

Distanced attitudes toward marriage: Examining young adults' negative views on marriage in Türkiye

Evliliğe yönelik mesafeli tutumlar: Türkiye'de genç yetişkinlerin evliliğe ilişkin olumsuz görüşlerinin incelenmesi

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Abstract

In recent years, young adults' distanced and negative attitudes toward marriage have become an increasingly discussed issue. In particular, the increase in age at first marriage and the decline in marriage rates highlight the importance of understanding how young adults evaluate marriage. This study aimed to examine the psychosocial factors that shape young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage. The research was conducted using a phenomenological qualitative design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 14 unmarried young adults aged 19–30 who were enrolled at Ondokuz Mayıs University in Samsun, Türkiye. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings showed that young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage were shaped by five main themes: economic concerns, loss of autonomy, negative references, social pressure, and difficulties in partner selection. Participants associated marriage with economic burden, increased responsibilities, loss of individual freedom, restriction of personal space, negative marital examples, social expectations, and uncertainty in finding a suitable partner. Overall, the findings suggest that marriage is no longer perceived by some young adults as a compulsory life stage, but rather as a decision evaluated through perceived costs, risks, social expectations, and individual life conditions. The study contributes to the literature by showing that young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage are not based on a single factor but on a multidimensional psychosocial evaluation process. These findings may inform psychological counseling, premarital psychoeducation, and preventive mental health practices aimed at understanding young adults' perceptions of marriage.

Keywords: Young adult, distanced attitudes toward marriage, marriage attitudes, qualitative research, marriage

Öz

Günümüzde genç yetişkinlerin evliliğe yönelik mesafeli ve olumsuz tutumları giderek daha fazla tartışılan bir konu haline gelmiştir. Özellikle ilk evlenme yaşının artması ve evlilik oranlarının azalması, genç yetişkinlerin evliliği nasıl değerlendirdiklerinin anlaşılmasını önemli kılmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın amacı, genç yetişkinlerin evliliğe yönelik mesafeli tutumlarını şekillendiren psikososyal faktörleri incelemektir. Araştırma, fenomenolojik nitel araştırma deseniyle yürütülmüştür. Veriler, Samsun'da Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi'nde öğrenim gören 19–30 yaş aralığındaki 14 evli olmayan genç yetişkinle gerçekleştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Elde edilen veriler tematik analiz yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, genç yetişkinlerin evliliğe yönelik mesafeli tutumlarının beş ana tema etrafında şekillendiğini göstermiştir: ekonomik kaygılar, özerklik kaybı, olumsuz referanslar, toplumsal baskı ve eş seçimi güçlükleri. Katılımcılar evliliği ekonomik yük, artan sorumluluklar, bireysel özgürlük kaybı, kişisel alanın daralması, olumsuz evlilik örnekleri, toplumsal beklentiler ve uygun eş bulmadaki belirsizliklerle ilişkilendirmiştir. Genel olarak bulgular, evliliğin bazı genç yetişkinler tarafından artık zorunlu bir yaşam aşaması olarak değil; algılanan maliyetler, riskler, toplumsal beklentiler ve bireysel yaşam koşulları çerçevesinde değerlendirilen bir karar olarak görüldüğünü ortaya koymaktadır. Araştırma, genç yetişkinlerin evliliğe yönelik mesafeli tutumlarının tek bir nedene değil, çok boyutlu bir psikososyal değerlendirme sürecine dayandığını göstermesi bakımından literatüre katkı sunmaktadır. Bu bulguların, genç yetişkinlerin evlilik algılarını anlamaya yönelik psikolojik danışmanlık ve önleyici ruh sağlığı çalışmaları katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Genç yetişkin, evliliğe mesafeli bakış, evlilik tutumu, nitel araştırma, evlilik

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Introduction

The family is the most fundamental institution of society and the first stage of individuals' socialization process (Demir, 2021; Aslan, 2002). A family formed through marriage serves as a vehicle for transmitting social values and cultural norms to future generations and thus functions as a safeguard of sociocultural continuity. However, over the past decades, numerous factors—such as advances in gender equality, changing economic conditions, and rising individualism on a global scale—have redefined the nature of the institution of marriage (Tekin, 2024). Among young adults, this transformation is reflected in the increasing age at first marriage and the decreasing tendency to view marriage as a compulsory social obligation. A study conducted in the United States reported that only 69% of never-married participants aged 18–34 wished to marry in the future, 23% were undecided, and 8% did not consider marriage, pointing to a rise in marriage-avoidant attitudes (Fafard St-Germain et al., 2022). In the same study, only 20% of young people in this age group considered marriage “very important” for a meaningful life, whereas 68% found job satisfaction and 62% found having close friends to be more important.

Making sense of young adults' attitudes toward marriage is also one of the core problem areas within the discipline of marriage and family counseling. Indeed, attitudes toward marriage are shaped by the information individuals acquire throughout life, family experiences, emotions, and cognitive biases (Bener & Günay, 2013; Kaya, 2022; Erkol et al., 2021).

In the present study, distanced attitudes toward marriage refer to a cautious, ambivalent, and critical orientation toward marriage rather than a categorical rejection of marriage. This concept encompasses young adults' tendency to evaluate marriage as a possible source of economic burden, loss of autonomy, relational risk, social pressure, and uncertainty in partner selection (Willoughby & James, 2017; Liefbroer, 1991). In this respect, distanced attitudes differ from marriage avoidance,

which refers to a tendency to reject marriage altogether, and from marriage postponement, which mainly refers to delaying marriage to a later life stage. Distanced attitudes also differ from perceived marital risk alone, because the concept involves not only risk perception but also emotional hesitation, critical evaluation, and ambivalence toward marriage as a social and relational institution (Najmudin et al., 2025; Putri, 2025; Tabkhi et al., 2025). Therefore, in this study, the concept is used as an umbrella term that captures young adults' negative, cautious, and ambivalent evaluations of marriage.

Khalili et al. (2022) reported that perceptions of marriage have changed over time; young people marry later than previous generations, and only 17% consider marriage necessary for a satisfying life. The same study emphasized that, in Iran, the mean age at marriage in 2019 was 29.9 for men and 25 for women, showing a marked increase since 1986. These data provide strong clues as to how modernization and urbanization processes have contributed to postponing marriage. In addition, the study found that young people's negative attitudes toward marriage clustered around four main themes: interpersonal factors (negative emotions about the future, not feeling ready for marriage, marital idealism, not feeling a need for marriage); family factors (family idealism and intergenerational differences); social factors (imitating others' lifestyles, doubting social support); and economic factors (financial concerns). The study suggests that these factors fuel anxiety, fear, and doubt about marriage among young women, leading to a tendency to postpone marriage decisions or to avoid marriage altogether.

Social Exchange Theory provides a useful framework for understanding young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage. According to this theory, individuals evaluate close relationships by considering the balance between perceived rewards and perceived costs (Sabatelli, 2022; Stafford, 2017). In the context of marriage, perceived rewards may include emotional intimacy, companionship, social support, and family continuity, whereas perceived costs may include economic

burden, loss of autonomy, increased responsibilities, gendered role expectations, and the risk of conflict or divorce (Blau, 2017; Kenny, 2013; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). In addition, within the context of modernization and intergenerational change, marriage has increasingly become a life decision evaluated through individual expectations, economic conditions, and changing social values rather than a compulsory social transition (Özkaya, 2022; Baş, 2021). From this perspective, young adults may develop distanced attitudes toward marriage when they perceive the potential costs and risks of marriage as outweighing its expected benefits. Therefore, the present study uses Social Exchange Theory as an interpretive framework to understand how economic concerns, autonomy-related anxieties, negative marital references, social pressure, and partner selection difficulties shape young adults' evaluations of marriage.

In the Turkish context, young adults' approaches to marriage reflect both the influence of the traditional family structure and the transformations brought about by modernization. The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung report *Youth Study Türkiye 2024* notes that most young people in Türkiye prefer to stay in the parental home until marriage for economic reasons; that the family institution constitutes the primary pillar of social welfare; and that the state's family-centered welfare policies are reinforced through "neo-conservative familism." According to the research, when choosing a partner, young people attach the greatest importance to educational level (56.5%) and family approval (50%), while economic status and religious beliefs are also key preference criteria (Engin et al., 2020). These findings suggest that marriage decisions in Türkiye are shaped by family values and economic stability as well as individual preferences. They also indicate that limited opportunities for independent living may contribute to the postponement of marriage.

Gender emerges as a significant variable in attitudes toward marriage (Öngen & Aytaç, 2013). A study conducted with university students in Türkiye found that women's attitudes toward marriage were more negative than men's, a difference

associated with women's increasing socioeconomic independence and the expectation that traditional gender roles may cause problems within marriage. The same study emphasized that men's avoidance of seeking help for marital problems due to traditional masculinity norms, along with difficulties in expressing emotions, may reinforce women's negative attitudes toward marriage (Bener & Günay, 2013). Overall, these findings indicate that the unequal structure of gender roles influences marriage decisions and that role expectations within marriage can be discouraging for young women.

Family experiences also play a role in the roots of negative attitudes toward marriage. Research shows that individuals who grow up in high-conflict family environments or whose parents are divorced tend to hold more negative views of marriage (Erkol et al., 2021). Fear of divorce may increase the tendency to avoid marriage. Carter and Glick (1976) noted that some individuals avoid marrying due to fear of divorce; however, avoiding marriage does not prevent heartbreak or family instability and may even lead to greater relationship strain in the long run. Thus, perceived divorce risk and family models are important factors that nurture young adults' negative feelings toward marriage.

Taken together, these findings indicate that young adults' attitudes toward the decision to marry are shaped by multifaceted psychosocial dynamics. Existing research often addresses these dynamics through a limited set of variables, whereas an in-depth qualitative understanding is needed to reveal how young adults interpret marriage in relation to economic, relational, familial, social, and individual factors. Young adulthood constitutes a critical developmental period for examining this issue, as individuals in this life stage are more likely to evaluate marriage as a possible future decision. Accordingly, the present study seeks to explore the psychosocial factors that shape young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage.

In line with this purpose, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What psychosocial factors shape young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage?
2. How do young adults interpret marriage in relation to economic concerns, autonomy, negative familial and social references, social pressure, and partner selection difficulties?
3. How are young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage constructed through perceived costs, perceived risks, and social expectations?

Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design based on a descriptive phenomenological approach to examine young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage and the meanings they attribute to marriage. A descriptive phenomenological approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to describe how young adults experience, interpret, and make sense of marriage as a possible future life decision, without reducing their accounts to predetermined variables. The central phenomenon of the study was young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage, understood as cautious, ambivalent, and critical evaluations of marriage. In line with this aim, semi-structured interviews were used as the data collection method because they allowed participants to express their views in their own words while enabling the researcher to ask follow-up questions when needed.

Study Group

The study group consisted of 14 unmarried young adults aged 19–30 who were enrolled at Ondokuz Mayıs University in Samsun. Participants were selected through convenience sampling within a purposive sampling framework. The main inclusion criteria were being unmarried, being between the ages of 19 and 30, being enrolled in higher education, and volunteering to participate in the study. Individuals who were married, previously married, or outside this age range were not included.

This sampling strategy was considered appropriate because the study focused on young adults who had not yet experienced marriage but could evaluate it as a possible future life decision. University students were regarded as an information-rich group, as their attitudes toward marriage may be shaped by social norms, family culture, academic life, future plans, and relationship experiences.

Data collection continued until data saturation was reached. Similar codes and meanings began to recur after the eleventh interview, and the thirteenth and fourteenth interviews did not generate a new main theme. Instead, they confirmed and enriched the existing themes and categories. Therefore, data collection was terminated after the fourteenth interview. Saturation was evaluated in terms of the repetition of analytical patterns, the stabilization of codes, and the absence of substantially new meanings related to young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage.

The demographic characteristics of the participants, including age, gender, education level, income level, relationship experience, and ideal marriage age, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Study Group

No	Age	Gender	Education Level	Income Level	Relationship Experience	Ideal Marriage Age
1	27	Male	Bachelor's	Middle	Long-term	25
2	22	Male	Bachelor's	Middle	Short-term	30
3	19	Female	Bachelor's	High	Long-term	35
4	20	Male	Bachelor's	Middle	None	30
5	21	Male	Bachelor's	Middle	Long-term	32
6	23	Female	Bachelor's	Middle	Short-term	28
7	24	Male	Bachelor's	Middle	Long-term	26
8	24	Male	Bachelor's	Low	Long-term	26
9	30	Female	Bachelor's	Middle	Long-term	33
10	24	Female	Associate	Middle	Long-term	28
11	20	Female	Bachelor's	Middle	Long-term	25
12	27	Female	Graduate	Middle	None	27
13	25	Male	Bachelor's	Low	Short-term	35
14	25	Female	Bachelor's	Middle	Long-term	27

Note. N = 14.

Data Collection Instrument

In this study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with young adults in order to enable an in-depth qualitative examination of their distanced attitudes toward marriage and the meanings they attribute to marriage. The interview questions focused on participants' perceptions of marriage, perceived economic and relational costs, concerns about autonomy and personal space, family and social references, social pressure, and difficulties in partner selection.

The semi-structured interview form was developed based on the relevant literature on marriage attitudes, young adulthood, and Social Exchange Theory. The form was designed to include open-ended questions that would allow participants to express their own meanings, concerns, and evaluations regarding marriage. The questions were organized around the main focus of the study, namely young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage.

Sample interview questions included the following: "What does marriage mean to you?", "What factors make you feel distant from marriage?", "How do economic conditions affect your thoughts about marriage?", "How do marriage examples in your family or social environment influence your views on marriage?", and "What difficulties do you think may arise in the process of partner selection?" During the interviews, probing questions such as "Could you explain this in more detail?" and "Can you give an example?" were used when necessary to deepen participants' responses.

This technique was preferred because it provided both a thematic structure and flexibility for participants to express their views in their own words.

Procedure

The data collection procedure was planned in accordance with the principles of qualitative research. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ondokuz Mayıs University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (protocol no: 2025-

419 | 28/03/2025). Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the interviews.

The interviews were conducted in settings where participants could feel comfortable and safe. Guided by the semi-structured interview form, participants were asked questions about their perceptions of marriage, autonomy-related concerns, family and social references, social pressure, and partner selection difficulties. Each interview lasted approximately 40–50 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent. The recordings were transcribed verbatim, anonymized, and prepared for thematic analysis. To ensure confidentiality, participants were coded as P-1, P-2, and so forth, and no identifying information was included in the transcripts or findings.

Since the study focused on a socially and personally meaningful topic such as marriage, the researchers paid attention to reflexivity throughout the research process. To minimize potential researcher bias, participants' narratives were analyzed as closely as possible to their original expressions, direct quotations were used to preserve participants' voices, and the researchers repeatedly returned to the transcripts during the analysis process.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process was carried out by following the main stages proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were read several times to become familiar with the data. Then, meaningful statements related to young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage were identified and coded.

In the next stage, similar codes were brought together and organized under categories and main themes. The emerging themes were reviewed by

comparing them with the original transcripts to ensure that they accurately reflected participants' statements. As a result of this process, five main themes were identified: Economic Concerns, Loss of Autonomy, Negative References, Social Pressure, and Difficulties in Partner Selection.

The analysis was conducted manually without using qualitative data analysis software. To strengthen credibility and confirmability, the researchers repeatedly returned to the original transcripts, used participants' direct quotations, and ensured that the codes, categories, and themes remained grounded in participants' own expressions. Dependability was supported by clearly describing the stages of data collection and analysis, while transferability was strengthened by presenting detailed information about the study group, research context, and participant characteristics. In addition, tables showing the categories, codes, and frequencies for each theme were added to the Findings section to make the analytical process more transparent.

Findings

The thematic analysis revealed five main themes and related categories, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Themes and Categories

Themes	Categories
Economic Concerns	Marital costs
	Reduced economic independence
	Ongoing costs of maintaining a marriage
Loss of Autonomy	Avoidance of responsibility burden
	Perceived restriction
	Violation of personal space
Negative References	Lack of role models
	Divorce experiences
	Witnessing intrafamilial conflict
	Experiences of violence
Social Pressure	Coercive social expectations
	Stereotypes
	The Aversive Nature Of Pressure To Marry
Difficulties in Partner Selection	High personal standards
	Limited opportunities
	Family criteria
	Lack of social support

Note. *N* = 14.

Economic Concerns

The first main theme was Economic Concerns, which included three categories: Marital costs, Reduced economic independence, and Ongoing costs of maintaining a marriage. The categories, codes, and frequencies related to the theme of Economic Concerns are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Economic Concerns

Category	Code	F
Marital Costs	Commercialization of the wedding industry	10
	Mutually high expectations	9
	Current high cost of living	9
Reduced Economic Independence	Restriction of personal spending	7
	Belief that expenses will increase	6
Ongoing Costs of Maintaining a Marriage	Housing costs	8
	Child-related expenses	6
	Household/grocery expenses	5

Note. *F* = frequency.

Marital Costs

Marital costs were one of the most frequently emphasized factors shaping participants' distanced attitudes toward marriage (*n* = 11).

"I think wedding expenses are unnecessarily high. Having such a heavy financial burden makes me take a distanced view of marriage. For example, even just renting a venue or organizing a basic ceremony can reach serious amounts, and this makes me think." (P-7*)

When all responses were examined, Marital costs, as one of the factors shaping young adults' negative perspectives on marriage, appeared to be framed by the commercialization of the wedding industry (*n* = 10), mutually high expectations (*n* = 9), and the current high cost of living (*n* = 9).

Reduced Economic Independence

Reduced economic independence was another factor shaping participants' distanced attitudes toward marriage (*n* = 8).

"I think this is a process that will inevitably happen, because in the end I won't be living this life on my own anymore. That's why I believe that independent spending will either definitely decrease after marriage or not exist at all. This sometimes

upsets me because I currently live with my family. Even now, it can't be said that I spend completely independently, but if I have debt, it concerns only me. And if I'm going to struggle, in a way it's just a month where I need to be careful myself. I'm sure it won't be like that in marriage, because there's no longer a situation where you can just say "me." We have to think about "us," too. Because of this necessity, the fact that my spending would sometimes be tied to another person makes me step back from marriage. For example, I'm someone who feels happy when I buy things for myself; knowing that I would need to be careful about this in marriage makes me feel as if I'd be tampering with my own happiness." (P-1**)

When all responses were examined, Reduced economic independence, as one of the factors shaping young adults' negative perspectives on marriage, appeared to be framed by the restriction of personal spending ($n = 7$) and the belief that expenses will increase ($n = 6$).

Ongoing Costs of Maintaining a Marriage

Ongoing costs of maintaining a marriage also contributed to participants' distanced attitudes toward marriage ($n = 9$).

"I think unhappiness will arise at home because of rent, grocery expenses, and similar things. For example, if my spouse wants to go on vacation but I can't take them because of debts, I would feel distressed, and it would create a sense of inadequacy in me. I think this would be psychologically exhausting. Because of situations like these, I can say that I view marriage negatively." (P-11*)

When all responses were examined, Ongoing costs of maintaining a marriage, as one of the factors shaping young adults' negative perspectives on marriage, appeared to be framed by housing costs ($n = 8$), child-related expenses ($n = 6$), and household/grocery expenses ($n = 5$).

Loss of Autonomy

The second main theme was Loss of Autonomy, which included three categories: Avoidance of responsibility burden, Perceived restriction, and Violation of personal space. The categories, codes, and frequencies related to the theme of Loss of Autonomy are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Loss of Autonomy

Category	Code	F
Avoidance of Responsibility Burden	Domestic tasks	9
	Unfair responsibility sharing	7
	Continuous adjustment	9
Perceived Restriction	Restricted time use	9
	Reduced decision autonomy	8
	Reduced individuality	7
	Limited personal control	10
Violation of Personal Space	Reduced individual activities	8
	Adapting to spouse's wishes	9

Note. F = frequency.

Avoidance of Responsibility Burden

The first category that emerged under Loss of Autonomy was Avoidance of responsibility burden. Considering the data, it was observed that for the majority of young adults ($n = 9$), a desire to avoid an increased responsibility burden played a role in the development of negative views toward marriage.

"When you're single, whether you cook a meal or not is completely up to you; you might not feel like cooking that day and you simply don't. But I don't think that's really possible in married life. Obligations exhaust women a lot—laundry, dishes, meals that constantly need to be taken care of, and guests who have to be hosted... It's truly so overwhelming that I wouldn't want to be in such a system." (P-2**)

When all participants' responses were examined, one of the core structures contributing to young adults' negative attitudes toward marriage appeared to be the increase in daily life and household-related responsibilities that accompany marriage. This was predominantly reiterated within the framework of the high volume of domestic tasks (e.g., routine duties such as cooking, laundry, dishwashing, ironing, and cleaning) ($n = 9$) and concerns that the division of responsibilities between spouses would not be fair ($n = 7$). In addition, while

participants stated that they could be more flexible regarding their behaviors when single, they emphasized that marriage entails the need to adjust to one's spouse, and that the obligation of continuous adjustment ($n = 9$) emerged as an important factor underlying their distanced attitudes toward marriage.

Perceived Restriction

The second category that emerged under Loss of Autonomy was Perceived restriction. Considering the data, it was found that for the majority of young adults ($n = 10$), Perceived restriction was a decisive factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

"For example, I'm comfortable about acting or meeting up with my friends. I can say, "Let's meet up—I'm heading out," and leave the house right away. I don't need to report to anyone or even let anyone know. What time I come back, etc., is completely up to me. But in marriage it's not like that, unfortunately—there are things like "You should let me know, we had plans, I wish we had spent time just the two of us today." You feel like you're always on alert. I think there are difficulties such as needing your plans in that moment to be compatible with the person in your life. This is what makes me take a distanced view of marriage." (P-9*)

When participants' responses regarding Perceived restriction were examined, it became clear that young adults frequently repeated the view that the domains in which they currently feel free would narrow significantly after marriage, and that they would be unable to carry out their wishes. Participants emphasized, in particular, the constraining changes in how time is used (e.g., social activities, vacation plans, individual hobbies) ($n = 9$), a decrease in autonomy in individual decision-making ($n = 8$), and a reduction in individuality due to emotionally, physically, and psychologically felt responsibility toward one's spouse ($n = 7$). In addition, concerns about not being able to have sole say over one's living arrangement and one's needs being pushed into the background depending on the spouse ($n = 10$) were found to be influential in the

formation of participants' negative perspectives on marriage.

Violation of Personal Space

The third category that emerged under Loss of Autonomy was Violation of personal space. Considering the data, it was found that for the majority of young adults ($n = 9$), Violation of personal space was a decisive factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

"I think it affects personal space. For example, because I work very intensely during the week, I want to rest on Sunday. But if my spouse wants to go out and I can't reciprocate—or if I have to reciprocate—this shows that my personal space is being violated, and that could lead me to view marriage negatively. (P-11*)"

When the interview data were examined overall, another key component leading young adults to adopt a distanced stance toward marriage was their belief that personal space would narrow after marriage. Participants frequently expressed concerns that, once married, they would not be able to prioritize their individual wishes and needs to the same extent as when they were single. It was evident that the dominant view was that differences in preferences and mismatches in life pace and dynamics could yield negative outcomes within marriage. Participants emphasized the difficulty of having to adjust to a spouse and stated that the time allocated to individual activities (e.g., hobbies, personal development) would decrease ($n = 8$). In addition, statements highlighting the obligation to adapt to the spouse's wishes and situation when making plans ($n = 9$) were particularly prevalent.

Negative References

The third main theme was Negative References, which included four categories: Lack of role models, Divorce experiences, Witnessing intrafamilial conflict, and Experiences of violence. The categories, codes, and frequencies related to the theme of Negative References are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Negative References

Category	Code	F
Lack of Role Models	Scarcity of healthy marriages	11
	Marriage as less enjoyable	8
Divorce Experiences	Divorce in close circle	8
	Unfaithfulness and broken trust	9
	Negative divorce processes	10
Witnessing Intra-familial Conflict	Parental conflict	8
	Fear of abandonment	8
	Fear of repeating conflict	8
Experiences of Violence	Violence examples	9
	Jealousy and financial conflict	8

Note. F = frequency.

Lack of Role Models

The first category that emerged under Negative References was Lack of role models. Considering the data, it was found that for the majority of young adults ($n = 11$), Lack of role models was a decisive factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

“Yes, the decrease in happy and peaceful marriages makes me think a lot. It makes me think that I might have the same bad experience later in my own marriage. In that case, it affects my perspective on marriage negatively. Feeling that anxiety and not being able to say with certainty that I would definitely not have an unhappy marriage makes me take a distanced stance—of course, no one wants to throw themselves into a problem.” (P-8**)

When responses related to Lack of role models were examined, it became clear that a substantial part of young adults’ negative views toward marriage was influenced by the decline in ideal, happy, and harmonious marriage examples in their close environment. Participants frequently emphasized the theme of the scarcity of healthy examples ($n = 11$), stating that marriages around them involved recurring cycles of problems and that this wore relationships down. In addition, observations that the dating/flirting period is perceived as more relaxed and enjoyable, whereas marriage is associated with ongoing issues such as continuously adapting and maintaining balance ($n = 8$), contributed to an expectation that marriage would reduce happiness.

Divorce Experiences

The second category that emerged under Negative References was Divorce experiences. Considering the data, it was found that for the majority of young adults ($n = 10$), Divorce experiences was a decisive factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

“Absolutely—I see it a lot. For example, my uncle divorced twice and was cheated on twice. Seeing this from the outside affects me very negatively; I can’t trust anyone. Maybe when we look at it from the outside, we say it’s always like this nowadays, but I think everyone experiences this fear. I’m one of those people too. I can say that seeing divorce and infidelity happening so often affects my perspective on marriage negatively.” (P-10*)

When responses regarding Divorce experiences were examined, one of the decisive conditions contributing to young adults’ negative attitudes toward marriage appeared to be the increasing prevalence of divorce in their surroundings. Participants particularly emphasized that recurrent divorce experiences among close family members and relatives ($n = 8$) and incidents of unfaithfulness (e.g., cheating, violence, not keeping promises, negative behaviors after marriage) ($n = 9$) influenced their tendency to adopt a distanced stance toward marriage. It was also stated that observing highly negative attitudes and behaviors between partners during divorce processes ($n = 10$) led participants to perceive marriage as a structure built on fragile and unstable foundations.

Witnessing Intrafamilial Conflict

The third category that emerged under Negative References was Witnessing intrafamilial conflict. Considering the data, it was found that for the majority of young adults ($n = 9$), Witnessing intrafamilial conflict was a decisive factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

“This is the most critical point for me, because everything really starts with the family. For example, when I have a problem with my boyfriend, my parents’ situation immediately comes to mind—I

see them right in front of my eyes, as if I can hear them yelling. One day I came home and saw that my mother had packed all her things, left us, and did it for another man. That affected me so deeply that now I feel anxious that my boyfriend could also leave me at any time, and my mother didn't have the right to do that to me. I'm in a relationship right now, but what kind of relationship... I'm constantly on my boyfriend's back—"What are you doing? Where are you?"—and I need to be sure all the time that he hasn't left me, and this exhausts me. I can't even think about marriage. Definitely, what we see in our family of origin—at least what I saw—affects my perspective on marriage negatively." (P-5**)

When responses concerning Witnessing intra-familial conflict were examined, it became evident that problematic marital processes observed within the family of origin substantially shaped young adults' negative perspectives on marriage. Participants particularly emphasized that the negative outcomes of a conflict-based communication pattern between parents contributed to tendencies in their own lives such as fear of abandonment, beliefs about not being loved, and avoidance of conflict ($n = 8$). It was also stated that these adverse experiences could lead to intense controlling behaviors in romantic relationships and a fear of repeating the same cycles in marriage ($n = 8$).

Experiences of Violence

The fourth category that emerged under Negative References was Experiences of violence. Considering the data, it was found that for the majority of young adults ($n = 10$), Experiences of violence was a decisive factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

"Yes, I frequently witness such cases. And in the background of these situations there are usually severe incompatibility, financial concerns, and jealousy. When I take these into account, I'm afraid that I might also end up in conflicts that big, and that makes me take a distanced stance toward marriage." (P-14*)

When responses regarding Experiences of violence were evaluated collectively, young adults'

negative attitudes toward marriage appeared to be strongly associated with witnessing physical, psychological, and economic violence within marriages. Participants stated that, in addition to violence-related news frequently encountered on social media, examples in their close environment—such as physical violence between spouses, being thrown out of the home, and manipulation ($n = 9$)—led them to perceive marriage as a risky institution. Participants who noted that violence often stems from jealousy, financial problems, and incompatibility ($n = 8$) emphasized that the possibility of experiencing a similar pattern in their own lives created significant anxiety.

Social Pressure

The fourth main theme was Social Pressure, which included three categories: Coercive social expectations, Stereotypes, and the aversive nature of pressure to marry. The categories, codes, and frequencies related to the theme of Social Pressure are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Social Pressure

Category	Code	F
Coercive Social Expectations	Gendered expectations	8
	Wedding-related expectations	11
	Pressure to have children	11
Stereotypes	Marriage as loss of freedom	9
	Marriage as responsibility	9
	Negative social narratives	9
The Aversive Nature of Pressure to Marry	Family pressure	8
	Intrusive questioning	8
	Marriage as obligation	8

Note. F = frequency.

Coercive Social Expectations

The first category that emerged under Social Pressure was Coercive social expectations. Considering the data, it was found that for nearly all young adults ($n = 12$), Coercive social expectations was a decisive factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

"Yes, definitely—especially on women, I think these expectations are very high. Women are expected to be perfect at work, at home, and in child-care. I look at my friends around me and they look so exhausted. It's as if they have to make sacrifices

no matter what in order to get something done... This feels extremely tiring to me. Even while talking right now, I'm so overwhelmed—you can't imagine. The more I think and talk about it, the more negatively I view marriage. I don't want to get lost in the rush of marriage." (P-1**)

When responses regarding Coercive social expectations were considered, young adults' negative attitudes toward marriage appeared to stem largely from rigid role distributions defined by society for women and men. Participants stated that women, in particular, are expected to be "perfect" in their work, domestic responsibilities, and child-care, and that this requires intense fatigue and sacrifice (n = 8). In addition, the abundance of expectations during the wedding process, economic difficulties, and expectations such as "having a child immediately" (n = 11) lead marriage to be perceived as a costly institution that restricts freedom. Such social pressures contribute to young adults adopting a more distanced and cautious stance toward marriage.

Stereotypes

The second category that emerged under Social Pressure was Stereotypes. Considering the data, it was found that for the majority of young adults (n = 12), Stereotypes was a decisive factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

"I literally heard the sentence "Why would you get married—live your life" from my father. Later I realized that what my father actually meant was, "I got burned; don't you get burned." What I've seen from my friends supports this too—"being single is king," truly. Marriage just feels like extra responsibility and burden." (P-5**)

When responses regarding Stereotypes were examined, young adults' negative attitudes toward marriage appeared to be associated with widely circulating societal messages such as "being single is king," "marriage becomes routine," and "it's asking for trouble." Participants stated that these narratives equate marriage with the loss of freedom, increased responsibilities, and a narrowing of personal space (n = 9). In addition, participants noted

that negative marriage examples they heard from their environment reinforced these stereotypes, and emphasized that the possibility of encountering a similar situation led them to adopt a more distanced stance toward marriage. In this context, societal discourses seem to play a role in young adults perceiving marriage as a risky and exhausting process.

The Aversive Nature of Pressure to Marry

The third category that emerged under Social Pressure was the aversive nature of pressure to marry. Considering the data, it was observed that for the majority of young adults (n = 8), The aversive nature of pressure to marry was a decisive factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

"Of course—because of my age, my family constantly says things like "the time has come, when are you going to get married, isn't there anyone?" and this makes me feel as if marriage is an obligation, so I want it even less." (P-9*)

When responses regarding the aversive nature of pressure to marry were examined, young adults' negative attitudes toward marriage appeared to be substantially fueled by statements from family and close social circles such as "it's time to get married," "you'll end up alone," and "time is passing." Participants indicated that these pressures are often expressed in a questioning and intrusive manner and can make them feel inadequate, incomplete, or delayed (n = 8). Participants emphasized that such repeatedly voiced expectations portray marriage as an "obligation" or a "task that must be completed," thereby creating an aversive perception of the institution of marriage. Overall, environmental pressures seem to increase reluctance toward marriage among young adults and contribute to perceiving marriage as a process that constricts one's sphere of freedom.

Difficulties in Partner Selection

The fifth main theme was Difficulties in Partner Selection, which included four categories: High personal standards, Limited opportunities, Family criteria, and Lack of social support. The categories, codes, and frequencies related to the theme of Difficulties in Partner Selection are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Difficulties in Partner Selection

Category	Code	F
High Personal Standards	Ideal partner qualities	8
Limited Opportunities	Fewer meeting opportunities	7
	Superficial digital interactions	7
Family Criteria	Family intervention	8
	Value incompatibility	7
Lack of Social Support	Lack of introductions	7
	Reduced meeting opportunities	7

Note. F = frequency.

High Personal Standards

The first category that emerged under Difficulties in Partner Selection was High personal standards. Considering the data, it was found that for the majority of young adults ($n = 8$), High personal standards was a decisive factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

“Yes, the examples you mentioned apply to me. I want the woman I will marry to be very beautiful and to have a good education. Because I also care about inner beauty, I keep finding faults and that leads me to think negatively. In the end, if you are going to have a marriage, I want it to be a relationship and communication that truly sits well with me. If it’s going to happen, it should be like that; if not, then it shouldn’t happen at all.” (P-12*)

When responses regarding High personal standards were examined, it became evident that part of young adults’ negative attitudes toward marriage was associated with elevated expectations about an “ideal partner.” Participants stated that their partners must possess qualities such as emotional maturity, respect, a sense of responsibility, communication skills, and loyalty, and that they could not envision a long-term relationship with individuals who do not have these characteristics ($n = 8$). Some participants noted that tendencies such

as “finding a flaw in everyone” or “waiting for the perfect person” make partner selection more difficult, leading marriage to feel like a hard-to-attain and risky step. In this context, high standards appear to contribute to young adults adopting a more cautious and distanced stance toward marriage.

Limited Opportunities

The second category that emerged under Difficulties in Partner Selection was Limited opportunities. Considering the data, it was found that for the majority of young adults ($n = 8$), Limited opportunities was a decisive factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

“Yes, environmental factors—for example, the city you live in—greatly affect marriage-related opportunities and one’s view of marriage. Because of the environment I’m in, I can say that opportunities are limited and I have to move forward within a more restricted social circle. This, along with the difficulty of not being able to find the person I want, leads me to take a more distanced stance.” (P-13*)

When responses regarding Limited opportunities were examined, young adults’ negative attitudes toward marriage appeared to be linked to a narrowing social environment, the accelerating pace of urban life, and the tendency of digital settings to foster more superficial interactions. Participants stated that the decline in opportunities to meet people ($n = 7$) makes it harder to form relationships and reduces the likelihood of building a trustworthy and sustainable bond. They also noted that low intimacy on digital platforms and the rapid consumption of communication ($n = 7$) make the path toward marriage feel uncertain and risky. Overall, these dynamics seem to increase anxiety about “not finding the right person,” leading young adults to approach marriage more distantly.

Family Criteria

The third category that emerged under Difficulties in Partner Selection was Family criteria. Considering the data, it was found that for the majority of young adults ($n = 10$), Family criteria was a decisive

factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

“Of course, one’s perspective on family values is important. At the very least, they need to respect family values. Otherwise, I think there will be problems frequently—because there will constantly be a clash of opinions and an effort to find a middle ground. And that feels like it would wear both the person and the relationship down. This is an anxiety-provoking point for me, so I can say it makes me take a distanced stance.” (P-6*)

When responses regarding Family criteria were examined, young adults’ negative attitudes toward marriage appeared to be linked to concerns that a potential spouse may not be compatible with their family’s values and expectations. Some participants ($n = 8$) stated that their families might be interventionist in partner selection, and that this could create pressure on the relationship. Participants who anticipated that potential differences between their family and their partner in worldviews could generate conflict ($n = 7$) noted that, for this reason, marriage could become a demanding and risky process. This uncertainty seems to lead young adults to approach marriage more cautiously.

Lack of Social Support

The fourth category that emerged under Difficulties in Partner Selection was Lack of social support. Considering the data, it was found that for the majority of young adults ($n = 8$), Lack of social support was a decisive factor in the development of negative views toward marriage.

“Yes, neither my family nor my friends have suggested anyone. As I mentioned, because of the environment I live in, my opportunities are already limited, but at least if my friends—or people my family knows—suggested someone, maybe I could find a person suitable for me more easily. Their insufficient efforts in this regard lead me to adopt a distanced stance.” (P-13*)

When responses regarding Lack of social support were examined, some participants ($n = 7$) stated that their family and close social circles

were insufficient in terms of introducing them to others, making suggestions, or facilitating contact with suitable individuals. Participants who noted that this lack of initiative reduces opportunities to meet people and makes the path toward marriage more difficult ($n = 7$) emphasized that, without support, their chances of finding the right person decrease, which in turn lowers their motivation toward marriage. Overall, this dynamic appears to contribute to young adults adopting a more distanced stance toward marriage.

Although the study was not designed as a gender-comparative analysis, a cross-theme reading of the participant narratives revealed some gender-related patterns. Female participants more frequently emphasized concerns about domestic responsibilities, gendered role expectations, loss of personal space, and social pressure related to marriage. These concerns were particularly visible under the themes of Loss of Autonomy and Social Pressure. Male participants, on the other hand, more often referred to economic responsibility, the expectation of providing for the household, and difficulties in finding a suitable partner. These concerns were more closely associated with the themes of Economic Concerns and Difficulties in Partner Selection. However, these patterns should not be interpreted as generalizable gender differences; rather, they show how the meaning of marriage may be shaped by gendered expectations within the participants’ social and cultural context.

Discussion

The findings of this study can be interpreted through Social Exchange Theory, which suggests that individuals evaluate close relationships by weighing perceived rewards against perceived costs and risks. In this study, young adults’ distanced attitudes toward marriage were not shaped by a single factor; rather, they emerged from a multidimensional evaluation process in which marriage was perceived as economically costly, autonomy-restricting, relationally risky, socially pressuring, and difficult in terms of partner selection. In this sense, the findings indicate that marriage is

evaluated by young adults not only as an emotional or relational union but also as a high-cost, high-risk, and high-pressure life decision.

The first finding of the study was the emergence of the theme of Economic Concerns, shaped by the categories of Marital costs, Reduced economic independence, and Ongoing costs of maintaining a marriage. In this context, the results revealed that Economic Concerns are a decisive factor in the development of young adults' negative perspectives on marriage. This can be explained primarily by the fact that economic needs play a determining role in many individual choices (Bakar, 2022; Becker et al., 2012; McCain, 1993). Research indicates that economic concerns influence not only marriage decisions but also career choices, migration, and even the formation of personality (Morrison & Lichter, 1988). From this perspective, the economic dynamics surrounding marriage may help explain why young adults adopt negative views toward marriage. These findings are consistent with studies showing that economic pressures and perceived financial responsibilities influence intentions to marry. From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory, these findings suggest that young adults evaluate marriage as a relationship form with high material costs and uncertain rewards (Stafford & Kuiper, 2021; Stafford, 2017; Nakonezny & Denton, 2008). When wedding expenses, housing costs, household expenses, and child-related costs are perceived as outweighing the emotional and relational benefits of marriage, a distanced attitude toward marriage becomes more likely (Shobande, 2025; George, 2023; Wahhaj, 2022).

Another key finding of the study was the emergence of the theme of Loss of Autonomy, shaped by the categories of Avoidance of responsibility burden, Perceived restriction, and Violation of personal space. Examination of the data showed that Loss of Autonomy plays an influential role in young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage. This finding is consistent with studies suggesting that marriage is perceived as leading to a loss of freedom, constraints on one's scope of action, and a weakening of the self (Schumacher, 2015; Ross,

1991). Participants' accounts suggest that autonomy-related concerns were not limited to daily routines but also involved broader worries about personal well-being. In this regard, anxiety related to Loss of Autonomy appears to carry not only individual but also sociological and psychological consequences for young adults (Goodman, 1999; Gove et al., 1990). Within the framework of Social Exchange Theory, loss of autonomy can be interpreted as a psychological cost of marriage. Participants' concerns about restricted personal space, reduced individual decision-making, and increased responsibility indicate that marriage is perceived not only as an economic obligation but also as a potential limitation on self-determination. In this respect, young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage may be shaped by the expectation that the psychological costs of marriage could outweigh its perceived emotional and relational rewards (Krishnan & Ahmed, 2025; Willoughby & James, 2017; Hall, 2006).

One of the study's findings is that the theme of Negative References—comprising the categories of Lack of role models, Divorce experiences, Witnessing intrafamilial conflict, and Experiences of violence—distinctly shapes young adults' attitudes toward marriage. This finding suggests that family- and experience-based transmissions are a determining factor in young adults' development of a distanced stance toward marriage (Ndayambaje et al., 2020; Jennings et al., 1992; Booth & Edwards, 1990). A large proportion of participants stated that, within the social structure, “happy, peaceful, and healthy” marriages have been increasingly diminishing; this perception has led them to view marriage as a risky institution with low sustainability (Barman, 2024; Jackson, C., 2007). In addition, evaluations suggesting that a considerable portion of existing marriages are “managed” or “maintained out of necessity” reinforce avoidant and distanced attitudes toward marriage among young adults (Park & Harris, 2023). Accordingly, Negative References appear to frame marriage as a potential cycle of conflict, thereby contributing to young adults' withdrawal from the institution of marriage.

In terms of Social Exchange Theory, negative marital references increase the perceived risks of marriage. Divorce experiences, intrafamilial conflict, violence, and the lack of positive marital role models may reduce the expected emotional and relational rewards of marriage. At the same time, these experiences may strengthen the perception that marriage involves possible emotional harm, instability, disappointment, and loss. Therefore, negative references appear to shift young adults' cost-benefit evaluations of marriage in a more cautious and distanced direction.

One of the prominent conclusions of the study is that the theme of Social Pressure—comprising Coercive social expectations, Stereotypes, and the aversive nature of pressure to marry—has a notable impact on the attitudes young adults develop toward marriage. The findings indicate that societal expectations and entrenched beliefs constitute an influential framework in young adults' tendency to distance themselves from the institution of marriage (Jia, 2024; Neff & Morgan, 2014; Yen & Yang, 2011). Statements from female participants, in particular, reveal that they adopt a distanced stance toward marriage due to the excessive responsibilities imposed on women in society and the tangible weight of this burden (Mishchenko et al., 2023; Uysal et al., 2019; Ogletree, 2014). It was apparent that expectations directed at women were perfectionistic and that marriage was perceived primarily as a domain of high responsibility and risk due to the multiple roles assigned to women. This aligns with the literature indicating that gender roles increase women's emotional and behavioral burden (Sönmez & Aktaş, 2023; Ercan & Uçar, 2021).

Among male participants, the emphasis was directed more toward economic responsibilities. The recurrent theme of the obligation to "provide for the household" suggests that men evaluate marriage in terms of risk and performance expectations (Burstein, 2007). This finding is consistent with prior research highlighting that economic role expectations may contribute to postponing marriage decisions among men (Allison, 2023; Rabenda-Nowak & Wylęły, 2022; Carroll, 2016; Edin & Reed, 2005). Overall, the data underscore

that social norms, gender roles, and economic responsibilities exert a determining influence on young adults' marriage decisions. This suggests that, within modern social structures, marriage has increasingly become an institution that is more carefully deliberated and evaluated. From a Social Exchange Theory perspective, social pressure may transform marriage from a voluntary relational choice into a socially imposed obligation. This transformation may reduce the perceived rewards of marriage while increasing its psychological and social costs. In particular, when marriage is associated with gendered responsibilities, family expectations, economic performance, and pressure to conform to social norms, young adults may evaluate marriage as a high-pressure decision rather than a mutually satisfying relationship.

The findings indicate that difficulties in partner selection are shaped by high personal standards, limited opportunities, family criteria, and lack of social support. These factors appear to negatively influence young adults' perceptions of marriage. These results suggest that young adults' cautious approach to marriage is strongly influenced by personal expectations and the inability to access suitable opportunities for marriage (McNulty, 2016; Bıykoğlu, 2012; Edin & Reed, 2005). From this perspective, the literature emphasizes that, alongside changes and developments in modern society, opportunities for appropriate and healthy contexts for meeting potential partners have diminished (Çiçek, 2021; Bayer, 2013). Existing studies further support the claim that these developments contribute to increases in divorce and infidelity cases (Şahan & Kılıçarslan, 2024; Sürebiçer, 2008). Participants frequently expressed the belief that they could be harmed due to risks such as distrust and unfaithfulness during the marital process. The perception that "there is no one left to marry" reinforces an outlook such as "if I cannot be with someone the way I want or imagine, then I'd rather not be with anyone," leading participants to approach marriage with both greater distance and greater hopelessness (Arooj et al., 2025; Edin & Reed, 2005).

The findings also show that expectations of compatibility with Family criteria constitute an important factor; statements emphasizing that incompatibility would lead to frequent arguments and become overwhelming were prominent. This, in turn, appears to negatively affect young adults' views of marriage (Süleymanlı & Demir, 2022; Yılmazçoban, 2010; Muench & Landrum, 1994). Social Exchange Theory also helps explain why difficulties in partner selection contribute to distanced attitudes toward marriage. When young adults perceive limited opportunities, high uncertainty, family-related incompatibility, and lack of social support in finding a suitable partner, the expected rewards of marriage become less certain, while the perceived risks of making a wrong choice increase. Therefore, partner selection difficulties may shift young adults' evaluations of marriage toward caution, hesitation, and distance.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings suggest that young adults' distanced attitudes toward marriage are shaped by a multidimensional psychosocial evaluation process. Marriage was not perceived only as an emotional or relational union, but also as a life decision associated with economic costs, autonomy-related concerns, relational risks, social pressure, and partner selection difficulties. In this respect, the study shows that young adults' reluctance toward marriage should not be interpreted merely as a lack of desire to marry; rather, it reflects a broader evaluation of perceived costs, risks, responsibilities, and individual life conditions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, premarital psychoeducation and counseling programs for university students and young adults could be developed in a way that directly addresses the main sources of distanced attitudes toward marriage. Since economic concerns were one of the most prominent themes, these programs may include sessions on financial planning before marriage, realistic expectations

about wedding and household expenses, and shared economic responsibility. Considering the theme of loss of autonomy, psychoeducational content may also focus on personal boundaries, equitable sharing of responsibilities, maintaining individuality within marriage, and balancing individual and relational needs.

The findings also suggest that negative marital references, such as divorce, intrafamilial conflict, and violence, play an important role in shaping young adults' perceptions of marriage. Therefore, counseling practices with young adults who feel hesitant about marriage may benefit from exploring family-of-origin experiences, observed marital models, and perceived relational risks. In addition, because social pressure and gendered expectations were frequently emphasized by participants, premarital programs should include discussions on gender roles, family expectations, social norms, and the distinction between marriage as a personal decision and marriage as a socially imposed obligation.

Finally, difficulties in partner selection indicate the need to support young adults in developing realistic partner expectations, healthy relationship criteria, communication skills, and awareness of compatibility. Future studies may examine distanced attitudes toward marriage with more diverse samples, including non-university young adults, working young adults, and individuals from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, mixed-method or longitudinal designs may be used to explore how young adults' attitudes toward marriage change over time and under different life conditions.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the study group consisted of 14 young adults enrolled at a single university in Türkiye; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all young adults. Second, the data were based on participants' self-reported narratives, which may have been influenced by social desirability or participants' willingness to share personal experiences. Third, although the sample

included both female and male participants with different relationship experiences and income levels, the study was not designed to make systematic comparisons across demographic groups. Finally, because the study was conducted with unmarried young adults, the findings reflect pre-marital perceptions and expectations rather than direct marital experiences.

Future studies may examine distanced attitudes toward marriage with more diverse samples, including non-university young adults, working young adults, and individuals from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, future research may use mixed-method or longitudinal designs to explore how young adults' attitudes toward marriage change over time and under different life conditions.

Declarations

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