




The Final Stop of a Life: Thematic Content Analysis of the Film "Hanım"

Bir Yaşamın Son Durağı: "Hanım" Filminin Tematik İçerik Analizi

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of this study is to examine the multidimensional nature of the experience of old age and the effects of social changes on this experience through the film "Hanım." The study aims to make the phenomena of aging, loneliness, social isolation, and social exclusion visible through cinema and to foster a better understanding of the psychosocial experiences of older individuals.

Method: A thematic analysis approach was employed in the research. The 1990 film "Hanım" was selected as the sample because it reflects the effects of urbanization, modernization, and transformations in family structure on older adults. Scenes in the film were analyzed at the levels of scene, dialogue, and thematic units and evaluated from psychological, sociological, and gerontological perspectives.

Results: The analysis identified the following core themes: elderly loneliness and social isolation, psychosocial effects, ageism, othering, devaluation, nostalgia for the past, elderly vulnerability, neglect and abuse, and end-of-life and preparation for death. The findings demonstrate that the experience of aging is not merely an individual process; rather, it exhibits a multi-layered structure shaped by the weakening of social relationships, economic vulnerability, the dissolution of family bonds, and societal attitudes.

Conclusion: The film "Hanım" provides an important resource for understanding the effects of aging and social isolation in the 1990s. In this regard, it is recommended that cinematic narratives on aging be used as material in awareness-raising education and academic studies; that aging issues be addressed as a societal rather than an individual problem; and that empowering social policies, such as animal-assisted interventions, be developed.

Keywords: "Hanım" film, social isolation, loneliness, aging

ÖZ

Amaç: Bu çalışmanın amacı, "Hanım" filmi üzerinden yaşlılık deneyiminin çok boyutlu yapısını ve toplumsal değişimlerin bu deneyim üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektir. Çalışma, sinema aracılığıyla yaşlılık, yalnızlık, sosyal izolasyon ve toplumsal dışlanma olgularının görünür kılınmasını ve yaşlı bireylerin psikososyal deneyimlerinin daha iyi anlaşılmasını hedeflemektedir.

Yöntem: Araştırmada tematik analiz yaklaşımından yararlanılmıştır. 1990 yapımı "Hanım" filmi, kentleşme, modernleşme ve aile yapısındaki dönüşümlerin yaşlı bireyler üzerindeki etkilerini yansıtmaları nedeniyle örneklem olarak seçilmiştir. Filmde yer alan sahneler; sahne, diyalog ve tematik birimler düzeyinde incelenmiş; psikolojik, sosyolojik ve gerontolojik perspektifler doğrultusunda değerlendirilmiştir.

Bulgular: Analiz sonucunda yaşlı yalnızlığı ve sosyal izolasyon, psikososyal etkiler, yaşlı ayrımcılığı, ötekileştirme, değersizleştirilme, geçmişe özlem, yaşlı savunmasızlığı, ihmal ve istismar ile yaşam sonu ve ölüme hazırlık olmak üzere temel temalar belirlenmiştir. Bulgular, yaşlılık deneyiminin yalnızca bireysel bir süreç olmadığını; sosyal ilişkilerin zayıflaması, ekonomik kırılganlık, aile içi bağların çözülmesi ve toplumsal tutumlarla şekillenen çok katmanlı bir yapı sergilediğini göstermektedir.

Sonuç: "Hanım" filmi 90'lı yıllarda yaşlılık ve toplumsal izolasyonun etkilerini anlamak için önemli bir kaynak sunmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, yaşlılık temalı sinema anlatılarının farkındalık eğitimlerinde ve akademik çalışmalarda materyal olarak kullanılması, yaşlılık sorunlarının bireysel değil toplumsal bir mesele olarak ele alınması ve evcil hayvan destekli müdahaleler gibi güçlendirici sosyal politikaların geliştirilmesi önerilmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: "Hanım" filmi, sosyal izolasyon, yalnızlık, yaşlılık

Introduction

Türkiye's rapidly changing demographic structure is increasing the visibility and importance of the elderly population within society year by year. According to the 2024 Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) Active Aging Index data, the elderly population—comprising individuals aged 65 and older—stood at 7,550,727 in 2019 and has increased by 20.7% over the past five years, reaching 9,112,298 in 2024. During the same period, the elderly population's share of the total population rose from 9.1% to 10.6% (TÜİK 2024). This demographic shift not only alters the population structure but also profoundly impacts societies' attitudes toward aging, social relationships, and intergenerational interactions. In this context, societies' approaches to aging vary. In modern societies dominated by individualism, the status of the elderly has undergone a significant transformation compared to traditional structures; socio-economic processes such as industrialization, urbanization, and technological advancements have narrowed the social roles of older individuals and led to the erosion of their traditional authority based on accumulated knowledge. With the dissolution of the extended family structure, the elderly's decisive position within the family has weakened, and the representation of respect and social capital has shifted from collective structures to individual attributes. Consequently, older adults have lost their central roles in cultural transmission and decision-making, and now lead their lives within a limited sphere defined by restricted social networks and support from the nuclear family (Kalaycı and Özkul 2017).

Aging is defined as a decline in physical and functional capacity resulting from an irreversible process of wear and tear on the body (Akgönül 2024). The growing elderly population has made it imperative to develop comprehensive policies that support active and healthy aging, particularly in developed countries. Countries such as Sweden, the United States, Canada, and Australia implement comprehensive service models aimed at enabling older adults to lead independent and high-quality lives in their own living environments for as long as possible. In contrast, in developing countries, elder care is largely left to family responsibility, with state-supported care services being limited and inequalities being pronounced. In Turkey, the rapid growth of the elderly population is bringing the country closer to the category of "highly aged societies" in the near future. Current policies primarily focus on social security, poverty alleviation, and the support of care services; the 65-year-old pension, social assistance, nursing homes, senior living centers, and various services provided by local governments constitute the main areas of implementation (Zıplar 2015). However, the growing need for care, the spread of the nuclear family structure, and the increasing burden on the working population are heightening the need for more integrated and sustainable aging policies. Turkish National Action Plan on the Rights of the Elderly (2023–2025) sets out concrete goals and activities across six policy areas—active and healthy aging, social participation, age-friendly environments, disaster preparedness, justice and the protection of rights, and implementation and monitoring—to address the aging process in Türkiye through a holistic and rights-based approach (Aile ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı 2023). The plan aims to strengthen the independence, social participation, and safety of older adults through health, care, education, employment, accessibility, and legal frameworks. In this context, the action plan offers a roadmap that positions older adults not as a passive group but as active and valuable agents of social development (Aile ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı 2023). Another critical factor underscoring the importance of these policies is the increasingly visible experience of loneliness among older adults. As life expectancy increases, healthcare advances, and the young population declines due to low birth and death rates, the elderly population is growing; this demographic shift, combined with urbanization, a shrinking social circle, health issues, and economic hardships, is intensifying the phenomenon of loneliness among the elderly. In a meta-analysis conducted by Su et al. (2023), which included 30 studies from various countries around the world, the prevalence of episodic loneliness among the elderly was found to be 28.6%. In Turkey, however, this rate is reported to be higher. In a study by Öztürk Haney et al. (2017), loneliness was reported at a rate of 46.9%, while Alkan et al. (2020) identified a 46.1% rate of loneliness among geriatric cancer patients. The prevalence of loneliness among the elderly brings to light the role of discriminatory and exclusionary attitudes that older individuals face in the social sphere.

Ageism is a multidimensional social problem arising from individuals being subjected to prejudice, stereotypes, and exclusionary attitudes solely based on their age. World Health Organization data indicates

that discriminatory attitudes toward older adults are widespread on a global scale and have been normalized in a significant portion of societies (Özütürker 2021). Underlying these attitudes is a tendency to avoid and reject old age due to its association with death, illness, and physical/mental decline (Yılmaz and Mermutlu 2023). Particularly in modern societies, the association of values such as productivity, speed, and aesthetics with youth positions older adults as an “economic and social burden”; this situation lays the groundwork for the exclusion of older adults from public and social spaces (Voss 2018). When this exclusionary structure intersects with gender inequalities, it results in a much deeper and more multifaceted vulnerability for older individuals. Older women, in particular, carry structural disadvantages—such as limited educational opportunities, exclusion from employment, and economic dependence—into their later years. The weakening of social and economic support networks following the loss of a spouse further exacerbates this vulnerability. In cases where cognitive decline accompanies advanced age, older women are pushed into a more dependent position within care relationships; this brings with it risks of burnout, neglect, physical abuse, and economic exploitation experienced by family members assuming caregiving responsibilities. Thus, women who have faced gender-based constraints throughout their lives confront the most intense forms of social exclusion and vulnerability in old age (Yelboğa 2018). These forms of structural exclusion and vulnerability cause older individuals to become increasingly detached from social relationships, making loneliness a central component of the experience of old age (Vos 2018, Yelboğa 2018).

The effects of loneliness on older adults have been extensively studied, and its negative consequences on physical and mental health are frequently highlighted. Studies conducted in the United Kingdom reveal that approximately 30% of the elderly population experiences feelings of loneliness, which leads to increased rates of mortality and morbidity. It has been observed that social isolation increases the risk of premature death and turns older adults into regular users of healthcare services (Arslan and Hocaoğlu 2014). The phenomenon of loneliness encompasses not only a lack of social support but also social vulnerability, and it is further exacerbated by factors such as declines in physical and cognitive abilities, economic hardships, and social exclusion (Crewdson 2016, Çunkuş et al. 2019). The acceleration of urbanization and the rise of individualism are increasing the risk of loneliness among older adults. In particular, individuals raised in rural areas struggle to adapt to urban life, leading to their exposure to social isolation (Doğan 2020). Additionally, economic constraints limit older adults’ participation in social activities, further intensifying feelings of loneliness (Erol et al. 2016). The decline in physical and cognitive functions that occurs with the aging process restricts individuals’ social interactions, while factors such as the loss of loved ones and social exclusion contribute to a weakening sense of belonging and the chronic nature of loneliness (İlgaz and Gözüm 2020). For this reason, the role of various support mechanisms in alleviating the sense of loneliness among older adults has gained importance. Among these mechanisms, digital technologies are particularly noteworthy, and conflicting views regarding the relationship between aging, loneliness, and technology have emerged. The techno-optimistic approach argues that social media, communication apps, social robots, and assistive technologies reduce loneliness among older adults, facilitate socialization, and contribute to the emergence of new fields such as gerontechnology (); the techno-critical approach emphasizes that these technologies reinforce ageism, strengthen negative stereotypes, and may deepen loneliness by limiting social participation (Alptekin 2011, Öze 2025).

The psychosocial support provided by pets in older adults’ efforts to cope with loneliness is among the proposed solutions in this area (Anadolu Kedisi 2017, Uren 2025). Cats support individuals’ mental health by reducing feelings of loneliness and strengthening the sense of interpersonal connection (Demirağ and Hintistan 2019). In addition to these approaches, media works also raise awareness by making the social, cultural, and emotional dimensions of elderly loneliness visible.

Older adults are underrepresented in mainstream media and cinema relative to their population share; they are often portrayed as sick, grumpy, comical, or passive figures (Apak and Aka 2020). In the Turkish context, the representation of aging in cinema and television has undergone a qualitative shift from the fixed supporting character stereotypes of the 1950–1980 period—such as Hulusi Kentmen and Aliye Rona—and the role of a comedic or melodramatic pitiable figure in the 1980–1995 period, to productions like *Eşkiya* and *Pandora*, which marked a qualitative break; with this shift, elderly characters were brought to the

forefront for the first time, portrayed as multidimensional, active individuals grappling with the conflicts of modernization (Kuruoğlu and Salman 2017). One of the key examples illustrating this transformation is the film "Hanım," which offers a multi-layered narrative on the representation of old age. "Hanım" is a striking example that vividly highlights the struggles of elderly individuals with loneliness, how societal transformations reflect on this process, and the extent to which support mechanisms can be effective.

Directed by Halit Refiğ and released in 1990, the film "Hanım"—which won the Best Director Award at the 26th Golden Orange Film Festival—sheds light on the universal challenges of aging through the character of Olcay Hanım, portrayed by Yıldız Kenter. Having lost her husband, living alone, and diagnosed with cancer, Olcay Hanım refuses treatment and faces death while grappling with the question of who will care for her cat, Hanım, after she passes away. In the 1990s, the urbanization process led to the dissolution of extended family structures, the weakening of social support mechanisms, and increased individualism, thereby heightening the risk of loneliness and social exclusion for older adults. While loneliness and social isolation have always been significant issues, today's advancements in communication technology enable older adults to maintain their social connections.

Olcay, who lives alone, is frequently neglected by her daughter. Olcay, who gives piano lessons to make ends meet, lives in an old house and is under pressure from her daughter to sell it. Economic difficulties remain a significant problem for older adults today, just as they were in the past. Although there have been some improvements in healthcare, illnesses during old age are still a major concern. Ms. Olcay, who has been diagnosed with cancer and has refused treatment, believes the treatment will not be beneficial and is worried about becoming a burden to others because she has no one to care for her. Despite society's negative attitudes toward the elderly, Mrs. Olcay is striving to continue her life, yet she experiences feelings of loneliness and exclusion during this process. (Kurt 2020). The film addresses themes such as elderly loneliness and social isolation, psychosocial effects, ageism, othering, devaluation, and nostalgia for the past, as well as elderly vulnerability (physical, mental, and economic disadvantages), neglect and abuse, and end-of-life and death preparation.

This research is grounded in both the social imperatives brought about by demographic transformation and the need to deeply understand this process through cultural representations. In Turkey, the proportion of the population aged 65 and older has been rapidly increasing, reaching 10.6% as of 2024, with projections indicating this rate will rise to 33.6% by 2100 (TÜİK 2024). This rapid change necessitates the scientific examination of the phenomenon of aging for Turkey, which is approaching the category of "super-aged societies." Modernization and urbanization processes have led older adults to lose their traditional statuses and face increasing issues of loneliness and social isolation, which have reached high rates of 46.9% in Turkey. Cinema offers a powerful analytical tool that brings these complex social and emotional dimensions of aging into view. While aging is often stereotyped in the literature, the 1990 film "Hanım" holds critical significance for being the first to cast an elderly character (Olcay Hanım) in the lead role, presenting her as a multidimensional, active individual grappling with the conflicts of modernization. The film was selected as a case study due to its intense exploration of universal and local themes such as elderly loneliness and social isolation, health issues, ageism, and preparation for death. This study aims to provide concrete insights into the development of social support services and age-friendly policies that enhance the quality of life for older adults, as well as to raise social awareness, through the analysis of a cinematic text.

The experience of aging addressed in this study was evaluated within the framework of the Disengagement Theory developed by Cumming and Henry (1961), which views the elderly individual's gradual withdrawal from society as a natural and inevitable process. However, the film analysis was not structured directly based on the concepts and components of this theory; rather, the theory was used as an analytical framework primarily during the interpretation and discussion of the findings. According to this theory, modernization and industrialization lead to a narrowing of the social roles of older individuals; the individual turns inward both psychologically and socially, assuming a sort of "role of role-lessness." This process of withdrawal is characterized as a functional necessity in terms of the continued functioning of the social system and the individual's preparation for death (Kurtkapan 2018). Cinema offers an important analytical tool for understanding the social, cultural, and emotional dimensions of aging. Film analysis

provides the opportunity to make cultural representations of aging visible, to convey how shifts in social values are reflected in everyday life, and to evaluate the experiences of older individuals through a multi-layered narrative. Cinema's power to reflect social change and produce cultural meaning makes films a valuable data source, particularly for studies addressing the social dimensions of aging—such as loneliness, care, independence, and belonging. For this reason, the film analysis method was chosen in this study to examine older adults' experiences of loneliness within their cultural context.

This study focuses on three main questions. First, it examines how the experience of old age is represented in the film *Hanım*. Second, it explores the themes around which loneliness, social isolation, and social exclusion manifest in the film. Finally, the study examines in which scenes cultural indicators of ageism and the vulnerability of the elderly are concentrated, and how these indicators are portrayed in those scenes.

Method

In this study, thematic analysis—a qualitative research method—was employed to examine representations of aging in the film "*Hanım*." During the analysis process, the six-step procedure proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was followed to ensure the systematic and in-depth interpretation of qualitative data.

Data Analysis and Processing Steps

Data analysis was conducted manually without the use of any software. The analysis process consisted of the following stages:

1. Familiarization with the Data: The researchers watched the film independently twice, and then once more in a joint session. All dialogues in the film were transcribed into written text, ensuring full control over the dataset.
2. Code Generation: The transcribed texts were examined line by line, and initial codes were created using an inductive approach without adhering to any predefined code list. During the coding process, primary codes were first created starting from the lowest-level units of meaning; by identifying the relationships between these codes, more comprehensive sub-themes and ultimately main themes were reached. In this way, the data was organized within a hierarchical model moving from the part to the whole.
3. Theme Identification: Related codes were grouped together to identify candidate themes (e.g., social isolation, nostalgia for the past).
4. Theme Review: The alignment of candidate themes with both the codes and the entire dataset was verified; where necessary, themes were merged or separated.
5. Defining and Naming Themes: The essence of each theme was clarified, and academic names consistent with the literature on aging were assigned.
6. Reporting: Findings were presented in an explanatory style, supported by direct quotes and scenes from the film.

Reflexivity

During the process of analyzing and interpreting the data, the researchers' expertise in the field of geriatric health enabled them to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the medical and social dimensions of the portrayals of aging in the film. The researchers' academic background contributed to the study's validity by providing an explanatory perspective in the interpretation of the findings. This study is based on the analysis and interpretation of publicly available film and does not involve human participants, personal data, or any form of intervention. As such, it does not fall within the scope of research requiring ethical review or approval under institutional or national guidelines. Accordingly, formal ethical approval was not required for this study.

Table 1. Themes in the film and relevant scenes			
Theme	Subtheme	Relevant Scene (Minute)	Scene Description
Loneliness in Old Age and Social Isolation	Social Stigma	01:35	The men sitting in the coffeehouse comment on Mrs. Olcay walking around with her cat, saying, "She's completely lost her mind..."
	Emotional and existential loneliness	14:55	Mrs. Olcay tells her cat, "If I die, no one will want you."
	Weakening of family bonds	8:00	In a brief phone conversation with her daughter, Ms. Olcay says, "You're busy, I'm sorry... I just wanted to check in on you."
	Love for animals and attachment	01:35, 14:50	In the film, we see Mrs. Olcay living with her cat, "Hanım." There are scenes where she takes her cat outside in a birdcage, talks to her, and maintains constant communication with her. Additionally, throughout the film, there are scenes where she goes door to door after her death, searching for someone who can care for her cat and find it a safe home.
	A Shrinking Social Circle	53:54	Olcay Hanım has only one student.
	Intergenerational alienation	37:21	Mrs. Olcay's detachment from society is visually conveyed as she watches the young people on the bus with a distant and melancholy gaze.
	The healing effect of social contact	01:01:12	It is evident that Mrs. Olcay is noticeably happy during the visit of her grandson and former son-in-law.
	Fear of death and loneliness	01:28:17	A scene in which Mrs. Olcay engages in reflections on death and faith is included.
	Despair	01:20:01	Mrs. Olcay's statement, "There's no such thing as humanity left," reflects her pessimism about life.
	Guilt	01:24:22	Ms. Olcay's statement, "Maybe I'm the bad one," is included.
Sense of worthlessness	01:24:03	Ms. Olcay's statement, "I feel like my insides are rotting and stinking," expresses a strong sense of worthlessness.	
Ageism	Age-based stigmatization and othering	01:35	At the coffeehouse, the phrase "She's lost her mind" is used to describe Ms. Olcay.
	Devaluation	07:25	The neighbors say of Mrs. Olcay, "She's completely lost her mind."
	Intergenerational divide	56:00	The scene where Ülkü expresses that she finds Mrs. Olcay's artistic sensibilities worthless to young people takes place.
Longing for the Past	Loss of a spouse and nostalgia	49:10	Olcay Hanım recounts how she met her husband and her life in the past.
Vulnerability in Old Age	Loss of Physical Function	31:25	A scene is shown where Ms. Olcay normalizes her physical fatigue by saying, "That's just old age."
	Economic vulnerability	53:54	It is noted that the piano lessons Ms. Olcay gives are her sole source of income and social interaction.
Neglect and Abuse	Economic Abuse	57:17	It is noteworthy that Ülkü wants her mother to sell the house.
	Psychological Abuse	58:00	Ülkü tells Olcay Hanım, "You have no one but a cat."
	Emotional neglect	01:25:12	Ms. Olcay is being neglected by her daughter.
End of Life and Preparing for Death	Awareness of Death	29:00	Ms. Olcay uses the phrase, "Azrael was inside this house."
	Spiritual Inquiry	01:31:00	Ms. Olcay says, "I don't know how to pray to God."
	Grief and detachment from life	01:32:02	Following Mrs. Olcay's death, Captain Necip states, "My last connection to life has been severed; I will carry this wretched body until death comes."

Results

The findings obtained from the film analysis in this study were grouped under seven main themes: elderly loneliness and social isolation, psychosocial effects, ageism, elderly vulnerability, nostalgia for the past, neglect and abuse, and end-of-life and preparation for death. Each theme was subdivided into subthemes based on recurring scenes, dialogues, and narrative patterns in the film. The findings were compiled based on the minutes in which the relevant scenes appear, the characters in the scenes, and the scene descriptions (Table 1).

These themes were structured in accordance with the research questions. In this context, the "Loneliness and Social Isolation in Old Age" theme addresses the research question regarding how social relationships of older adults are shaped; the "Psychosocial Effects" theme examines the psychological implications of the aging process on the individual; the "Ageism" theme focuses on societal attitudes and behaviors; the "Vulnerability in Old Age" addresses the vulnerability levels of older adults, the "Nostalgia for the Past" theme addresses research questions regarding the perception of time and meaning-making processes in old age, the "Neglect and Abuse" theme addresses the negative experiences older adults are exposed to, and the "End-of-Life and Preparation for Death" theme addresses research questions regarding the perception of death and end-of-life experiences in old age.

While the findings presented in Table 1 reveal the multidimensional nature of the experience of old age in the film, evaluating these themes within the context of the characters and the narrative yields a deeper meaning. Accordingly, the identified themes have been addressed through a holistic approach centered on Mrs. Olcay.

Loneliness in Old Age and Social Isolation

One of the most prominent themes of the experience of old age in the film is loneliness and social isolation. This situation is particularly represented in depth through the character of Olcay Hanım. The limited nature of human relationships in Olcay Hanım's daily life, her maintaining a distant relationship with her social circle, and spending most of her time alone serve as a concrete indicator of social isolation in old age (Table 1).

In the scene set in the coffeehouse, the fact that the people around her perceive Mrs. Olcay as "different" and "strange" reveals that older individuals can be subject to social exclusion. Additionally, the bond Mrs. Olcay forms with her cat draws attention as an alternative form of attachment that replaces human relationships. Olcay Hanım's statement, "If I die, no one will want you," indicates that her loneliness encompasses not only her current situation but also concerns regarding the future and life after death (Table 1).

Along with her cancer diagnosis, the uncertainty Olcay Hanım feels about her life further intensifies her loneliness. Despite having a daughter and son-in-law, Ms. Olcay hesitates to ask for help because she does not want to be a burden to them. This situation highlights a common issue leading to weakened family bonds and the isolation of the elderly. Ms. Olcay's reluctance to leave the house and her avoidance of social activities can be interpreted as a result of social isolation. In a brief and distant phone conversation with her daughter, she says, "You're busy, I'm sorry, I'm not complaining, I just wanted to check in on you," and hangs up, emphasizing that she doesn't want to bother her. This reveals that social bonds have weakened and that the character has entered a conscious process of withdrawal. This situation demonstrates that older adults experience loneliness as a result of both external and internal processes. At this point, social isolation is not limited to the individual's detachment from their surroundings; it also creates a foundation that triggers psychological processes. The weakening of social bonds deepens psychosocial impact by leading to the development of feelings of fear of death, hopelessness, and worthlessness in the individual (Table 1).

In the film, it is shown that Mrs. Olcay lives with her cat, "Hanım." Scenes depict her placing her cat in a birdcage to take it outside, talking to it, and maintaining constant communication with it. Additionally, throughout the film, there are scenes where she goes door to door in search of someone who can care for

her cat, aiming to find a safe home for it after her death. The statement Mrs. Olcay makes to her cat, "If I die, no one will want you," actually concretizes the deep social isolation she experiences in old age and the loneliness stemming from the belief that her own existence has lost its significance in the eyes of society, using the figure of the cat as a metaphor (Table 1).

The fact that her former son-in-law's visit with her granddaughter made Mrs. Olcay very happy, and that Canan is the only student she gives piano lessons to, highlights the narrowing of Mrs. Olcay's social circle and her sense of loneliness (Table 1).

Psychosocial Effects

As a result of social isolation, various psychosocial effects come to the forefront in the film. The anxiety, fear, and withdrawal Olcay Hanım experiences upon learning of her illness demonstrate the heightened psychological vulnerability of old age. In particular, her anxiety about what will happen to her cat after her death reveals how awareness of death and a sense of responsibility are intertwined.

Mrs. Olcay's statement, "There's no such thing as humanity left," reflects not only personal disappointment but also a general lack of trust in societal values. This statement indicates that the elderly individual feels excluded from society and that her sense of belonging has weakened. In this context, psychosocial effects emerge as a natural consequence of loneliness and directly impact both the individual's self-perception and their connection to life. When Nedim Kaptan speaks of the ship's hospital, he uses the metaphor: "Some recover and set sail again, while others, like us, are in a hopeless state. Some are repaired in port and set sail again, while others have dropped anchor and lost all hope." This metaphor suggests that some older individuals gradually lose their hope for the future during the aging process and remain trapped in feelings of loneliness and helplessness (Table 1).

Mrs. Olcay experiences intense guilt over not having raised her daughter well enough. In a scene where she speaks with her husband, she expresses "the sorrow of not having raised Ülkü well" and immediately adds, "Maybe I'm the one who's bad." This statement deepens the character's tendency to blame herself and reflects the feelings of worthlessness and failure commonly seen in old age. By questioning her inadequacy in her role as a mother, Mrs. Olcay feels a chronic sense of regret regarding both her past and her current loneliness (Table 1).

In her conversation with her husband, it is evident that she states her illness is in an advanced stage and that there is no hope for recovery. In this scene, her expression of anxiety regarding who will care for her cat after her death highlights her awareness of the approaching end of life. She also notes that her daughter Ülkü cannot spare enough time for her due to her hectic lifestyle; she admits that while she fears being alone, she has not shared her illness to avoid upsetting her daughter. Mrs. Olcay's statement to her cat, "If I die, no one will want you," clearly reveals the feelings of invisibility and worthlessness she experiences (Table 1). These vulnerabilities experienced at the psychosocial level lead the elderly individual to feel excluded from society and to withdraw from social relationships. This situation can also make it easier for elderly individuals to be exposed to discriminatory attitudes that are becoming more visible in the social sphere.

Ageism

Discriminatory attitudes toward older adults are also prominently featured in the film. While traveling on the same bus as young people, their energetic and relaxed demeanor makes Mrs. Olcay feel even more alone. She watches them with disapproving and sorrowful eyes. This encounter with the young people leads her to feel excluded from society and victimized by discrimination (Table 1). The fact that Mrs. Olcay's behavior is deemed "abnormal" points to the stereotyping of older adults by society. Such discriminatory and exclusionary attitudes toward older adults weaken the individual's social standing, leaving them in a more vulnerable position. Social devaluation can increase an older individual's vulnerability both psychologically and socially.

Elderly Vulnerability

In the film, old age is associated with a growing state of vulnerability alongside loneliness and psychosocial fragility. Mrs. Olcay's concealment of her illness and her distant approach to the treatment process demonstrate that the individual is vulnerable physically, economically, and emotionally. It is observed that Mrs. Olcay normalizes her physical fatigue with the phrase "That's just old age." Additionally, the weakness of economic and social support mechanisms, coupled with her stating that she can no longer teach by citing her age, contributes to her becoming more vulnerable during this process (Table 1). This situation highlights that older adults are in a state of multidimensional vulnerability. This increasing sense of vulnerability creates the conditions for the older adult to turn away from current living conditions and toward the past. The individual attempts to cope with the current state of vulnerability by seeking refuge in past experiences and memories.

Longing for the Past

In the film, the experience of old age is not limited to the present situation but also encompasses a strong sense of longing for the past. Mrs. Olcay's turning to memories of the past, comparing her current life to earlier periods, and occasionally seeking refuge in the past demonstrate that the longing for the past intensifies in old age. While this longing for the past can be interpreted as an effort to find meaning, it also makes the current state of loneliness feel more pronounced. However, turning to the past does not eliminate the lack of social support; rather, it makes the individual's situation of neglect and insufficient support more visible. This situation makes older adults more vulnerable to neglect and abuse.

Neglect and Abuse

The film also highlights the forms of neglect and abuse experienced by elderly individuals. In the scene where Ülkü asks her mother for money, she says, "I'm thinking of you even as I'm setting this business up; you don't need to scrape by on your pension and piano lessons. The house is in shambles—let's sell it. With the money you'll get, you'll live more comfortably and become a partner with us," providing a clear example of financial abuse. This approach can be interpreted as an attempt to use her daughter's financial resources for her own benefit, directly threatening the elderly individual's quality of life. Additionally, Ülkü's accusation and belittling of her mother with the words, "If you're such a good person, why are you so alone? You have no one but a stray cat—," is a clear indication of psychological abuse. This situation demonstrates that older adults can be deprived of adequate support and neglected not only at the societal level but also within the family (Table 1). Neglect and a lack of social support directly impact the older adult's end-of-life process and lead to death being experienced alongside feelings of loneliness, abandonment, and worthlessness.

End-of-Life and Preparing for Death

The film explores the end-of-life process in depth through the characters' experiences. Mrs. Olcay's confrontation with her illness, her reflections on death, and her growing awareness of the final stages of her life constitute an important dimension of the process of preparing for death in old age. Mrs. Olcay experiences uncertainty and anxiety in the moments when she senses death approaching. Her statement to her cat, "Azrael was in this house; he came to take me, but for some reason he changed his mind," vividly reflects the uncertainty she faces while awaiting death and living with that expectation (Table 1). In her conversation with her husband's hallucination, she says, "I'm ready for this. I don't know how to pray to God, but shouldn't I have prayed as I leave this world?" she says, both indicating her readiness to face death and confronting her religious beliefs and feelings of spiritual inadequacy. These statements reveal the elderly individual's anxieties regarding death, her spiritual inquiries, and her efforts toward acceptance.

Another striking reflection of this process is seen through the character of Necip Kaptan. Following Olcay Hanım's death, Necip Kaptan's statement, "My last connection to life has been severed; I will carry this wretched body until death comes," clearly illustrates the profound existential void experienced after loss

in old age. This statement demonstrates that when elderly individuals lose their social ties, their connection to life weakens, and death becomes an inevitable waiting game (Table 1).

When the findings are evaluated within a holistic framework, it becomes evident that the relationships between themes are not linear but form a dynamic, mutually reinforcing structure. In the film, the experience of aging emerges as a process in which social isolation triggers psychosocial effects, these effects render the individual vulnerable, vulnerability increases the risk of neglect and abuse, and ultimately shapes the end-of-life experience. In this context, the relationship between themes can be conceptualized as follows:

Social isolation→*psychosocial effects*→*vulnerability*→*neglect and abuse*→*end-of-life and preparation for death*

This model demonstrates that the problems arising in old age are not independent of one another; rather, they are processes that trigger, deepen, and create a multidimensional experience.

Discussion

In this study, the film "Hanım" was analyzed within the context of the aging experience, focusing on themes of loneliness and social isolation, vulnerability in old age, psychosocial impact, discrimination, and end-of-life issues. Findings from the film analysis reveal, through the character of Olcay Hanım, that social relationships narrow, support mechanisms weaken, and patterns of multidimensional vulnerability become apparent in old age. In particular, a representation of old age where loneliness, the narrowing of the social circle, and elements of economic and physical vulnerability are intertwined is noteworthy. In this section, the findings are discussed in light of the relevant literature and theoretical framework.

The behaviors exhibited by Ms. Olcay in the film parallel the fundamental assumptions of the Withdrawal from Life Theory. The character's decision to stop taking piano lessons after retirement and to withdraw from her social circle concretizes the phenomenon of the threefold withdrawal (withdrawal from social roles, narrowing of the social environment, and reduction of responsibilities) described in the theory (Kurtkapan 2018). Mrs. Olcay's refusal to be hospitalized by concealing her illness and her waiting for death with a spiritual acceptance can be explained by the theory's prediction of "the individual turning inward toward their own inner world by distancing themselves from social pressure." From this theoretical perspective, the process Ms. Olcay undergoes appears not merely as an individual withdrawal but as an experience of increasingly deepening isolation.

In the film Hanım, loneliness is addressed within the framework of social and emotional losses that emerge alongside old age; the loss of a spouse, the weakening of relationships with children, and the narrowing of the social circle are presented as the key factors defining this experience. The film does not limit loneliness to mere physical isolation; it transforms it into a multi-layered process through the dissolution of emotional bonds and the increasing distance within the family. Mrs. Olcay's tendency to step back out of concern for not causing discomfort in her communication with her daughter, and her gradual reduction of social interactions, demonstrate that the elderly individual has internalized social isolation over time. In contrast, the emotional revitalization observed during brief interactions with her grandson and former son-in-law suggests that social relationships can serve a protective and healing function during old age. This narrative points to the fact that, as noted by Çunkuş et al. (2019), loneliness in old age is not merely a state of physical isolation; it is a multidimensional experience associated with the weakening of meaningful social and emotional bonds. In the film, the gradual narrowing of Mrs. Olcay's social circle and the restriction of her social interactions bring the theme of social isolation to the forefront. Nostalgia for the past and superficial interactions with the younger generation reflect the elderly individual's withdrawal from social life and their reduced presence in social spaces. This situation is associated with elderly individuals gradually distancing themselves from social relationships and turning toward a more secluded lifestyle.

In the film "Hanım," the health issues experienced by Olcay Hanım, along with the accompanying physical limitations and limited social support, align with the core risk factors for loneliness and social isolation in old age, as noted by Doğan (2020). Studies examining social support mechanisms for older adults in Turkish

society indicate that a decline in family support deepens feelings of loneliness and social isolation (Yaylagül et al. 2021). Mrs. Olcay's limited relationship with her children and her solitary life parallel these findings, which highlight the decisive role of family support in the psychological well-being of older adults. Similarly, Walsh et al. (2017) note that negative societal attitudes toward aging lead older adults to feel excluded from social and cultural spheres. The sarcastic and insensitive remarks in the film demonstrate how this perception of exclusion and othering is reproduced in daily life. In their study examining the experience of aging in an urban context, Erol et al. (2016) report that older adults living in cities experience higher levels of loneliness compared to those living in rural areas. Mrs. Olcay's living alone in a major city and having limited social relationships demonstrates that urban life can increase the risk of loneliness for older individuals. The film's narrative reveals that urban life can create a context where social relationships weaken for older individuals.

It is observed that the patterns of loneliness and social isolation depicted in the film co-occur with depressive symptoms. While Ms. Olcay's health issues and cancer diagnosis are presented as factors that increase her psychological vulnerability, her avoidance of seeking help due to the fear of being a burden to her family and her withdrawn behavior stand out as patterns that can be linked to depressive symptoms. Kalaycı's (2022) study indicates a significant association between loneliness and depression, noting that depressive symptoms are more common among elderly individuals living alone. Mrs. Olcay's loneliness and her display of depressive symptoms align with these findings. Doğan (2020) reports that social isolation and loneliness in older adults increase cognitive and mental health risks, and that this situation raises the risk of developing dementia. The combination of Mrs. Olcay's loneliness, lack of social support, and health issues demonstrates that these risk factors are concretely represented in the film's narrative. Similarly, in their study, Sözal and Ergün (2021) note that a lack of social support, living alone, chronic illnesses, and economic difficulties increase psychological vulnerability in older adults.

In the film, the relationship Olcay Hanım establishes with her cat "Hanım" serves as an emotional buffer against loneliness and social isolation in old age. The anxiety regarding the cat—"Who will take care of it after I'm gone?"—reveals that the responsibility of care provides a daily routine and a sense of purpose, partially compensating for the lack of human relationships (particularly the limited and neglectful contact with her daughter). This cinematic representation aligns strongly with the literature on pet ownership (Demirağ and Hintistan 2019). Research indicates that pet ownership can support mental health by reducing symptoms of depression and stress in individuals (Olca and Güloğlu 2025). Two-thirds of pet owners believe their pets help lower their stress levels, and 80% of these individuals believe their pets bring them greater happiness (APPA 2017). Mrs. Olcay's relationship with her cat in the film concretizes these findings. While the cat's presence provides emotional support, stress reduction, and a sense of purpose for the elderly person living alone, the caregiving responsibility intertwined with the fear of death cinematically illustrates how love for animals can serve as a natural protective mechanism in old age. In this context, the film "Hanım" stands out as a valuable cultural text highlighting the potential for integrating pet-assisted approaches into aging policies.

In the film, discrimination and devaluation directed at older adults are made visible through everyday interactions and language use. The fact that Olcay Hanım's behaviors are met with mocking remarks demonstrates the reproduction of stereotypes associated with aging. Aslan and Hocoğlu (2014) report that such stereotypes lead to the disregard of older adults' individual characteristics and their marginalization in the social sphere. The film addresses the vulnerability of older adults in its physical, economic, and emotional dimensions. Sözal and Ergün's (2021) findings regarding economic vulnerability in old age align with the narrative in the film "Hanım." In the film, while Olcay Hanım's health issues increase her physical fragility, the absence of a steady income and the desire for her economic decisions to be dictated by family members indicate a weakening of her economic autonomy. In particular, her daughter's pressure to sell the house makes visible the diminishing control the elderly individual has over her assets, revealing how economic dependence in old age is reproduced through intra-family relationships. The theme of neglect and abuse is addressed in the film primarily through its emotional and economic dimensions. The disregard for Mrs. Olcay's emotional needs and the establishment of indirect control over her financial resources demonstrate how elderly individuals can become vulnerable within family

relationships. This aligns with Yılmaz (2018), who highlights that elder abuse is not limited to physical violence but also encompasses economic, emotional, and neglect-related dimensions.

The theme of the end of life and preparation for death is brought to the fore in the film "Hanım" through Olcay Hanım's awareness of death and her focus on the past. The literature indicates that older adults' intense focus on the past is a part of psychological aging and is associated with uncertainties about the future (Yanguas et al. 2018, Van et al. 2022). In the film, Olcay Hanım's gradual withdrawal from life aligns with her efforts to confront death and make sense of this process; meanwhile, her limited social interactions suggest—as Martinez and Heredia (2021) emphasize—that social isolation can increase psychological vulnerability.

The film "Hanım" demonstrates that loneliness, social isolation, psychosocial impact, discrimination, vulnerability, and neglect in old age constitute an interconnected, multidimensional process. Olcay Hanım's story reveals that these experiences in old age are not merely individual problems but also social issues, supporting studies that highlight the importance of strengthening social support mechanisms for older adults (Yıldırım 2021, Yerli 2025).

This study is limited to a thematic analysis conducted through a single film. The findings are based on the scenes and dialogues in the analyzed film and do not claim generalizability. Since the thematic structure is constructed based on the researcher's interpretation, there is a risk of subjective evaluation. Additionally, the analysis is limited to the content presented by the film's narrative and does not directly reflect real-life experiences. Analyses conducted using different theoretical frameworks or different productions may yield different results.

Conclusion

This study examined how old age, loneliness, social isolation, ageism, vulnerability, neglect, and end-of-life experiences are portrayed in the film "Hanım." In the film, Olcay Hanım's experiences highlight the weakening of an individual's social relationships during the aging process, the inadequacy of social support mechanisms, and the impact of societal attitudes on the experience of aging. The findings demonstrate that loneliness in old age is not merely an individual condition; rather, it is a multidimensional process closely linked to social structure, family relationships, and the social environment. The narrative presented in the film reveals that older adults may face risks of social isolation, depressive symptoms, economic and physical vulnerability, as well as neglect and abuse. Mrs. Olcay's health issues, shrinking social circle, and limited family support demonstrate how factors contributing to increased psychological fragility in old age can be experienced simultaneously. Additionally, the film reveals how mocking and insensitive attitudes toward aging, as well as ageism and devaluation, are reproduced within everyday life practices. The findings suggest that the experience of aging must be evaluated not only in terms of individual characteristics but also in conjunction with social change, urbanization, transformations in family structures, and social support systems. The film's presentation of end-of-life and death preparation themes intertwined with loneliness and social isolation brings to light the emotional and existential dimensions of older adults' experiences regarding the final stages of life. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the film "Hanım" addresses the themes of aging and loneliness in a multidimensional manner and draws attention to the structural challenges faced by older adults through the medium of cinema. By highlighting that the experience of aging is as much a social phenomenon as it is an individual one, the film contributes to gerontology and the analysis of films centered on aging.

The findings of this study indicate that the film "Hanım" powerfully brings to light representations of aging, loneliness, social isolation, and social exclusion; however, institutional and public mechanisms aimed at supporting older individuals are not prominently featured in the film's narrative. This situation indicates that the problems experienced by older adults are predominantly presented as individual and family-related issues. From this perspective, the film offers an opportunity for a critical reading of the invisibility of elder care services and social support systems. In line with the findings of the analysis, it is recommended that the representations of aging in the film "Hanım" be used as educational and awareness-raising material in the fields of gerontology, social work, psychology, and gerontology. The film's portrayal

of the elderly individual's experiences of loneliness, social isolation, and devaluation through everyday life practices provides concrete examples that can be discussed by students and researchers. The study also demonstrates that the elderly character's withdrawal from social life is largely presented as an inevitable and natural process in the film. This form of representation carries the risk of equating aging with passivity and loneliness. Therefore, it is recommended that future film analyses include comparative studies focusing on narratives that center the active social participation and empowering representations of older adults. The findings indicate that themes of ageism, neglect, and economic exploitation are implicitly present in the film "Hanım," yet the structural dimensions of these issues are not explicitly addressed. This suggests that portraying issues related to aging through individual tragedies in cinematic narratives may push societal responsibilities into the background. In this context, it may be beneficial to support film analyses on aging with studies that address the challenges faced by older adults within their structural and social contexts. Additionally, the film demonstrates that pet ownership can serve as a natural source of emotional support for older individuals in their struggle against loneliness and social isolation; therefore, it is recommended that the integration of animal-assisted interventions into aging policies and social service practices be researched and encouraged. Finally, this analysis of the film "Hanım" demonstrates that cinema is a powerful tool in shaping perceptions of aging. Therefore, it is recommended that films with aging themes be approached not merely as artistic products but as cultural texts that reproduce social perceptions; furthermore, the shortcomings and representational limitations within these texts should be discussed within an analytical framework.

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