifies the magnitude of an exogenous variable's impact on an endogenous variable's R2, with effect sizes categorized as low ($f^2 \geq 0.02$), moderate ($f^2 \geq 0.15$), or large ($f^2 \geq 0.35$). Table 5 illustrates the satisfactory predictive power of the model based on Q2, R2, and f2 values.

Table 5: Prediction power of the model.

	Q ² values	R ² values	f ² values
Customer Evaluations	0.404	0.409	CE->IGC 0.468
Customer Conformity	0.281	0.447	CE->CC 0.225
In-group Conformity	0.194	0.319	CE->SE 0.029
Self-Esteem	0.042	0.028	CE->A 0.064
Relatedness	0.064	0.091	CE->C 0.055
Autonomy	0.066	0.082	CE->R 0.057
Competence	0.051	0.086	CE->DWB 0.012
Decreased Well-Being	0.039	0.373	IGC->CC 0.132
			CC->DWB 0.140
			SE->DWB 0.011
			A->DWB 0.018
			C->DWB 0.188
			R->DWB 0.001

Model fit is evaluated using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and Normed Fit Indices (NFI). An SRMR below 0.10 and an NFI approaching 1 signify an acceptable model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1998; Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Ding et al., 1995). In addition to a Chi-

square of 2897.409, the SRMR value of 0.068 and NFI value of 0.757 demonstrate an acceptable model fit.

A simple-slope analysis was conducted to examine how age moderates the associations between exclusion perceptions and the three basic psychological needs. The conditional effects at ± 1 SD of age revealed meaningful divergence across age groups. For autonomy, exclusion perceptions exerted a substantially stronger negative effect among younger participants ($\beta = 0.408$) compared to those at mean age ($\beta = 0.247$) and older participants ($\beta = 0.087$), indicating that younger individuals' sense of volition and self-directedness is more vulnerable to exclusion experiences. For competence, the pattern reversed; the effect of exclusion perceptions on competence was weakest among younger individuals ($\beta = 0.100$) and increased at mean age ($\beta = 0.230$), reaching its strongest level among older adults ($\beta = 0.360$). This suggests that older individuals interpret exclusion as particularly detrimental to their sense of capability. For relatedness, the pattern mirrored autonomy, with exclusion having a strong negative impact among younger participants ($\beta = 0.438$), a moderate impact at mean age ($\beta = 0.232$), and a minimal effect among older adults ($\beta = 0.027$). Taken together, these results demonstrate that age systematically shapes the psychological consequences of exclusion, heightening younger individuals' sensitivity in terms of autonomy and relatedness, while amplifying older individuals' vulnerability in terms of competence need satisfaction. Table 6 depicts the result of simple slope analysis.

Table 6: Simple slope results across age groups

	CE --> A	CE --> C	CE --> R
Age at +1 SD	0.087	0.360	0.027
Age at -1 SD	0.408	0.100	0.438
Age at Mean	0.247	0.230	0.232

4. Discussions and Conclusion

This study explores the social dynamics of consumer behavior by examining the impact of the NEWFC policy on male customer well-being and coping mechanisms. It delves into the multifaceted effects of marketplace exclusion on men's psychological and social experiences, particularly the emotional consequences of difficulty finding female companionship. By highlighting how exclusion can lead to conformity, decreased self-esteem, and diminished self-determination needs, this research offers valuable insights for businesses, policymakers, and society at large.

Echoing prior research on marketplace exclusion (e.g., Hutton, 2019; Williams and Henderson, 2012; Rosenbaum et al., 2020), this study reveals that the exclusion of men due a NEWFC policy hinders their social engagement, leading to emotional distress, practical difficulties, and ultimately, a decline in well-being. Furthermore, these findings suggest that men may develop diverse coping mechanisms in response to such exclusion. Some individuals may conform to social norms or venue policies and make financial sacrifices to find a female companion for such experiences, as a strategy of resilience, akin to how disadvantaged groups adopt subservient consumption to maintain relationships with authority figures (Saren et al. 2019). Building on research that links increased in-group conformity with consumer conformity after exclusion (Rawat et al., 2022), the present findings suggest that male customers excluded due to the NEWFC policy may conform to group norms to alleviate exclusion with a motivation for social acceptance (Burnkrant & Coisineau, 1975; Allen, 1965). In contrast, individuals whose

choices are restricted or usurped may actively resist these practices or pursue alternative options by seeking out inclusive venues (Venkatesan, 1966; Chatterton & Hollands, 2003). The nature of social exclusion shapes coping effectiveness.

The discrepancy in self-esteem levels between inclusion and exclusion scenarios stem from the adverse impact of exclusion on self-esteem, rather than from inclusion bolstering it (Berstein et al., 2013). Arslan's (2019) findings underscore the significance of self-esteem by demonstrating that social exclusion adversely affects both self-esteem and well-being, ultimately diminishing life satisfaction. Supporting these findings, and existing research on self-esteem's vulnerability to social exclusion (Leary, 1990; Leary et al., 1995), this study finds that the NEWFC policy's exclusion of solo male customers appear to be associated with a decline in their self-esteem. Unlike females who gain easier entry, denied males perceive this as a personal rejection, lowering their self-esteem. Interestingly, contrary to prior research suggesting a connection between self-esteem, social exclusion, and well-being, present findings indicate that a decrease in self-esteem among excluded young males does not translate to diminished psychological well-being (H7). This points to a more complex relationship among these variables, which could be influenced by factors such as sample size or cultural contexts.

This study demonstrates the negative effects of discriminatory marketplace exclusion on perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness, leading to feelings of humiliation, worthlessness, and frustration. These feelings, in turn, can negatively influence customer evaluations and ultimately shape their consumption preferences and perceptions of companies (May & Chaplin, 2008). Notably, the decrease in perceived autonomy may be particularly detrimental. It can leave male customers feeling like they have no control over their choices, which undermines a sense of well-being, supporting prior research (e.g. Legault, 2020; Markus & Schwartz, 2010; André et al., 2018; Bone et al., 2014) that suggests that a decline in perceived autonomy can negatively impact overall well-being.

This study reveals that NEWFC policy can diminish excluded male customers' perceived competence, particularly regarding social interaction and relationship building within the marketplace. This decline in perceived competence may contribute to a decrease in overall psychological well-being. Research suggests that competence fosters well-being by enabling consumers to achieve desired outcomes (Reis et al., 2000; Sharma et al., 2017; Sheldon and Niemiec, 2006). Conversely, limited perceived self-efficacy and competence stemming from discrimination can lead to feelings of devaluation, isolation, and powerlessness, potentially undermining well-being (Rigakos, 2008; Bone et al, 2014).

While local urban spaces with exclusive segmentation may foster in-group bonding among their members (Grazian, 2009), excluded customers, seeking a sense of belonging, may actively pursue alternative avenues to forge new connections (Rawat, 2022; Snyder & Newman, 2019). Contrary to existing research suggesting a positive link between relatedness and well-being (e.g., Guo et al., 2013; Guevarra & Howell, 2015), this study does not find a direct relationship between perceived relatedness and a decline in psychological well-being (H14). This unexpected result highlights the need for further research to elucidate the underlying mechanisms. While a larger sample size could potentially yield different results, it is also possible that cultural variations and diverse approaches to social relationships play a role. Additional investigation is necessary to fully understand how perceptions of relatedness truly impact well-being.

Self-determination theory posits a developmental trajectory for autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs, which are fundamental for well-being (Dunn & Thrall, 2012). The impact of age on the elements of self-determination may vary across age demographics. Prior research suggests that younger individuals have a heightened need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Patrick et al., 2007; Wehmeyer & Shogren, 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2000). The present study expands upon existing knowledge by investigating how age influences the relationship between customer perceptions of marketplace exclusion and self-determination needs. Focusing on young male consumers, this study finds that age moderates (H9a, H10a, H13a) the connection between perceived marketplace exclusion and evaluations of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These findings corroborate previous research illustrating age's moderating effect on self-determination theory among young individuals (e.g., Mackenzie et al., 2018; Jung & Kang, 2022; Gilal et al., 2020). Younger males with typically active lifestyles may experience a more pronounced decline in relatedness due to exclusion, whereas older adults with potentially less active lifestyles might be less affected. This corresponds with research suggesting that advanced age is positively associated with a higher likelihood of eudaimonic living among older adults compared to their younger and middle-aged counterparts, despite the eldest demographic displaying the highest levels of life satisfaction alongside the lowest levels of purpose and growth relative to their younger counterparts (Mackenzie et al., 2018). Furthermore, these insights have practical implications for policymakers and venue managers. First, interventions aiming to reduce perceived exclusion (e.g., transparent entry policies, staff training, communication strategies) may need to be tailored more carefully for younger consumers, who are more psychologically responsive to exclusion cues. Second, outreach campaigns or harm-reduction strategies targeting mental well-being may be more effective if calibrated to age-specific sensitivities. Lastly, understanding age-differentiated responses can help nightlife operators anticipate how exclusion policies may influence different consumer segments' willingness to participate in nightlife economies.

Consumer well-being is a multifaceted concept, encompassing material, psychological, social, and physical aspects (Eshaghi et al., 2023). Social integration and belonging, fostered by acceptance and coherence, are crucial for individual and collective well-being (Sirgy et al., 2007). Social exclusion not only reduces well-being and happiness by cultivating anticipation of future rejection and a sense of not belonging (Sjåstad et al., 2021) but also affects psychological needs and driving specific consumption responses (Yang, 2019), thereby detrimentally affecting consumer well-being. Consistent with these suggestions, the present findings indicate that exclusion from entertainment venues, by undermining social needs, can negatively affect male consumers' psychological well-being, leading to feelings of rejection, isolation, and stress, particularly among those who highly depend on social acceptance, ultimately reducing life satisfaction and happiness.

This research contributes to the literature by examining marketplace exclusion specifically experienced by male customers denied entry to entertainment venues due to a specific policy. While existing research explores the impact of marketplace exclusion on customer well-being, this study goes beyond by investigating its effects on a wider array of psychological factors. Examining the multifaceted consequences of marketplace exclusion, particularly in entertainment venues, this study explores how exclusion not only affects self-esteem, in-group tendencies, and conformity, but also disrupts self-determination needs and ultimately diminishes psychological well-being. This disruption can manifest as a shift towards

authoritative performances (conforming to specific group norms) or seeking alternative venues, highlighting the role of consumption in both identity formation and social communication (Arnould & Price, 2003; Bock, 1993; Baudrillard, 1998). Excluded men not only experience direct rejection but also anticipate future surveillance and judgment in similar settings, prompting conformity to dominant social expectations such as securing a female companion as a means of avoiding shame or further marginalization. This anticipatory self-monitoring reflects Foucault's argument that disciplinary power operates not through overt coercion, but by inducing individuals to internalize and reproduce norms themselves. Similarly, Lacan's (1977) theory of the gaze offers a psychoanalytic view of objectification, suggesting that subjectivity is formed by internalizing the recognition and judgment of others, not just by being seen.

Several limitations should be acknowledged to contextualise the findings. First, the study is situated within a specific cultural setting, urban nightlife environments in Türkiye, which may limit generalizability. Cultural norms surrounding masculinity, public leisure, and authority figures vary cross-nationally, and exclusion may be interpreted differently across societies. Second, the study examines a single policy framework (NEWFC), which restricts the ability to extrapolate findings to other types of consumption-related exclusion. Future research should consider multiple policy contexts to understand how different forms of exclusion shape consumer experiences. Third, all focal variables rely on self-report, cross-sectional measures, which are susceptible to perceptual biases and social desirability effects. Taken together, these limitations highlight that the contributions of this study should be interpreted as context-specific rather than universal. They also provide avenues for future work to further develop a nuanced understanding of marketplace exclusion across cultures, policies, and methodological approaches.

Future research can delve into the lasting effects of marketplace exclusion, exploring how it shapes consumer behavior and identity over time. Additionally, cross-cultural comparisons can illuminate how these psychological consequences vary across different cultures, alongside demographic factors beyond age. While this study focused on the exclusion and psychological impact on only male customers, it remains unclear whether women genuinely benefit from this policy or if their experiences are shaped by other forms of objectification, surveillance, or discomfort within the nightclub environment. Investigating how women interpret and navigate this inclusion dynamics could offer a more holistic understanding of the gendered implications of such policies. Comparative studies exploring both male and female perspectives would contribute to a more balanced and critical evaluation of NEWFC's broader social effects. Given the cross-sectional and self-report nature of the data, the relationships identified in this study are associative rather than causal. Although PLS-SEM allows for testing theoretically driven directional paths, it does not establish temporal or experimental causality. Therefore, longitudinal, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches could explore whether the effects of diminished self-esteem and weakened perceived relatedness manifest delayed or indirect impacts on well-being, such as through social withdrawal, cynicism, increased reliance on maladaptive coping strategies, or through the subjective meanings individuals assign to social connection in discriminatory settings, offering richer insight into why these variables may not directly influence well-being in certain groups.

The implications of this study should be interpreted with caution given the cultural and regulatory particularities of Türkiye's nightlife sector. Practices of venue entry, perceptions of

fairness, masculine status dynamics, and interactions with security personnel are deeply embedded in local norms and may differ substantially from those in other cultural contexts. Moreover, the NEWFC policy represents a specific regulatory configuration that may not be directly comparable to exclusion mechanisms in other countries. Therefore, the recommendations offered, such as the need for transparent gatekeeping procedures, staff training, or communication strategies, apply most directly to settings similar to Turkish nightlife environments. Policymakers and managers in other national contexts should consider how local cultural norms, regulatory frameworks, and consumer expectations shape exclusion-related experiences before drawing parallels or implementing similar interventions.

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Extended Summary

Examining the Impact of 'No Entry Without a Female Companion' (NEWFC) Policy on Young Male Consumers: Self-determination Needs, In-group Tendency, Social Conformity, and Well-being

This study explores the psychological and social consequences of discriminatory entry policies in nightlife venues, with particular attention to the “no entry without a female companion” (NEWFC) rule commonly practiced in Türkiye. Although much of the literature on marketplace exclusion examines the disadvantages faced by women, racial minorities, and marginalized consumer groups, the exclusion of men under specific gendered policies remains largely unaddressed. This research responds to that gap by examining how NEWFC practices affect young male consumers’ self-esteem, conformity, fulfillment of self-determination needs, and overall well-being. In doing so, it contributes to wider debates on consumer vulnerability, equality in public spaces, and the psychosocial effects of exclusionary market practices. Marketplace exclusion is a multifaceted phenomenon encompassing economic, cultural, and psychological barriers that limit individuals’ ability to participate in consumption spaces. In nightclubs, the NEWFC policy aims to achieve gender balance and provide a sense of safety for female patrons. Yet, this rule also marginalizes men by assuming they may pose a threat if unaccompanied, reinforcing social stereotypes that stigmatize masculinity. Drawing on theories of consumer identity, conformity, and self-determination, the study develops a comprehensive model to analyze how exclusionary practices shape consumer experiences. Central to the conceptual framework is the idea that exclusion disrupts individuals’ opportunities to perform their identities authentically and authoritatively in consumption settings, while simultaneously intensifying pressures to conform to group norms in order to regain social belonging. Self-determination theory further suggests that exclusion undermines essential psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are foundational to well-being. The research adopts a quantitative design with data collected from 490 young men between the ages of 18 and 32 in Türkiye’s three largest cities: Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. The sample represents a critical demographic undergoing identity formation and social integration, making them particularly vulnerable to exclusionary experiences. Established scales for self-esteem and self-determination needs were adapted alongside researcher-developed items on marketplace exclusion and conformity. Factor analysis and reliability testing confirmed the validity of the constructs, and structural equation modeling was used to test fourteen hypotheses, with age examined as a potential moderator. The findings reveal that exclusion under the NEWFC policy exerts profound psychological and behavioral effects. Exclusion significantly increased in-group tendencies and conformity behaviors, with many men reporting that they sought female companions, offered to pay companions’ expenses, or adjusted their consumption choices to meet the policy’s requirements. These behaviors underscore how exclusion fuels conformity, reshaping consumption as a strategy for regaining acceptance and belonging. Exclusion also led to a measurable decline in self-esteem, although this variable did not directly predict reduced well-being, suggesting the existence of cultural or situational buffers that mitigate its effects. More importantly, exclusion diminished participants’ perceptions of autonomy and competence, both of which strongly predicted decreased psychological well-being. Interestingly, while exclusion lowered feelings of relatedness, this factor did not significantly influence well-being in the model, a finding that diverges from prior research emphasizing the importance of belonging for happiness. Age moderated these relationships, with younger men displaying greater sensitivity to declines in autonomy, competence, and relatedness when excluded, indicating that younger consumers are particularly vulnerable to the psychological costs of discriminatory practices. The results highlight how discriminatory door policies not only regulate physical access to nightlife spaces but also shape psychological outcomes and social dynamics. Consistent with earlier work on exclusion, the study shows that men who are turned away from venues often experience shame, frustration, and diminished self-worth. To cope with these challenges, many adopt conformity strategies, thereby reinforcing gendered stereotypes and perpetuating the very inequalities that policies like NEWFC claim to address. The findings also resonate with theoretical perspectives that view social exclusion as a mechanism of surveillance and discipline. Men denied entry internalize the scrutiny associated with nightclub doors and adjust their behavior preemptively, aligning with wider theories of disciplinary power and the internalized gaze. The study contributes to consumer research in several important ways. First, it introduces a novel context by analyzing the exclusion of men from leisure venues, a dimension rarely examined in discussions of gender and marketplace discrimination. Second, it extends the application of self-determination theory to the study of consumer exclusion, showing how autonomy and competence are particularly vulnerable in discriminatory consumption settings and how their erosion contributes to declines in psychological well-being. Third, the research demonstrates the role of conformity as both a coping mechanism and a perpetuator of exclusionary structures, underscoring the complex ways in which marginalized consumers navigate discriminatory practices. Policy and managerial implications are equally significant. Venue operators and policymakers should recognize that seemingly neutral or protective rules can create psychological harm and reinforce inequality. While intended to improve the nightlife experience for women, the NEWFC policy stigmatizes men, erodes their sense of autonomy and competence, and pressures them into conformity behaviors that distort social interactions. Inclusive approaches that ensure safety without exclusionary requirements

could enhance social cohesion and improve consumer well-being across genders. The study also raises questions for future research. The unexpected lack of a direct relationship between relatedness and well-being points to the need for further cross-cultural investigation into how different societies value social connection. Similarly, the weak link between self-esteem and well-being in this context challenges assumptions drawn largely from Western samples. Longitudinal and qualitative research could explore whether the psychological costs of exclusion manifest indirectly or with delay, for instance through social withdrawal, cynicism, or reliance on maladaptive coping strategies. Overall, the findings make clear that discriminatory marketplace practices like NEWFC have broad and detrimental consequences that extend far beyond access to leisure spaces. They shape how individuals see themselves, how they relate to others, and how they navigate consumer culture under conditions of stigma and constraint. By demonstrating that exclusion diminishes autonomy and competence, drives conformity, and ultimately undermines psychological well-being, this research calls for a rethinking of discriminatory entry practices in favor of inclusive, equitable approaches that respect the dignity and well-being of all consumers.

Appendix A: Sources of scale items.

Scale	Item	Source
Decreased Psychological Well-being (DWB)	Being turned away from a club due to a NEWFC policy damages my self-confidence.	Adapted from Rosenberg (1965)
	I feel inadequate when I'm turned away from a club with a NEWFC policy.	
	Getting denied entry to a club with a NEWFC policy makes me feel like I have failed.	
	Being excluded from a club with a NEWFC policy makes me feel useless	
	Being denied entry to a club with a NEWFC policy embarrasses me.	
	Getting turned away from a club with a NEWFC policy makes me feel inferior.	
	Being rejected from a club with a NEWFC policy makes me doubt my worth.	
Self-esteem (SE)	Despite being turned away from a club with a NEWFC policy, I still take pride in myself.	Adapted from Rosenberg (1965)
	Despite being turned away from a club with a NEWFC policy, I still believe in my positive qualities.	
	I am just as capable as many others.	
	Overall, I feel content with myself.	
	Even after being denied entry to a club with a NEWFC policy, I still hold a positive outlook on myself.	
Relatedness (R)	People in my life care about me.	Deci and Ryan (2000)
	The people around me are friendly.	
Marketplace Exclusion (ME)	Customer service practices can be discriminatory based on gender.	Developed by researchers based on the literature
	Gender-based discrimination in the marketplace can occur in products and services.	
	Gender-based discrimination and unfair marketing practices can occur in the marketplace.	
	Gender-based discriminatory pricing practices can exist in the marketplace.	
	Marketing practices can discriminate based on economic factors.	
	I anticipate that businesses will take measures to prevent discrimination and exclusion of consumers from the market.	
In-group Conformity	When my immediate circle approves my consumer preferences, it makes me feel like I belong.	Developed by researchers based on the literature
	Adhering to socially accepted consumption behaviors helps me feel more connected to my community.	
	I think socially unacceptable consumption behaviors can lead to social exclusion, which makes sense to me.	
Customer Conformity (CC)	I bring a female partner to a club with a NEWFC policy to keep things smooth with those around me.	Developed by researchers based on the literature
	I seek out a female companion to accompany me to popular clubs with a NEWFC policy to ensure my consumption habits are approved.	

	I strive to make female friends to gain acceptance at clubs with a NEWFC policy.	
	I am ready to spend extra, like covering the expenses of a female friend, to gain acceptance at clubs with a NEWFC policy.	
	I develop positive connections with women who can accompany me to gain entry to clubs with a NEWFC policy.	
Competence (C)	Most of the time, I do not feel very competent.	Deci and Ryan (2000)
	I do not often get the chance to demonstrate my skills in my life.	
Customer Evaluations (CE)	I protest against businesses that I perceive as discriminatory by boycotting and posting on social media.	Developed by researchers based on the literature
	I avoid buying from businesses that exclude certain types of consumers.	
	Discriminatory marketing practices worsen social inequality.	
	I am willing to spend extra on products or services from businesses that value inclusivity and equality.	
	Discriminatory marketing practices escalate social unrest.	
	I appreciate businesses that openly share their inclusive practices with customers.	
Autonomy (A)	Those familiar with me often say that I am good at what I do.	Deci and Ryan (2000)
	People I interact with in daily life usually take my feelings into account.	
	In my daily routines, I find myself frequently following instructions.	
	I freely share my thoughts and ideas.	