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Contact / İletişim

Address/Adres: Isparta Uygulamalı Bilimler Üniversitesi, Turizm Fakültesi, Eğirdir, Isparta - Türkiye

Tel: +90 (246) 2147100

E-mail: ijsser.contact@gmail.com

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Research article/Arařtırma makalesi

Usage of fear appeal for persuasive communication: Case of the Ministry of
Health's public service announcements

Özlem Seki Yaman, Hayriye Nur Görkemli

Usage of fear appeal for persuasive communication: Case of the Ministry of Health's public service announcements

Özlem Seki Yaman¹ and Hayriye Nur Gorkemli²

¹Selçuk University Faculty of Communication, Konya, Türkiye, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0516-7668>

²Corresponding author, Selçuk University Faculty of Communication, Konya, Türkiye, E-mail: ngorkemli@selcuk.edu.tr, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5506-1343>

Article Info	Abstract
Research Article Received: 12 March 2025 Revised: 18 August 2025 Accepted: 26 August 2025 Keywords: Communication, Persuasion, Fear appeal, Public service announcement	<i>This study investigates the use of fear appeals as a persuasive communication method in public service announcements supported by the Ministry of Health from 2006 to 2016. A sample of public service announcements was analyzed through content analysis based on topics, types of fear elements, persuasive techniques, and whether solutions were provided. The results indicate that both rational and emotional appeals were used, with fear appeals mainly appearing in emotionally driven messages, especially in situations involving direct health threats. Conversely, rational appeals were more common in informational or promotional PSAs.</i>

1. Introduction

Persuasion is defined as an activity and process (Gass & Seiter, 2003) that requires conscious efforts to influence the behaviour or thoughts of the recipient (Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994) and requires two or more people to bring together the activities of changing, reinforcing or eliminating behaviours, motivations, goals, attitudes, beliefs within the boundaries of a specific communication context. Persuasion aims to create a positive attitude towards a product, person, or opinion, or to change an existing attitude (Demirtaş & Andaç, 2004). It seeks to have a desired effect on the target (Yüksel et al., 2012).

The most prominent feature of persuasion is the absence of pressure or coercion, and the power to direct the attitudes of the masses without resorting to brute force or persuading them on specific issues is based on language. With the correct use of language, the desired behavior can be achieved without the need for coercion or brute force; otherwise, if coercion or brute force is used, the desired behavior may result in the opposite direction (Brown, 1980). In this respect, persuasion is of great importance in ensuring harmony with social control and preventing chaos. Due to all these characteristics, persuasion has been analysed as a skill, an art, and a science throughout human history (Anık, 2000). Today, persuasive communication is utilized in advertising campaigns, the political sphere, marketing, interpersonal communication, and in various other fields. It is known that the desired change or effect in persuasive communication depends on independent variables such as "source", "message", "medium", "receiver", and "target". Accordingly, the persuasive strategies necessary to bring about the desired behaviour in the receiver can be shaped by the elements of 'source', 'message', 'medium', and 'target', which also constitute the basic process of communication (Gürüz & Eğinli, 2010).

* This study was prepared based on the master's thesis titled "Usage of fear appeal in persuasive communication: Case of Ministry of Health's public spotlights," which was conducted at Selçuk University Institute of Social Sciences in 2017.

This study has complied with the Research Publication Ethics stated in "Wager E & Kleinert S (2011) Responsible research publication: international standards for authors. A position statement was developed at the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, Singapore, July 22-24, 2010. Chapter 50 in Mayer T & Steneck N (eds) Promoting Research Integrity in a Global Environment. Imperial College Press / World Scientific Publishing, Singapore." For this reason, the authors state that they conducted the research within the framework of ethical principles. It is not a human study, so ethical approval is not required. All responsibility belongs to the author.

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Regarding the source, factors such as reliability, credibility, expertise, physical appeal, likability, similarity to the target audience, prestige, power, empathy, and communication skills are crucial for persuasion. In terms of tools, one key factor influencing communication effectiveness is related to the characteristics of the chosen channels. Among these tools, face-to-face communication is considered more effective because it allows for immediate feedback from the recipient. This enables the source to adjust the message based on the input, making it easier to influence the receiver. Conversely, mass media have the advantage of reaching a large audience quickly. Tools like newspapers, magazines, books, and television can reach millions simultaneously and have the power to influence opinions. The key consideration here is which mass media to use, which should depend on the subject matter of the message. When selecting a mass media channel, it is crucial to choose one that has the most significant impact, aligns most closely with the source's purpose, best matches the message content, and reaches the largest audience at the lowest cost (Gürgen, 1997). The third element, the receiver, is the group whose attitudes and behaviors are targeted for influence by an idea, product, institution, or person in the persuasion process. It is well known that the target's characteristics significantly influence other variables, such as source, message, and tools, within the communication process (Elden & Bakır, 2010).

Conducting various analyses before delivering the message to the target audience can improve the success of persuasion. Personal traits, including tendencies, attitudes, educational background, gender, abilities, self-confidence, attachment, and prestige, play vital roles in attitude change (Göksel et al., 1997). The message, which is the final component of persuasion, can be defined as the encoding of information, ideas, emotions, and attitudes transmitted from the source to the receiver. Generally, effective messages should feature clear and simple language, short sentences, avoidance of ambiguous concepts, consistency, and relevance to current issues (Usal & Kuşluyan, 1999). Factors that influence a message's persuasive power include whether it is one-way or two-way, the use of evidence, conclusions, repetition, sequencing, and the effects of fear, humor, positive-negative expressions, among others (Demirtaş & Andaç, 2012).

One-way - two-way message: In one-way communication, the source only presents their perspective without including a contrary view. In two-way communication, on the contrary, the opposing view is also included, but this opposing thesis is usually refuted (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1988). When preparing the message, it is necessary to decide whether it will be two-way or one-way by considering the subject to be persuaded and the characteristics of the recipient.

Evidence: The source, who initiates communication with the aim of persuasion, sometimes presents his/her message by basing it on facts, research findings, and statistical evidence, and sometimes by using a striking and colourful story to attract attention. If the target audience has a superficial understanding of the subject and low interest in it, narrative evidence will be more effective. However, for people with a high interest in the subject, the use of qualified, scientifically based evidence will be more effective (Demirtaş & Andaç, 2012).

Linking to the result: Deciding whether to clearly state the desired attitude change and its justifications at the end of the message is another message strategy. While explaining the result is generally a good approach, as with other methods, it's better to make a decision based on the target audience.

Repetition: In the advertising industry, it is understood that the message should be repeated often to ensure it is both understood and remembered. Repeated exposure to the message increases its effectiveness, making this approach attractive to advertising agencies seeking to boost profits (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002). Additionally, when a message is repeatedly shown, signs of liking the content also tend to develop. The repetition method, which effectively speeds up perception and learning processes, plays a vital role in engaging the receiver from different perspectives (Özerkan & İnceoğlu, 1997).

Sequencing: In persuasive communication, whether the essential points about the message should be given at the beginning or at the end is one of the factors related to the degree of impact of the message. There is no clear consensus on this issue; sometimes it is effective to present it at the beginning, and sometimes at the end, to influence the receiver. However, there are also opinions that if it is given at the beginning, the receiver can concentrate on the message better (Yüksel, 2005). Using this strategy in situations where the target audience has a low interest in the subject is more effective in terms of attracting attention.

Positive and negative expressions: It is essential to incorporate both positive and negative expressions in message structuring, particularly in the field of health. For example, a campaign aiming to change attitudes towards smoking can structure the same message in two ways with both positive and negative expressions; the use of an expression such as 'if you do not quit smoking, you will die more quickly' is an example of negative expression,

while the expression “*if you quit smoking, you will live longer*” is an example of positive expression. The effectiveness of both expressions varies depending on the subject, target audience, and motivation level (Demirtaş & Andaç, 2012).

Effects of humour: Politicians and advertisers think that a message containing humour is more effective in terms of attracting attention and retention than a message without humour (Demirtaş & Andaç, 2012). It is essential to design the message containing humour in such a way that it does not get in the way of the product or service, otherwise the message may not be a tool between the target and the source and may only function as entertainment (Göksel et al., 1997).

Effects of fear: The purpose of including stimuli that will cause anxiety in the message is to remind the individual of the need for self-protection and to emphasise that the service or product offered with the message will realise this protection. With the message presented in this way, a psychological tension is initially created in the person. Then they are more inclined to perform the desired behavior to alleviate this tension (Göksel et al., 1997). Today, it is evident that messages conveying fear and panic are frequently employed in advertising and propaganda techniques.

To achieve the desired effect on the target audience, various strategies under the heading of ‘appeal’ are employed in the messages. Strategies under the heading of appeal will be discussed below.

2. Literature

Appeal is one of the most critical concepts in persuasive communication, including commercial and political advertising campaigns (Balci, 2006). An appeal can be defined as an element that constitutes the essence of an advertising message, responding to emotional or rational needs that appeal to the mind or heart of the consumer. Within the scope of creative strategies, appeals can be divided into two categories: emotional and informational. In informational appeal, the practical, functional, or utilitarian needs of the consumer are addressed, and the benefits of the product are emphasized more. In emotional appeal, on the other hand, the social and psychological needs of consumers are addressed, and the emotions related to the brand are emphasized more than the product's characteristics in the purchasing decision (Uztuğ, 2003). A more general classification is made under three headings: rational, emotional, and moral (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001).

Messages containing rational appeals tend to be more realistic and logical (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998). Avoiding doubtful questions, generalizations, attacking those who do not share the same opinion, and refraining from making illogical analogies are key considerations when using this appeal (Gürüz & Eğinli, 2010). The key point in rational appeal is to convey the message within a logical framework by focusing on aspects that will benefit the person in practice, rather than providing detailed information about the product or brand. One of the critical elements in the use of rational appeal is the provision of evidence. The testimonies of public or private individuals, the use of government statistics, and statements based on other data to support the message or issue are essential in realizing communication in the desired direction (Balci, 2006).

Morality guides the attitudes and behaviors of individuals in regulating their relationships with others within society and with institutions. In this direction, advertisers who want to influence the attitudes and behaviours of the target audience have started to use the concept of morality as a message appeal (Elden & Bakır, 2010). While realising this, the audience's feelings about what is ‘right’ and ‘appropriate’ are directed. Social content, such as a cleaner environment, improved human relations, equal rights for women, and assistance for the disabled, is often incorporated within the scope of this appeal (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001). Additionally, religious references can be incorporated into discussions on specific issues, depending on the degree of importance to the target audience and the concepts of sin and good deeds (Elden & Bakır, 2010).

Emotional motives in communication mainly consist of subjective concepts with similar characteristics, such as happiness, love, pity, hatred, fear, and their equivalents (Usal & Kuşluvan, 1999). The effective use of emotional appeal varies depending on the listener's mood and the subject (Gürüz & Eğinli, 2010). While analysing the listener, the common idea is that educated people are more affected by rational appeals. In contrast, individuals with lower educational backgrounds are more susceptible to messages containing emotional elements, which should also be taken into consideration (Ustaahmetoğlu, 2010). Many emotional appeals can be used to develop attitudes or behaviours in the desired direction in the recipient. The most commonly used of these available appeals are fear, humour, animation, sexuality, music, imagination, and surrealism (Fill, 2005). The most frequently used of these appeals are explained below:

Fear appeal: A fear appeal can be defined as a persuasive messages that warn the recipient that their health, life, property, or other assets are under threat. The primary purpose of this persuasion method is to induce a change in attitudes or behaviors by triggering the recipient's fears with verbal or non-verbal materials that constitute fear appeals. In English, this term can also be used as 'threat appeal' or 'fear-based communication' (Jürgen & Jürgen, 2000). A message created for persuasion through fear is usually structured with statements such as 'if you do not perform behaviours or attitudes such as buying, voting, believing, supporting, or learning, you will face extremely negative and dangerous consequences' (Demirtaş & Andaç, 2012). The emphasis on fears in the message creates a psychological tension in the individual. To overcome this situation, individuals tend to accept the solution suggested by the fear content presented to them more readily than other options (Göksel et al., 1997).

While the messages in which fear appeal is used are threatening in terms of content, the words, visuals, and sounds used as style variables are essential. For example, when using language as a style variable, it must be intense and personalised. In high-fear appeals, the language used is vivid and intense, emphasizing the seriousness of the threat. In contrast, low-level fear appeals mitigate the severity of the danger by employing neutral language, a calm tone, or visuals that do not contradict the recipient (Balci, 2006). A powerful fear appeal may cause the recipient to feel helpless and out of control, which may lead to a decrease in the recipient's attention to the message. Another point to consider regarding the use of fear appeals is that reactions to fear vary from person to person. A stimulus that is perceived as very scary by one person may not be perceived as scary by another person. For this reason, determining who will be scared and how to scare them is of great importance in a fear-based campaign (Elden & Bakır, 2010).

It is possible to categorise the variables affecting the effect and success of fear appeals under the following headings (Gass & Seiter, 2003):

- Perceived threat: If the recipient approaches the message as 'this event will not find me', the appeal will not be successful. The receiver should be able to perceive that the threat given in the message can also happen to him/her.
- Clarity of suggestions: The situations to be avoided and the ideas to reduce the danger should be clearly defined.
- Placement of suggestions: The solution suggestion about the problem given to the recipient is less effective when it is given before the message. At the same time, it is more effective when it is given immediately after the message.
- Argument quality: High-quality arguments have more power to convince the recipients that the risk is real.
- Self-esteem: Recipients with high self-esteem are better able to cope with fear stimuli and the messages delivered through them.
- Anxiety level: People with high anxiety levels resort to fear control, which is an undesirable situation, instead of danger control, which is a desired situation, when faced with a fear-based message.

Humour appeal: It is possible to define humour in the most general sense as subtle mockery performed for purposes such as making someone laugh, entertaining, or touching someone without offending their behaviour. It is based on entertainment and tolerance, and humour in almost all societies is shaped by these two basic variables (Yardımcı, 2010). Another aspect of humour is related to its persuasiveness, but studies have shown that the persuasiveness of humour is not greater than that without humour. The two most essential points in the effect of humour and persuasion are the intensity of the message and the humour. While the message containing intense humour is more effective, low-level humour combined with a soft-selling approach is also effective (Bir, 1993). In addition, the use of humour can contribute to the persuasion of the buyer such as increasing the reliability and popularity of the source, increasing the attractiveness of the advertisement, creating an emotional environment suitable for persuasion, ensuring the comprehensibility of the message, creating behavioural change in line with the desired purpose, and this is the result that the advertiser expects when using this attraction (Bakır, 2006).

Sexual appeal: Sexuality is an element that emerged as a biological key for people to continue their generation or to meet their physiological needs, and has been a subject of social and cultural interest for years. It is possible to talk about concepts such as nudity, eroticism, and pornography in relation to sexuality. Especially nudity is a frequently used tool in the creation of sexual attraction (Elden & Bakır, 2010). It is possible to see that such concepts of sexuality are used in various advertisements as a message strategy, and this use is called sexual attraction. This type of attraction, which is commonly seen in products such as perfume, underwear, and alcoholic beverages, is now also present in advertisements for cheese, soft drinks, junk food, and even electrical goods

(Woodward & Denton, 2004). The use of sexuality as a message appeal is an effective method to attract the attention of the recipient. When using this appeal, it is essential to ensure that the message strategy and the product content are mutually compatible.

Animation appeal: In the face of intense competition, organisations and brands in many markets can utilise animation characters that evoke various emotions to create awareness among consumers and drive demand for their products and services. At the same time, these characters can also contribute to the formation of a positive bond between the product and service and the consumer (Yıldız & Deneçli, 2013). Animation techniques, whose primary target audience is primarily children, have made significant progress recently. However, there are also successful examples of animations used in advertisements targeting adults. The primary purpose of such advertisements is to create products that might be boring or lack interest, visually appealing, and remarkable. Additionally, it facilitates the easier understanding of complex products (Fill, 2005).

Music appeal: The music used in advertisements generally affects the subconscious mind and has a significant influence on our perceptions of the advertised product. Different types of music, such as music pieces written for commercial purposes, popular songs, and jingles, can be used in the background of advertisements. Famous advertising jingles ensure the repetition of the brand because the audience first establishes a relationship between the jingle and the brand. Instrumental music, on the other hand, appeals more to the audience's mood and emotions, creating an indirect effect in terms of advertising (Hoerberichts, 2012). It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the music used in the message is in harmony with the pictures, background, words used, etc., in the advertisement. In other words, the music used should be able to create an atmosphere that fosters a confident attitude and behavior (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998).

All of these traditional forms of appeal are now widely used in digital media and artificial intelligence applications. It is estimated that approximately 5.56 billion people will use the internet by 2025 (We Are Social, 2025). Due to the rapid increase in digitalisation, many areas, particularly marketing, have shifted their focus to the digital sphere. In fact, this has become a necessity rather than a choice. Now, all companies and organisations, whether profit-oriented or not, communicate their messages to their target audiences in digital environments (Köse and Yeygel Çakır, 2019). This provides a framework for effective marketing strategies on digital platforms, encouraging interaction, driving conversions, and building brand loyalty by leveraging consumers' psychological predispositions (Pellegrino, 2024). BJ Fogg, a Stanford University faculty member, states that interpersonal influence is the most significant advancement in the field of persuasion through the use of new technologies (Fogg Social Media, 2010). Results obtained from big data are an essential factor in the implementation of designs aimed at digital persuasion. Using big data, designs suitable for digital persuasion can be created, and strategies and messages can be shaped for websites and social media platforms. This clearly demonstrates the importance of persuasion strategies in the digital environment (Odabaşı, 2022).

3. Methodology

This study was prepared based on the master's thesis titled "Usage of fear appeal in persuasive communication: Case of Ministry of Health's public spotlights," which was conducted at Selçuk University Institute of Social Sciences in 2017. This study has complied with the Research Publication Ethics stated in "Wager E & Kleinert S (2011) Responsible research publication: international standards for authors. A position statement was developed at the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, held in Singapore from July 22 to 24, 2010. Chapter 50 in Mayer T & Steneck N (eds) Promoting Research Integrity in a Global Environment. Imperial College Press / World Scientific Publishing, Singapore." For this reason, the authors state that they conducted the research in accordance with the framework of ethical principles. Since it is not a human study, ethical approval is not required.

3.1. Purpose of the study

This study aims to contribute to the field of persuasive communication by providing insights into the use of fear attraction in public settings, which can be effectively incorporated into social marketing and has recently gained increased attention and discussion.

3.2. Population and sample

In this study, a total of 113 PSAs published and supported by the Ministry of Health between 2006 and 2016 were sampled and analysed. In addition to the public service announcements published by the Ministry of Health alone, public service announcements supported or partnered by the Ministry of Health were also included in the study.

At this point, it was considered appropriate to collect the PSAs supported or co-sponsored by the Ministry of Health and refer to them as PSAs published by the Ministry of Health to avoid confusion during the research. While the number of PSAs published by the Ministry of Health alone was determined to be 78 according to the available data, it was found that the remaining 35 PSAs consisted of PSAs in which the Ministry of Health was a partner or supporter (Table 1).

3.3. Method of the study

The methods used were literature review and content analysis. Content analysis is a method that systematically determines content according to certain principles and considers its relationships to one another (Riffe et al., 2014). In this context, the literature review was initially used to determine how fear appeals were employed in persuasive communication within public service announcements broadcast by the Ministry of Health over ten years. Then, within the framework of the theoretical information obtained, the content analysis method was applied.

3.4. Data collection and processing

During the data collection phase of the research, 113 public service announcements (PSAs) broadcast and supported by the Ministry of Health between 2006 and 2016 were examined individually and entered into a coding table. The public service announcements were obtained through the Ministry of Health, General Directorate of Health Development, Department of Health Communication, RTÜK (Radio and Television Supreme Council), and YouTube. The data in the coding table were entered into SPSS version 23 and analysed. Frequency analysis and cross-tabulation analysis were used.

The analyzed announcements were manually categorized, and a coding scale was created. Twenty announcements were selected as a sample, and two researchers coded them according to this coding scale. The reliability coefficient was calculated to be 0.9, which was deemed sufficient for the research's reliability. $R = 2(C_{1,2}) / (C_1 + C_2)$ $0.9 = 2(18) / (20 + 20)$ (R =Reliability coefficient; $C_{1,2}$ =Number of common coding by two researchers; C_1 =Number of coding by the first researcher C_2 =Number of coding by the second researcher)

Table 1. Public service announcements supported/partnered by the Ministry of Health

Red Crescent
Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock
Ophthalmological Association of Turkey
Soap and Detergent Manufacturers Association
Turkish Green Crescent Society
Ministry of Education
UNICEF
HETADER (Haemophilia and Thalassaemia Association)
Healthy Generations Association
Confederation of Opticians and Opticians
ONKOD (Organ Transplant Coordinators Association)
HKD (Animal Protection Association)
Turkish Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Association
Child Endocrinology and Diabetes Association
Turkish Thoracic Society
GARD (Global Alliance Against Chronic Respiratory Diseases)
Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation
CFCU (Treasury Finance and Contracts Unit)
WYG (Socio-economic Consultancy Services)
Turkish Radiation Oncology
Sabri Ülker Food Research Foundation
TAPDK (Tobacco and Alcohol Market Regulatory Board)

4. Findings

In this study, a total of 113 PSAs were examined, with a total duration of 1 hour, 27 minutes, and 1 second. The shortest PSA was 21 seconds, and the longest was 2 minutes and 10 seconds. The longest PSA was released before 2012. This is because, according to the Public Service Announcement Directive of 2012, the maximum duration of public service announcements with audio or film features is 45 seconds (www.rtuk.gov.tr).

It can be seen that emotional appeals are used more in public service announcements published or supported by the Ministry of Health (54.0%). The percentage of public service announcements using rational appeal is 46%. Examining public service announcements by sub-category, the use of fear appeal accounts for 36.3%. This is followed by animation appeal with 10.6% and music appeal with 7.1%. Humorous and sexual appeals are not used at all. Let's look at the topics covered by the public service announcements. It is seen that physical topics (various types of disabilities) are used at the lowest rate (5.3%), social issues (pollution, epidemics, organ donation, blood donation) at the highest rate (70.8%), and health topics (health services, various diseases; diabetes, obesity, cancer, etc.) at the highest rate. It can be seen that the Ministry of Health broadcasts informative public service announcements on general health issues at a rate of 31.9%. Examples of public service announcements that provide information on health issues include how a disease can be transmitted, how to protect yourself, precautions to take, and how to eat, among other topics. This is followed by similar proportions of PSAs on social issues (23.9%) and on reducing and preventing the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, etc. (23.0%), which can be grouped under the heading of bad habits. Public service announcements on health services come third with a rate of 21.2%. These types of public service announcements include the promotion of services provided by the Ministry of Health (Table 2).

Table 2. Appeal types and problems covered in public service announcements

	f	%
Type of appeal		
Rational	52	46,0
Emotional	61	54,0
Total	113	100,0
Type of emotional appeal		
Fear	41	36,3
Animation	12	10,6
Music	8	7,1
Not Used	52	46,0
Total	113	100,0
Problems covered		
Physical	6	5,3
Social	27	23,9
Health	80	70,8
Total	113	100,0
Topics covered		
Use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs etc.	26	23,0
Informative about general health issues	36	31,9
Health Services	24	21,2
Social Issues	27	23,9
Total	113	100,0

It can be seen that rational appeal, which appeals to reason and logic, is used more frequently in public service announcements that provide information about health services (17.7%) and in informative public service announcements on general health issues (15.0%). Emotional appeal is used in public service announcements about the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, etc., by 22.1% and in informative public service announcements about general health issues by 16.8%. The topics where rational appeal and emotional appeal are used in close conjunction are public service announcements on general health and social issues. This can be explained by the fact that informative public service announcements about health appeal to people's emotional side. In contrast, the instructive part appeals more to their logic, and social issues have both informative and emotional features. Statistically, there is a significant relationship between the subject of the public service announcement and the type of appeal used ($X^2=32.458$; $p<0.05$) (Table 3).

Regarding emotional appeal and the topics covered, it is seen that fear appeal is used to a large extent in public service announcements on the use of substances such as alcohol, tobacco, drugs, etc., with a total rate of 23.0%, and 21.2% respectively. Apart from this, animation appeal is most frequently used in informative PSAs on general health problems, with a rate of 7.1%; music appeal is used in social issues, with a rate of 4.4%, and in other areas, with a rate of 0.9%. In the public service announcements broadcast and supported by the Ministry of Health, fear appeal is mainly used. Among the fear elements, 10.6% disease, 7.1% physical and psychological disorders, and these are followed by death, regret, and threat elements in close proportions. The fear element related to disease is used more in public service announcements about alcohol, tobacco, and drug use than in others. Again, the fear of death, which is present in almost everyone, is used more in public service announcements about these bad habits

than in others. Second, the elements of fear that emphasise physical and mental disorders, which are used intensively, are more common in public service announcements about general health problems.

The fact that the solution to the specified problem is also clearly stated constitutes an essential point in terms of persuasion. It is seen that the public service announcements subject to this study, at a rate of 87.6%, clearly and explicitly present the solution proposal to the target audience. When using fear appeals, the presentation of the solution is as important as whether it is given before or after the fearful message in terms of the success of the persuasion it is intended to achieve. This is because the solution is more effective when it is given immediately after the message (Gass & Seiter, 2003:288). The Ministry of Health prefers to present the solution proposal after the fearful message in 35.4% of the public service announcements it broadcasts and supports (Table 4).

Table 3. Distribution of appeal types and subjects covered

Subjects according to appeal types	Type of emotional appeal	f	%
Use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs etc.	Rational	1	0,9
	Emotional	25	22,1
Informative about general health issues	Rational	17	15,0
	Emotional	19	16,8
Health Services	Rational	20	17,7
	Emotional	4	3,5
Social Issues	Rational	14	12,4
	Emotional	13	11,5
Total	Rational	52	46,0
	Emotional	61	54,0
Subjects according to emotional appeal types	Emotional appeal types		
Use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs etc.	Fear	24	21,2
	Animation	0	0,0
	Music	1	0,9
	No Use	1	0,9
	Fear	10	8,8
Informative on general health	Animation	8	7,1
	Music	1	0,9
	No Use	17	15
	Fear	0	0
Health Services	Animation	3	2,7
	Music	1	0,9
	No Use	20	17,7
	Fear	7	6,2
Social Issues	Animation	1	0,9
	Music	5	4,4
	No Use	14	12,4
	Fear	41	36,3
Total	Animation	12	10,6
	Music	8	7,1
	No Use	52	46
Fear elements			
Illness		12	10,6
Threat		4	3,5
Loss		1	,9
Regret		6	5,3
Death		7	6,2
Violence		3	2,7
Physical and psychological disorders		8	7,1
Not Used		72	63,7
Total		113	100,0

It can be seen that 78 public service announcements contain horror elements between 00 and 10 seconds. However, public service announcements that do not use horror elements are also included in this period. Therefore, it can be said that the public service announcements in this range contain a small amount of horror elements in terms of duration. It can be seen that 17 public service announcements contain horror elements in 22-32 seconds, 12 public service announcements contain horror elements in 11-21 seconds, 5 public service announcements contain horror elements in 33-43 seconds and 1 public service announcement contains horror elements in the longest duration range of 44-55 seconds. It can be said that the public service announcement in the last range contains horror elements in terms of duration (Table 4).

Table 4. Existence of solutions and times allocated for fear element

Solution	f	%
Existed	99	87,6
Not Existed	14	12,4
Total	113	100,0
Time of proposing solution		
Before	1	,9
After	40	35,4
No fearful messages used	72	63,7
Total	113	100,0
Time allocated to the fear element (sec.)		
00-10 sec.	78	69,0
11-21 sec.	12	10,6
22-32 sec.	17	15,0
33-43 sec.	5	4,4
44-54 sec.	1	,9
Total	113	100,0

Table 5. Sources of persuasive elements

Source of persuasive elements	f	%	
Reliable and Expert People	8	7,1	
Popular People	10	8,8	
People Similar to the Target Group	81	71,7	
Other	14	12,4	
Total	113	100,0	
Source of persuasive elements acc. to appeal type	Appeal type		
Reliable and expert people	Rational	7	6,2
	Emotional	1	0,9
Popular people	Rational	6	5,3
	Emotional	4	3,5
People Similar to the Target Group	Rational	36	31,9
	Emotional	45	39,8
Other	Rational	3	2,7
	Emotional	11	9,7
Total	Rational	52	46,0
	Emotional	61	54,0
Source of pers. elements acc. to emot. appeal type	Emot. app.type		
Reliable and expert people	Fear	0	0,0
	Animation	0	0,0
	Music	1	0,9
	No use	7	6,2
Popular people	Fear	2	1,8
	Animation	1	0,9
	Music	1	0,9
	No use	6	5,3
People similar to the target group	Fear	35	31,0
	Animation	4	3,5
	Music	6	5,3
	No use	36	31,9
Other	Fear	4	3,5
	Animation	7	6,2
	Music	0	0,0
	No use	3	2,7
Total	Fear	41	36,3
	Animation	12	10,6
	Music	8	7,1
	No use	52	46,0

Looking at the elements used to create fear and the durations, the fear elements in the 00-10 second range, which we define as mild fear appeals, consist of violence, disease, regret and loss. The sickness element is present in all but the longest duration, but is used more intensively in what we call the medium duration range. The only

PSA in the 44-54 second range, which we define as a strong fear appeal, emphasises the fear of regret. The small number of PSAs between 44-54 seconds should also be taken into account here.

Examining the characteristics of the people chosen as sources in the public service announcements studied reveals that those most preferred are individuals similar to the target, with a high rate of 71.7%. The reason for this can be attributed to the belief that similarity has a great effect (O'Keefe, 2002:199-200). Apart from this, it can be seen that famous people are used at a rate of 8.8% and reliable and expert people at a rate of 7.1%. The other category is public service announcements, which use animation, voice-over only, photographs, and children (Table 5).

Table 6. Message types of persuasive elements

Type of message		f	%
One-way		38	33,6
Message containing numerical data		10	8,8
Positive statements		20	17,7
Negative statements		29	25,7
Fearful message		16	14,2
Total		113	100,0
Message types acc. to appeal types	Appeal type		
One-way	Rational	27	23,9
	Emotional	11	9,7
Message containing numerical data	Rational	9	8,0
	Emotional	1	0,9
Positive statements	Rational	13	11,5
	Emotional	7	6,2
Negative statements	Rational	3	2,7
	Emotional	26	23,0
Fearful messages	Rational	0	0,0
	Emotional	16	14,2
Total	Rational	52	46,0
	Emotional	61	54,0
Message types acc. to emot. appeal types			
One-way	Fear	0	0
	Animation	9	8
	Music	2	1,8
	No use	27	23,9
Message containing numerical data	Fear	0	0
	Animation	1	0,09
	Music	0	0
	No use	9	8
Positive statements	Fear	0	0
	Animation	2	1,8
	Music	5	4,4
	No use	13	11,5
Negative statements	Fear	26	23
	Animation	0	0
	Music	0	0
	No use	3	2,7
Fearful messages	Fear	15	13,3
	Animation	0	0
	Music	1	0,9
	No use	0	0
Total	Fear	41	36,3
	Animation	12	10,6
	Music	8	7,1
	No use	52	46

Examining the distribution of persuasive elements in relation to the source, by type of appeal, reveals that sources similar to the target are used in 31.9% of public service announcements employing rational appeal and 39.8% of those using emotional appeal. In the case of public service announcements in which famous people or persons are preferred as sources, there is again a slight difference of 3.5% for emotional appeal and 5.3% for

rational appeal. The source type where the difference is more noticeable compared to other elements is reliable and expert people. This source type is preferred more in the rational appeal type, which appeals to reason and logic, with a usage rate of 6.2%, than in the emotional appeal type, with a usage rate of 0.9% (Table 5). Let's look at the usage rates of persuasive elements related to the source in terms of emotional appeal. The highest rate for fear appeal is 31.0% among people similar to the target. For animation appeal, the other category is 6.2%, and it should be noted that this category also includes animated public service announcements. Finally, for music appeal, the use of sources similar to the target is preferred at a rate of 5.3%. (Table 5).

In the messages of the public service announcements examined, 33.6% were one-way messages, 25.3% negative expressions, 17.7% positive expressions, 14.2% messages containing fear, and 8.8% messages containing numerical data. The distinction between negative expressions and fear messages is made according to the predominant use of the fear element in the given message. For example, while the expression 'smoking kills', which directly and openly emphasises the element of death, is considered a fear message, the milder and indirect expressions, such as 'children's inactivity harms both their physical and social development', are considered negative expressions. An example of messages containing positive expressions is the expression 'quit smoking to live these precious moments more beautifully' (Table 6).

If the one-way message used is considered as a kind of informative message type, it can be considered as a suitable message type for rational appeal. In Table 18 we see that one-way messages are used at a rate of 23.9% in rational appeals. This rate drops to 9.7% for emotional appeals. It can be seen that, with the exception of one PSA, the rest of the messages containing numerical data are in PSAs where rational appeal is used. As expected, negative and fearful expressions are more frequent in PSAs using emotional appeal. There is a significant relationship between the persuasive elements used in the message and the type of appeal used ($X^2=48.771$; $p<0.05$). In public service announcements where emotional appeal was preferred, it was observed that all messages containing fear and most of the negative expressions were grouped under the heading of fear appeal. 2.7% of negative expressions were used in PSAs where rational appeal was used (Table 6).

Table 7. Evidence used in public service announcements

Evidence type	f	%
Research results	7	6,2
Expert view	16	14,2
Graphics and statistics	3	2,7
Images from life	34	30,1
Not used	53	46,9
Total	113	100,0
Evidences	Type of emotional appeal	
	Fear	3 2,7
Research results	Animation	3 2,7
	Music	0 0
	No use	1 0,9
	Fear	1 0,9
Expert view	Animation	0 0
	Music	0 0
	No use	15 13,3
	Fear	0 0
Graphics and Statistics	Animation	2 1,8
	Music	0 0
	No use	1 0,9
	Fear	13 11,5
Images from Life	Animation	0 0
	Music	5 4,4
	No use	16 14,2
	Fear	24 21,2
Not used	Animation	7 6,2
	Music	3 2,7
	No use	19 16,8
	Fear	41 36,3
Total	Animation	12 10,6
	Music	8 7,1
	No use	52 46

The proportion of public service announcements that used real-life examples was 30.1%. In addition, expert opinion was preferred by 14.2%, research results by 6.2% and graphics and statistics by 2.7%. Among the types of emotional appeal, the use of real-life scenes is more common in horror appeals (11.5%). The use of graphics and statistics, with a total rate of 2.7%, is preferred in animation appeal, with 1.8%. Again, as can be seen from the table, expert opinion with 13.3% and real-life sections with 14.2% are preferred more in the rational appeal type (Table 7).

Different tactics can be used to persuade the target audience, depending on the subject to be persuaded. In the public service announcements broadcast or supported by the Ministry of Health, the table shows that these tactics are not very much preferred. The tactics that are preferred more than others are 'not only that' (5.3%) and 'answering a question with a question' (4.4%). Examples of the 'not only that' tactic are statements such as 'smoking harms not only you but also your child'. As can be seen from the table, a very large proportion of the PSAs examined are in colour, 77.9%. While black and white and colour PSAs account for 16.8% of the total, black and white PSAs account for the lowest percentage at 5.3% (Table 8). Looking at the use of colour according to emotional appeal, black and white and coloured PSAs contain 8.8% fear appeal, while black and white PSAs contain 3.5% fear appeal and 1.8% animation appeal. Coloured PSAs used 23.9% fear appeal, 7.1% music appeal, and 8.0% animation appeal. Coloured PSAs used 38.9% rational appeal, which is rated outside the emotional appeal types. It was also observed that in both black and white and coloured PSAs, coloured parts were more likely to have solutions (Table 8). In Table 8, which also shows the visual style of public service announcements, it can be seen that 77.9% of the public service announcements broadcast on television use images. This is followed by 11.5% of PSAs supported by photographs and 10.6% of PSAs supported by animation. Figure 11 shows an excerpt from one of the examples of public service announcements supported mainly by various pictures (Table 8).

Table 8. Tactics, colours, and visual types used

Strategies	f	%
Yes-yes	3	2,7
First small then big	1	0,9
First big, then small	1	0,9
Increasing requests	2	1,8
Answering a question with a question	5	4,4
Not only that tactic	6	5,3
Give first, take later tactic	1	0,9
Taking place	4	3,5
Not used	90	79,6
Total	113	100,0
Colours Used		
Black-white	6	5,3
Colourful	88	77,9
Black & white and colourful together	19	16,8
Total	113	100,0
Colours used acc. to emotion. appeal types	Type of emotional appeal	
Black&white	Fear	4 3,5
	Animation	2 1,8
	Music	0 0
	No use	0 0
Colourful	Fear	27 23,9
	Animation	9 8
	Music	8 7,1
	No use	44 38,9
Black & white and colourful together	Fear	10 8,8
	Animation	1 0,9
	Music	0 0
	No use	8 7,1
Total	Fear	41 36,3
	Animation	12 10,6
	Music	8 7,1
	No use	52 46
Visual types		
Photographs	13	11,5
Animation	12	10,6
Video/Film	88	77,9
Total	113	100,0

Table 9. Slogan and emblem usage in public service announcements

Slogan and emblem usage	Frequency	Percentage
Only Emblem	53	46,9
Only Slogan (Visual)	1	,9
Slogan (Visual) and Emblem Together	59	52,2
Total	113	100,0
Usage of fear in slogans and emblems		
Yes	16	14,2
No	97	85,8
Total	113	100,0
Location place of announcements		
Outdoor	12	10,6
Studio	67	59,3
Both	34	30,1
Total	113	100,0
Use of fear element in the venue		
Yes	37	32,7
No	76	67,3
Total	113	100,0

Table 10. Emotion given by the sound

The emotion of sound		f	%
Enthusiasm		15	13,3
Sadness		28	24,8
Fear		23	20,4
Other		47	41,6
Total		113	100,0
The emotion of sound acc. to appeal type		f	%
Enthusiasm	Rational	4	3,5
	Emotional	11	9,7
Sadness	Rational	3	2,7
	Emotional	25	22,1
Fear	Rational	0	0
	Emotional	23	20,4
Other	Rational	45	39,8
	Emotional	2	1,8
Total	Rational	52	46
	Emotional	61	54
The emotion of sound		f	%
Enthusiasm	Emotional appeal type		
	Fear	0	0
	Animation	9	8
	Music	2	1,8
Sadness	No Use	4	3,5
	Fear	18	15,9
	Animation	1	0,9
	Music	6	5,3
Fear	No Use	3	2,7
	Fear	23	20,4
	Animation	0	0
	Music	0	0
Other	No Use	0	0
	Fear	0	0
	Animation	2	1,8
	Music	0	0
Total	No Use	45	39,8
	Fear	41	36,3
	Animation	12	10,6
	Music	8	7,1
		52	46

It can be seen that in the public service announcements studied, the slogan and emblem together were preferred in 52.2% of cases, the symbol alone in 46.9% of cases, and the slogan alone without the emblem in 0.9% of cases. In short, emblems were used extensively in the PSAs, and the research also found that the vast majority of these

were the institutional emblems of the Ministry of Health and its partners (Table 9). Table 9 also determines whether the element of fear is included in slogans and emblems. The slogans used verbally in the public service announcements were also examined, and it was found that the element of fear was used in both slogans and emblems at a rate of 14.2%. For example, in the slogan 'there is death at the end' in the public service announcement on hookah use and in the slogan 'neglect, not stove, kills' in another public service announcement on stove poisoning, the word death appears as an element of fear (Table 9).

When looking at the location preference in the corresponding PSA analysis, 59.3% used a studio, 30.1% both outdoor and studio, and 10.6% only outdoor. In the public service announcements published or supported by the Department of Health, the visual element of fear was used 32.7% of the time. Considering that the total rate of use of fear appeal was 36.3%, it can be interpreted that the presence of a visual element of fear in the venue was widely preferred in terms of fear appeal. Rational appeal, animation appeal, and music appeal were also included, and there was no visual element of fear in the venue at a rate of 67.3%. It was observed that the visual aspects of fear used in the venue were generally created by individuals who were harmed by the problem addressed and the situations and environments that caused the problem (Table 9).

In all the public service announcements studied, the use of sound in different characters that are appropriate to the message given, supportive, and aimed at influencing the audience was preferred at a rate of 100%. When the preference rates of these sounds were examined according to emotions, 24.8% preferred sounds that made the audience feel sad, 20.4% preferred sounds that made the audience feel afraid, and 13.3% preferred sounds in happy and hopeful tones. The neutral option, with a rate of 41.6%, mainly includes sounds that do not reflect a character, sounds accompanied by an informative sound-over, and various ambient sounds (Table 10).

When examining the distribution of different sounds used in the public service announcements studied, they were categorized by their type of appeal. It is observed that joyful, enthusiastic sounds are used in 9.7% of cases, sad, emotional sounds in 22.1%, and fearful sounds in 20.4%, primarily in the emotional appeal type. Neutral sounds are used more in rational appeals at a rate of 39.8% and, as mentioned above, informative external voices dominate the neutral category. There is a statistical correlation between these two variables. In other words, the emotion conveyed by the sound varies according to the type of appeal used. ($\chi^2=82.701$; $p<0.05$) (Table 10).

When looking at the characteristics of the sounds used according to the emotional appeals, we can see that the happy emotional sounds are used in 8.0% of animations, 1.8% of music, and 3.5% of rational appeals, since they are not used in these emotional appeal types. It can be seen that the sad emotional sounds are mainly used in 15.9% of fear appeals, 5.3% of music appeals, and 2.7% of rational appeals. As expected, the sound type that gives a sense of fear is used in fear appeal with 20.4% (Table 10).

5. Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this study is to contribute to the field of persuasive communication with findings on the use of fear attraction in public spots, which can be incorporated into social marketing and which have recently been encountered and discussed more frequently. In this study, the public service announcements published and supported by the Ministry of Health were examined to see how and to what extent scare tactics were used. A total of 113 public service announcements were analysed.

5.1. Theoretical implications

Rational appeals were more likely to be used in health services and in informative public service announcements about health. Looking at the fear elements, internal diseases, physical and psychological disorders were used slightly more than other elements. The element of death was used in 6.2% of the messages. At this point, it can be said that the Ministry of Health and its partners have implemented a correct strategy for young people in terms of the use of fear elements by including more disease elements in the public service announcements where they use fear appeals. If we look at the priority and continuation of the solution suggestion in terms of fear appeal; it was found that within the total 36.3% of fear appeal, solution suggestions were offered at a rate of 35.4% after the message containing fear.

The study analysed fear appeal in terms of persuasive communication. It was found that persuasion can be achieved with different appeal strategies, both message-related and source-related. In the public service announcements published and supported by the Ministry of Health, the highest rate of persuasive elements used regarding the source was people with similar characteristics to the target at 71.7%. The reason for this is that people tend to be more influenced by the group they belong to or by people they think are similar to them (Sakallı, 2001).

Again in this direction, the real-life sections were presented as evidence with a rate of 30.1% compared to other elements. We can say that this was the most used element for the same reason as similarity. No evidence was used in 46.9% of the public service announcements. However, it was observed that an effect was created with various fictions based on real life. 7.9% of the PSAs examined were in colour, while 5.3% were in black and white. Of the public service announcements broadcast in black and white, 3.5% were public service announcements that used scare tactics. The proportion of PSAs broadcast in both black and white and in colour is 16.8%, and the study found that when PSAs were broadcast in both black and white and in colour, there was a greater use of colour images together with solutions. The rate of inclusion of elements of fear in the slogans and emblems used is 14.2%. The proportion of fear elements visually present in the room is 32.7%. This ratio appears to be high when we look at the total use of fear appeals (36.3%). In public service announcements using fear appeal, 15.9% of sad sounds and 20.4% of fear-inducing sounds are used to reinforce the effect by supporting the visuals and messages in the same direction.

In the research, both fear and rational appeals were preferred in close proportions, mostly depending on the topic and purpose, in public service announcements broadcast and supported by the Ministry of Health. While fear appeal was most preferred in public service announcements about the use of harmful substances such as tobacco and drugs, rational appeal was more preferred in public service announcements about the services provided by the Ministry of Health. Public service announcements have tried to achieve the desired effect by using different elements of fear, sometimes with sound, sometimes with colours, and by using other persuasive strategies in different proportions.

There are various studies based on different methods and topics related to fear appeal. In the field of politics, Balcı (2006) conducted a study in his doctoral thesis on the use of fear appeal in negative political advertisements in terms of persuasive communication. Gürdin (2016) measured the effectiveness of fear appeal in anti-smoking advertisements using brain imaging techniques in his doctoral thesis. Çubukçu (2011) analysed the effects of fear appeal used in anti-smoking advertisements on young people in their adolescence. The common result of these impact studies is that fear appeal is effective on the target audience but may vary depending on various variables. Another study in this field was conducted by Çakar (2009) in his master's thesis, which analysed the use of fear appeal in insurance advertisements using content analysis. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature on persuasive health communication by showing that in public spot announcements rational and fear-based appeals are equally preferred. In doing so, it helps to fill a gap in existing literature that has often focused on either fear appeals or rational appeals. The findings also extend theories of persuasive communication by illustrating how visual and auditory elements (such as color, sound, and realism) act as complementary cues that strengthen the overall persuasive impact.

5.2. Practical implications

Beyond its theoretical contributions, this study also intends practical insights for health communication practitioners, campaign designers, and policymakers. The findings indicate that audiovisual elements (such as color, sound, and the balance between fictional and real-life scenarios) in messages that use fear appeals are frequently used to enhance the effectiveness of persuasive appeals. In the future, ministries can allocate resources more efficiently, achieve higher audience engagement, and achieve better health outcomes by systematically analyzing which appeals are most effective for different health topics.

5.3. Limitations and future research directions

This study has attempted to evaluate how fear appeals have been used in public service announcements broadcast or supported by the Ministry of Health in terms of persuasive communication. The main limitation of this study is its restriction to public service announcements published by the Turkish Ministry of Health between 2006 and 2016, and its limited scope with regard to practices in Turkey. More comprehensive and comparative results regarding health communication strategies would be provided by future studies that analyse broader time periods, particularly more recent ones, and compare public service announcements from different countries. In this context, different studies can be conducted to investigate the target audience, the role of fear appeal or other appeals in such use, and whether the persuasion achieves its purpose. In addition, different variables can be studied, such as the direction in which the appeals used in these public service announcements have an effect when the necessary environment is provided, and what type of appeal is more appropriate and effective at what level. In addition, evaluating fear appeals or other appeals from different perspectives in terms of persuasion can provide resources for sectors wishing to use these appeals more effectively and accurately. While fear appeals are preferred in areas

related to the basic fears of individuals, studies on which situations and sectors, and to what extent other appeals are preferred can also develop different perspectives in this area.

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Author contribution statements

The authors equally conducted the research design and implementation, analysis, and article writing without using AI applications.

Disclosure statement

The authors reported no potential competing interests.

Ethical committee approval

This study was prepared based on the master's thesis titled "Usage of fear appeal in persuasive communication: Case of Ministry of Health's public spotlights," which was conducted at Selçuk University Institute of Social Sciences in 2017. This study has complied with the Research Publication Ethics stated in "Wager E & Kleinert S (2011) Responsible research publication: international standards for authors. A position statement was developed at the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, held in Singapore from July 22 to 24, 2010. Chapter 50 in Mayer T & Steneck N (eds) Promoting Research Integrity in a Global Environment. Imperial College Press / World Scientific Publishing, Singapore." For this reason, the authors state that they conducted the research in accordance with the framework of ethical principles. Since it is not a human study, ethical approval is not required.

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Society 5.0 in business management: A bibliometric analysis

Eda Köse

Society 5.0 in business management: A bibliometric analysis

Eda Köse¹

¹Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, Nevşehir, Türkiye, E-mail: edakose@nevsehir.edu.tr, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9537-3672>

Article Info	Abstract
Research Article Received: 1 July 2025 Revised: 25 August 2025 Accepted: 26 August 2025 Keywords: Society 5.0, Business management, Systematic literature review	<i>This study aims to examine the Society 5.0 approach in the field of business management through bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review methodologies, thereby enabling assessments regarding the development of Society 5.0. Seventy articles published between 2020 and 2024 from the Scopus database have been analyzed. During the bibliometric analysis phase, the distributions of publishing countries, years, and keywords are evaluated. In the systematic literature review phase, thematic areas are identified as sustainability, digital transformation, Japan, cognitive mapping, and Democracy 5.0. The study evaluates different research perspectives related to the Society 5.0 approach in social sciences, particularly in the business field, and makes determinations regarding the current state and future development. The study provides valuable insights to stakeholders and managers in social sciences, particularly in business management, as well as policymakers, concerning the current state and future of the Society 5.0 approach.</i>

1. Introduction

Globally, a significant wave of transformation is underway across various aspects of life, with digital transformation serving as the primary driving force (Chen, 2017). This rapid transformation is likened to a double-edged sword; while it provides benefits to human life, it also possesses negative effects that may cause harm. Balancing the advantages of technological advancements with potential risks and ensuring their contribution to society as a whole will depend on the strategies and approaches adopted (Calp & Bütüner, 2022). Society 5.0 (S5.0) emphasizes the importance of technology in society by integrating the virtual and real worlds, focusing on collaboration between humans and technological systems to address societal challenges. S5.0, initially emerging in Japan, responds more to human-centered technological developments (Calp & Bütüner, 2022).

In this context, humans are not merely subjects of technology but relatively active agents controlling the development of science and technology (Balogun et al., 2020). S5.0 is expected to significantly contribute to societal progress by prioritizing technological advancements over human needs and promoting the enhancement of general welfare. Consequently, innovations in the business field are inevitable. This study aims to examine the Society 5.0 approach by evaluating different research perspectives related to social sciences, particularly in the business field, thereby enabling assessments regarding S5.0 development. Literature sources that can assist in identifying themes of interest associated with the S5.0 approach are utilized. Furthermore, by evaluating the impact domains related to S5.0, the future direction of research is determined.

2. Literature review

Human history can be read through phases in which the economic and social order has undergone radical changes, triggered by successive revolutions and technological and social transformations. The Society 5.0 (S5.0) formula stands out today as the next stage of this evolution, spanning from hunter-gatherer society (Society 1.0) to agricultural (Society 2.0), industrial society (Society 3.0), and information society (Society 4.0). S5.0 is a vision of a

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"super-smart society" that integrates advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, autonomous robots, the Internet of Things (IoT), and big data, prioritizing well-being (Çipi et al., 2023). This situation necessitates reframing businesses and public policies to create measurable social/environmental impact and build ethical, fair, and accessible digital ecosystems (Santos et al., 2024).

The Japan Business Federation envisions S5.0 as an "imaginative capital" that solves problems and adds value to sustainable development by digitally combining human creativity. This approach, conceived as a "system of systems," aims to reduce carbon emissions by connecting different systems via the internet through energy management and highways. It also aims to leverage advanced technologies and data sharing to achieve greater efficiency and sustainability, find solutions to problems, and raise living standards. Furthermore, it seeks to foster innovation and positive change by collaborating across sectors and partners (Narvaez Rojas et al., 2021). In this context, S5.0 is not merely a technological innovation but a comprehensive transformation of all aspects of processes and strategies. In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, greater integration is crucial for fostering innovation and maintaining a competitive advantage (Kao et al., 2024).

Nagy and Hajrizi (2019) describe two goals for the initial implementations of S5.0. First, to promote the digitalization and restructuring of new values that will accelerate the pace of development in international and developed economies and societies; second, to reorganize people's lives so that individuals can achieve their desired lifestyles in a safer, more enjoyable, and more peaceful way. Furthermore, S5.0 contributes to socioeconomic spending management by focusing on people's interests through ensuring social equity through sustainable development.

Acer & Alkan (2024) identified trends in the S5.0 concept by employing bibliometric analysis methodology on articles obtained from the Web of Science database in their study. According to the analysis results, Japan was identified as the country with the highest number of publications and citations, while the term "Industry 4.0" emerged prominently as a keyword. Mahat (2024) examined publications related to S5.0 in the management field in their study. Accordingly, terms such as technology, human, digital, and industry were commonly utilized. Sec-kin & Kose (2024) conducted a bibliometric analysis related to S5.0 on journals indexed in Scopus between 2017 and 2022. Consequently, keywords such as "Industry 4.0," "student," and "artificial intelligence" were observed to be prominent. Purnomo et al. (2021) found that the number of international publications in the S5.0 field increased annually as a result of bibliometric analysis of S5.0-related articles published in SCOPUS between 2017 and 2019.

In light of the studies summarized above, this research examines the trends of the S5.0 concept in the field of business management and its position in the literature. The research questions of the study have been defined in accordance with the study's purpose and scope. Accordingly, the research questions of the study are determined as follows:

1. Which concepts does Society 5.0 emphasize in the social sciences?
2. In which countries does it have research studies?
3. How are concepts such as sustainability and digital transformation associated in the literature?

3. Methodology

This study has complied with the Research Publication Ethics stated in "Wager E & Kleinert S (2011) Responsible research publication: international standards for authors. A position statement was developed at the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, held in Singapore from July 22 to 24, 2010. Chapter 50 in Mayer T & Steneck N (eds) Promoting Research Integrity in a Global Environment. Imperial College Press / World Scientific Publishing, Singapore." For this reason, the author states that she conducted the research within the framework of ethical principles. This is a bibliometric analysis and does not require ethics committee approval since it is not a human study.

This study aims to evaluate the effects of digital transformation on social sciences, particularly in the fields of "Business, Management and Accounting, Economics, Econometrics and Finance," by identifying studies focusing on S5.0 in the field of business management. For this purpose, the bibliometric analysis methodology and systematic literature review (SLR) have been employed together. In the study, a methodology has been established based on the "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)" guidelines to enable a comprehensive and systematic examination of the literature. This section summarizes the fundamental

steps of the bibliometric analysis process used in the study and the SLR methodology based on PRISMA principles.

The SCOPUS database was used for S5.0 studies in business management. The SCOPUS database was selected for bibliometric analysis to provide comprehensive content, avoid duplication of effort, and access a greater number of studies (Nair et al., 2024). Furthermore, SCOPUS's inclusion of more journals covering business and management fields reduces the risk of missing publications for this study (Baier-Fuentes et al., 2019).

In this study, the VOSviewer (VOS) software was used to visualize the clustering and similarities of registered publications within the bibliometric analysis process. VOSviewer reveals and visualizes the relationships between articles and citations (Eck & Waltman, 2010), making it an effective tool for creating bibliometric maps and visually presenting diverse information (Sajovic & Podgornik, 2022). Relevant data were collected for the selected bibliometric analysis techniques, and the PRISMA 2020 checklist, which includes guidelines for literature description, evaluation, and synthesis, was used for this purpose (McKenzie et al., 2021; Patalas-Maliszewska & Łosyk, 2024).

The SLR method enables the generation of qualitative and quantitative information by systematically collecting, analyzing, and interpreting studies on a specific topic over a period of many years (Narkede et al., 2024). It also guides the identification of problem areas and provides basic knowledge from the literature, helping to identify future research topics that need to be addressed (McKenzie et al., 2021; Patalas-Maliszewska & Łosyk, 2024).

3.1. Data search

In the study, a preliminary literature review was conducted, and keywords were determined. The terms "S5.0" or "Society 5.0" were used as search terms in titles, abstracts, and keywords from the SCOPUS database. The abstracts, summaries, and keywords of articles related to the search were automatically designed. Although no year-related restrictions were imposed during the search, as articles using the term "S5.0" showed an increase from 2020 onwards, the search period was limited to the years 2020-2024. Additionally, the study was limited to English-language publications and articles.

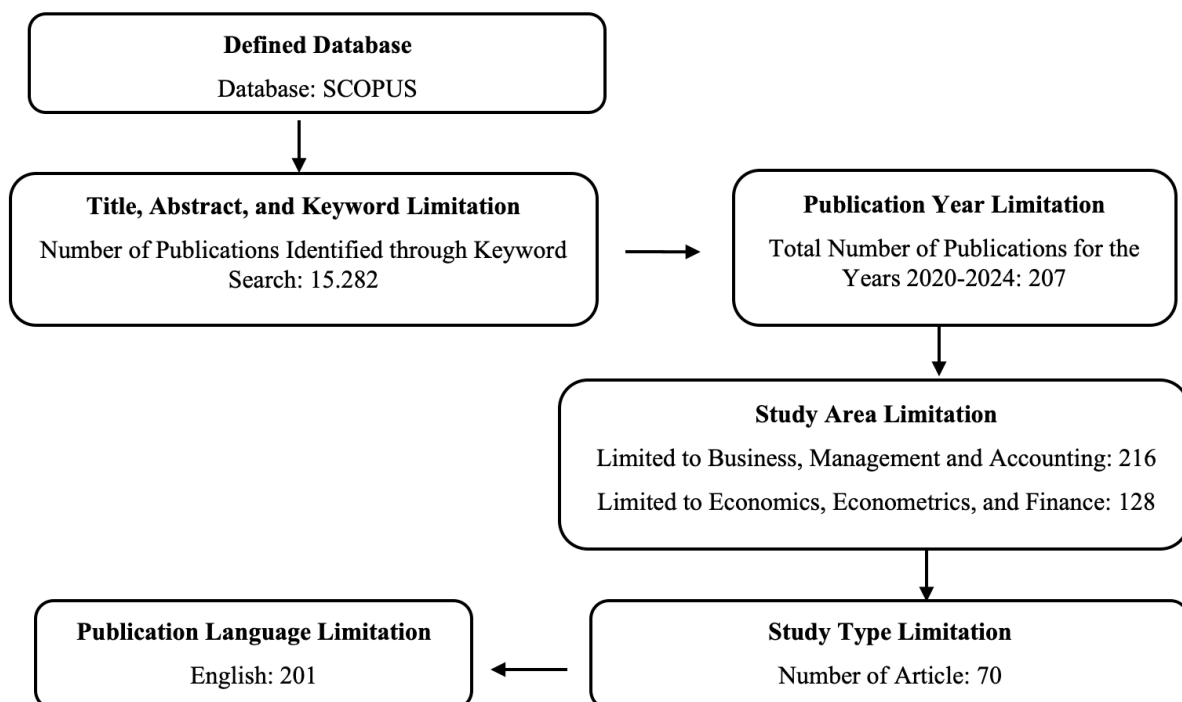


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart Followed in the Study

As a result of the search conducted, 15,282 studies were accessed. Since the literature study was oriented explicitly toward social sciences, the subject area was restricted. In the study, to ensure the specificity of the business field, it was determined as "Business, Management and Accounting" and "Economics, Econometrics and Finance." Within this scope, 216 studies in Business, Management, and Accounting, and 128 studies in Economics,

Econometrics, and Finance were accessed. Following the removal of studies with missing data and those outside the scope, 70 studies remained. The study process was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA process. The evaluation processes used to determine suitable articles for analysis in the study are illustrated in Figure 1.

The identified 70 studies were initially subjected to bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer software. Subsequently, in the SLR process, groupings based on bibliographic coupling were conducted, and study contents for specific thematic areas are presented in detail. During the implementation of SLR, adherence to the PRISMA protocol was maintained. Studies belonging to each thematic area were evaluated. In the study, the abstract sections of thematically determined areas were first analyzed, followed by full-text examinations of relevant studies in accordance with the themes (Rajumesh, 2023).

4. Findings

4.1. Bibliometric analysis findings

Bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer software to map author, journal, and country collaborations for the 70 articles identified as targets, in accordance with the keywords determined in the study. VOSviewer software is widely preferred for the visualization and analysis of bibliometric networks (Afzal, 2024). VOSviewer software was also utilized to obtain bibliographic information regarding the importance of topics researched in S5.0 literature and to reveal noteworthy information and patterns regarding the significance of various themes in the research context (Ghobakhloo et al., 2024). The number of publications by year in the study is shown in Figure 2.

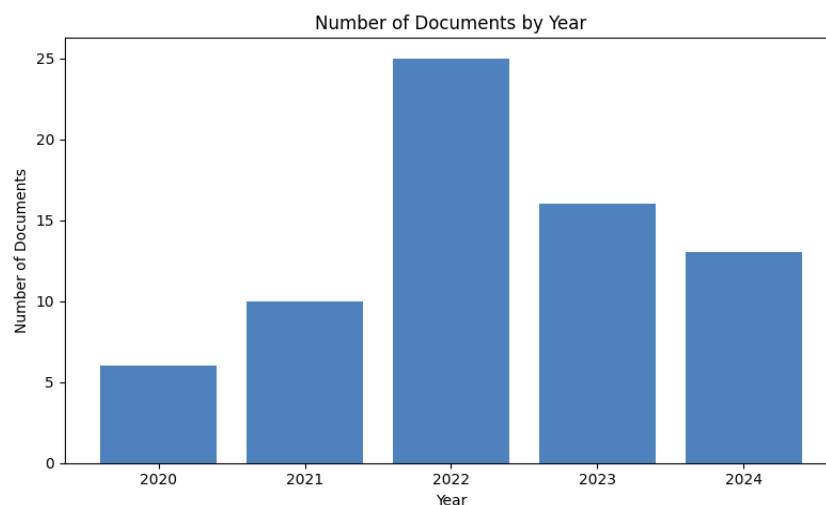


Figure 2. Distribution of article studies by year

Figure 2 shows that academic interest in the S5.0 topic experienced a significant increase, particularly in 2022. This increase in 2022 is likely attributed to the concept's greater adoption in international literature and its emergence as a prominent research topic in the business field. While interest in 2023 and 2024 continues, a decrease in the number of publications is observed. The ranking of the top ten countries where publications were conducted is presented in Figure 3.

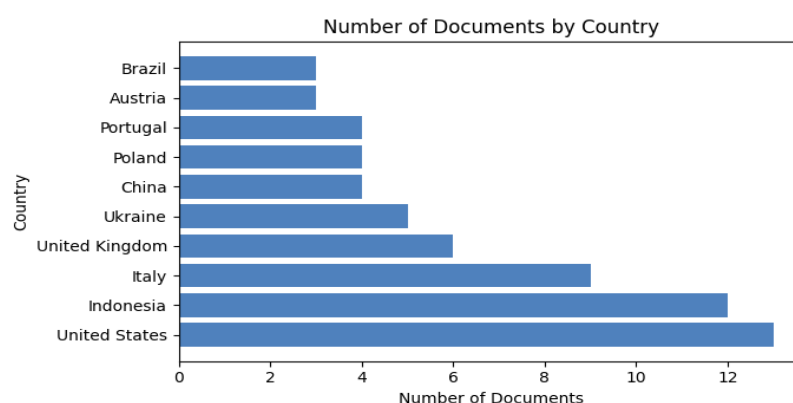


Figure 3. Distribution of the top ten countries of broadcasting

According to the information provided in Figure 3, while S5.0 is a global focus of interest, more intensive research is observed particularly in the United States (USA), Indonesia, and Italy. The USA's position at the top of the list is likely due to its strong academic and technological infrastructure in this field. Using a total of 184 keywords by authors and keywords repeated at least three times, 41 keywords that exceeded the threshold value were identified. A keyword network consisting of the identified 41 elements was created. The keyword relationships used in search queries are presented in Figure 4.

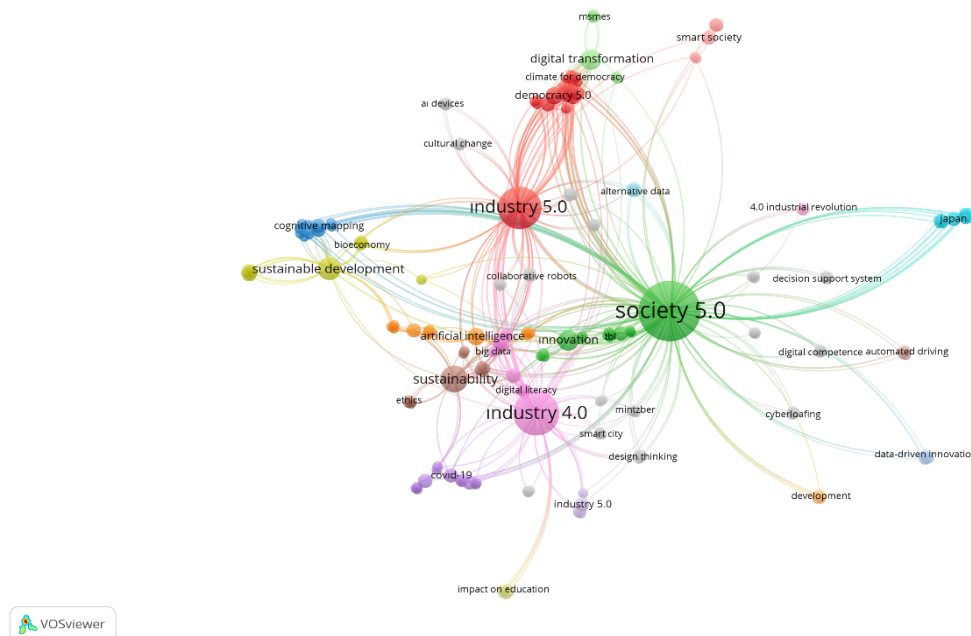


Figure 4. Distribution of the most used keywords

In the distribution of the most frequently used keywords, it is observed that terms such as “S5.0, Industry 5.0, Industry 4.0, sustainable development, innovation, sustainability, artificial intelligence, and digital transformation” are intensively utilized. According to Figure 4, the multidimensional relationships between industrial and societal processes and concepts such as sustainability, innovation, and digitalization are of critical importance in this process.

4.2. Systematic literature review findings

Within the scope of the study, in-depth content analysis was conducted on selected study texts to comprehensively reveal the reflections of the S5.0 concept in the literature. In the content analysis, the advantages and disadvantages offered by the S5.0 approach, as well as the areas and sectors intensively focused on in the literature, were systematically determined. The clustering related to thematic areas identified within the scope of SLR is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of thematic areas identified under SLR

SOCIETY 5.0	Sustainability and sustainable development	Environmental and sustainability Social welfare Resolution of global issues
	Digital transformation	Artificial intelligence Big data Internet of things (IoT) Smart systems
	Japan	S5.0 vision Policy and strategy development
	Cognitive mapping	Human-machine interaction Emotional intelligence and technology Mental maps
	Democracy 5.0	Social governance Digital citizenship

During the review and evaluation phase, the company follows predetermined instructions and a standardized update process to ensure content analysis and security (Ghobakhloo et al., 2024). This approach allows for a holistic evaluation of the dimensions, focused ranges, and data segments addressed by the S5.0 approach in the literature.

4.3. S5.0 and sustainability

S5.0's most significant contribution focuses on returning humanity to the center of innovation. Through artificial intelligence and digital transformation, S5.0 is expected to address not only economic dimensions but also social and environmental issues, thereby improving societal well-being. One of the key elements for sustainable development in S5.0 is the implementation of a circular economy that transforms the construction of a "super-smart society" (Alimohammadlou & Khoshsepehr, 2023); this approach is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as it aims to address problems such as poverty, inequality, climate change and resource management through technological innovation and inclusive societal solutions (Thakur et al., 2022).

While Carayannis and Morawska-Jancelewicz (2022c) emphasize that universities and research institutions are critical drivers of digital and green transformations through collaborative use of knowledge and social innovation, they explain that S5.0 presents challenges such as data security, digital inequality, and the environmental impact of digital infrastructure; on the other hand, S5.0 aims to build a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future by placing human well-being and sustainability at the center of innovation and encouraging cross-sectoral collaboration (Thakur et al., 2022).

4.3.1. S5.0 and digital transformation

S5.0 defines human-machine interaction not only as a technical process but also as a human-centered approach encompassing emotions and human values. The core of digital transformation is digital humanism, innovation management in 3D printing technologies, and digital literacy. Within this framework, Magni et al. (2024) explain the role of emotions and human factors in AI-human interaction, describing it as a digital vision that addresses the emotional and social needs of individuals beyond simply facilitating life. In S5.0, artificial intelligence and other digital technologies are designed and implemented to enhance human comfort (Magni et al., 2024).

Within the scope of S5.0, the human-centered and sustainable management of innovative technology plays an active role in the success of digital transformation. Particularly, three-dimensional printing technology contributes to areas such as production, cost advantage, and sustainability, while requiring new strategies and business models for effective management (Marić et al., 2023). Sá et al. (2021) state that digital literacy is one of the main challenges encountered in S5.0. Digital literacy is the competency of individuals to use digital technologies effectively, safely, and critically. For S5.0 to achieve its objectives, the digital literacy level of all individuals needs to be enhanced.

4.3.2. S5.0 and Japan

The S5.0 concept, introduced by the Japanese government, is described as a vision for a super-smart society where advanced technologies are integrated with human-centered values. Narvaez Rojas et al. (2021) state that S5.0 addresses societal problems by leveraging technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and robotics, following the progression from hunter-gatherer, agricultural, industrial, and information societies. S5.0 presents a bold and comprehensive vision for Japan's future, integrating technological innovation with human-centered and sustainable development. The realization of this vision depends on effective leadership, supportive government policies, and inclusiveness. Japan has taken an active role in promoting S5.0, particularly in areas such as autonomous driving. Yamasaki (2024) states that the S5.0 concept emerged as a result of expectations regarding the potential of government policies to enhance safety, efficiency, and quality of life. Whittaker (2024) argues that Japan aims to create a "positive cycle" through S5.0, where economic growth supports more innovation and societal welfare. This approach recognizes that economic, social, and environmental factors are interconnected and establishes S5.0 as a framework for long-term sustainability.

Japan embodies its S5.0 vision in five main areas: health and care, mobility, supply chain, smart infrastructure, and financial technologies. In health and care, the aim is to increase both quality and efficiency through remote monitoring, personalized digital healthcare services, and care robots; in mobility, autonomous and connected transportation, smart traffic management, and rural accessibility are highlighted; in the supply chain, IoT-based traceability, data-driven demand-supply balancing, and flexible logistics networks are established; in smart infrastruc-

ture, smart city applications, sensorization, data platforms, and digital-physical infrastructure with disaster resilience are expanded; and in financial technologies, inclusive and secure services are developed through technologies such as digital payments, open banking, and blockchain (Ari, 2021). S5.0 is a growth strategy for Japan and is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; it aims to enhance quality of life, security, and efficiency by expanding human-centered digital transformation from manufacturing to public services (Duman, 2022).

4.3.3. S5.0 and cognitive mapping

Today, the increasing interest in the S5.0 concept in the literature has led to cognitive mapping analyses to determine the scope of studies in this field. Cognitive mapping visualizes information by integrating technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. Roblek et al. (2021) examined the emergence and development of S5.0 bibliometrically and revealed that S5.0 concentrates on the axes of technology, innovation, sustainability, and societal welfare. It is also emphasized that publications related to S5.0 have increased over the years. Similarly, Purnomo et al. (2021) mapped keywords, collaboration networks, and research trends related to S5.0.

These studies demonstrate that S5.0 represents a new paradigm in terms of knowledge production, sharing, and management. Cognitive mapping, in turn, provides guidance for understanding current and societal developments, policy implementations, and research. Thus, it contributes to developing a common understanding in solving the complex situations created by digital society. For example, in smart city projects, the expectations and perceptions of different sectors can be analyzed through mapping. In this way, the human-centered solutions envisioned by S5.0 can be designed more effectively (Carayannis et al., 2022a; Purnomo et al., 2021; Roblek et al., 2021).

4.3.4. S5.0 and Democracy 5.0

The traditional innovation model is based on communication between the university, industry, and government. Carayannis and Campbell (2021a) created the "quadruple helix" by adding media and civil society to this model. Subsequently, the "quintuple helix" models were formed with the addition of the natural environment. The five dimensions defined as the quintuple helix are related to Industry 5.0 and S5.0 as definitions of developments in society, economy, and democracy (Carayannis Christodoulou et al., 2021c).

The Quadruple and Quintuple Helix innovation systems aim to optimize the design and functioning of modern, democratic societies and economies in a sustainable, inclusive, resilient, and effective manner through cyber-physical ecosystems compatible with Industry 5.0 and Society 5.0 principles. In this context, the "Quintuple Innovation Helix Framework" S5.0 represents the most comprehensive, meaningful, and valuable structure and method as it encompasses the five fundamental core dimensions of modern sustainable and democratic knowledge economies and societies. These are the dimensions of "environment, civil society and government, university, and industry" (Carayannis & Campbell, 2022d). S5.0 and Democracy 5.0 envision creating a human-centered, sustainable, and inclusive societal and governance structure through technology. Countries such as Japan, Estonia, China, South Korea, and the European Union are implementing different dimensions of this vision (Gurakan & Uzunırmak, 2025).

5. Conclusion

In today's world, S5.0 represents a human-centered and sustainable society vision that addresses digital opportunities. Therefore, it produces solutions to societal problems and enhances the quality of life through advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and big data. This study examined the position and development of the S5.0 approach in business management literature through bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review methodologies, based on 70 articles selected from the Scopus database for the period 2020-2024. The findings reveal that S5.0 has emerged as a multidimensional research area integrating technology, sustainability, and human-centered approaches. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings, the study's limitations, and future research directions in academic discourse are summarized below.

The keyword analysis of studies on S5.0 shows that research in the business management field concentrates on terms such as "Industry 5.0, Industry 4.0, sustainable development, innovation, sustainability, artificial intelligence, digital transformation." Additionally, words related to the multidimensional relationships between industrial and societal processes, as well as sustainability, innovation, and digitalization, have been intensively used in the studies. As a result of the study, it is observed that there has been a significant increase in publications related to S5.0, particularly since 2022. Among the countries with the highest number of publications, the USA, Italy, and

Indonesia stand out. SLR analyses show that S5.0 is addressed in different dimensions such as sustainability, digital transformation, Japan, cognitive mapping, and Democracy 5.0. The sustainability perspective of S5.0 aligns with waste reduction, the circular economy, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In terms of digital transformation, it is related to human-machine interaction, digital literacy, and digital humanism. It can be said that Japan and S5.0 play an essential role in terms of government policies and societal vision.

Society 5.0 is not just about making business management more efficient; it is a strategic framework that is human-centered and increases social benefits. When technology, data, and artificial intelligence are integrated with purpose, ethics, and governance, they transform into a sustainable competitive advantage. This transformation requires a holistic redesign of everything from business models to organizational culture, performance measurement to stakeholder communication. The key to success lies in aligning technical competence with corporate purpose and ethical compass in a consistent manner.

5.1. Theoretical implications

This study demonstrates that the S5.0 literature is strongly connected to the Industry 4.0/5.0, digital transformation, and sustainability literature clusters, and highlights the need to develop integrative models between technology-focused theories and approaches that prioritize societal well-being. This finding suggests that traditional technology adoption theories should be expanded to include human-centered values and societal impact assessments. However, it also suggests that human-centered design, digital humanism, and cognitive mapping approaches require a more comprehensive theoretical consideration within the S5.0 framework. In particular, expanding the quadruple/quintuple helix models within the S5.0 context will enrich the theoretical explanation of knowledge ecosystems and innovation networks. Bibliometric patterns highlight that S5.0 represents a paradigmatic shift from technology-related approaches to socio-technical systems thinking and requires new theoretical constructs that adequately capture the complexity of human-technology-society interactions in organizational contexts.

5.2. Practical implications

At the corporate level, S5.0 implementation requires not only technological investment decisions but also a comprehensive redesign of strategy, organizational structure, performance measurement, and stakeholder communication systems. Managers must align technology strategies with corporate goals and ethical principles. Furthermore, policymakers emphasize the importance of comprehensive infrastructure investments, data security frameworks, and digital literacy programs for the implementation of the S5.0 vision. The Japanese government has stated that they have accelerated the implementation and, accordingly, that there is a greater need for policy frameworks that support both technological advancement and social inclusion.

In terms of sectoral applications, healthcare, mobility, supply chain, smart infrastructure, and financial technologies have emerged as priority areas. This necessitates the development of sector-specific implementation roadmaps and support mechanisms. Risk management considerations emphasize that potential challenges (data security, digital inequality, and the environmental impacts of digital infrastructure) must be managed through governance mechanisms, transparency, and social inclusion. The emphasis on human-centeredness in the S5.0 literature has important implications for organizational behavior theories, particularly those related to human-computer interaction, workplace digitalization, and employee well-being. The study suggests that future organizational theories should incorporate concepts such as digital humanism, emotional intelligence in AI interactions, and the psychological impact of advanced automation on workforce dynamics.

To increase the success rate of S5.0 implementations, they should prioritize digital literacy development, human-centered design practices, industry-specific pilot projects, and multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanisms. Research shows that successful implementation requires iterative approaches that enable continuous learning, adaptation, and improvement based on stakeholder feedback and performance results. Organizations should invest in change management capabilities that can support the workforce transitions, skill development, and cultural alignment required for S5.0 implementation. This includes developing new performance metrics that capture both technological efficiency and social impact outcomes.

5.3. Limitations and future research directions

This study is limited to English articles in the Scopus database, excluding Web of Science and national databases. The study examined the S5.0 literature from 2020 to 2024. This temporal limitation may impact the comprehensiveness of the trend analysis and the identification of themes. This study demonstrates that S5.0 requires both theoretical reconceptualization in the business management literature and the development of governance-focused,

human-centered strategies for practical applications. S5.0 is at a critical juncture where academic research must be closely aligned with practical implementation efforts to effectively translate its principles into real-world benefits for society. Future work will contribute to the academic and practical maturation of the S5.0 perspective and support the transition to more sustainable, inclusive, and human-centered technological societies. This transition will depend on continued collaboration among researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and civil society to ensure that technological advancement serves the broader goals of human well-being and societal progress.

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Author contribution statements

The author self-conducted the research design and implementation, analysis, and article writing without using AI applications.

Disclosure statement

The author reported no potential conflicts of interest.

Ethical committee approval

This study has complied with the Research Publication Ethics stated in "Wager E & Kleinert S (2011) Responsible research publication: international standards for authors. A position statement was developed at the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, held in Singapore from July 22 to 24, 2010. Chapter 50 in Mayer T & Steneck N (eds) Promoting Research Integrity in a Global Environment. Imperial College Press / World Scientific Publishing, Singapore." For this reason, the author states that she conducted the research within the framework of ethical principles. This is a bibliometric analysis and does not require ethics committee approval since it is not a human study.

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Eirini Tryfero, Panagiotis Giavrimis

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Eirini Tryferou¹ and Panagiotis Giavrimis²

¹Lofos Panepistimiou, Department of Sociology, University of the Aegean, Lesvos, Greece, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1179-3619>

²Corresponding Author, Lofos Panepistimiou, Department of Sociology, University of the Aegean, Lesvos, Greece, E-mail: giavrimis@soc.aegean.gr, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7368-3533>

Article Info	Abstract
Research Article Received: 11 June 2025 Revised: 26 August 2025 Accepted: 29 August 2025 Keywords: School bullying, Ethnocultural diversity, English language teachers, Primary school, Greece	<i>This study aimed to explore the views of English language teachers who have taught in Greek primary schools on the island of Lesvos regarding bullying within the context of including students from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, the study examined how teachers interpret and respond to bullying incidents and the extent to which social and familial resources influence such behaviors. Using a qualitative method, the most commonly employed approach, research data were collected through semi-structured interviews with fifteen English language teachers. The research addresses a significant gap in understanding how educational policies and practices may unintentionally perpetuate social hierarchies through symbolic violence. Findings showed that the participants understood bullying in line with international literature, highlighting the infrequent occurrence of such incidents in the school setting between native students and those with ethnocultural diversity, which usually takes the form of verbal abuse, mainly involving racist comments.</i>

1. Introduction

The interdisciplinary community has consistently shown a particular interest in violence and aggression at the research level; however, the term "bullying" and its systematic study began relatively recently, in the 1970s, with Olweus (Nikolaou, 2013). According to Olweus (2013: 756), bullying is a 'subset' of aggressive behaviour, which is generally defined as behaviour aimed at causing injury or annoyance to another person. Since most bullying occurs without any apparent provocation from the targeted child or young person, it is typically regarded as a form of proactive aggression, as opposed to reactive aggression.

School bullying can be defined as harassment or violence that occurs systematically and repeatedly. It may manifest in the school environment, either through one person's behaviour towards another or through groups' behaviour against an individual or group (Olweus, 1993). The bully aims to instill fear in the victim, inflict physical pain, and cause mental distress (Maridaki-Kassotaki, 2009: 385). However, beyond Olweus' definition, it is argued that bullying is a "systematic abuse of power" (Sanders, 2004: 4). An inequality of power exists, making the victim unable to defend themselves, either because the bullies outnumber the victim or because the victim is physically weaker. Furthermore, the aggression of underage children that manifests as school violence is influenced by various factors affecting these individuals, such as societal pressures, cultural elements, the school environment, family dynamics, and personal characteristics (Georgiou & Fedonos, 2020; Sanders, 2004).

Bullying is a complex, multifaceted issue that becomes even more intricate in a multicultural setting (Nikolaou et al., 2019, p. 336; Olweus, 2009). Violence and bullying are two intertwined concepts often associated with students from immigrant backgrounds, who are primarily targeted, as the media and daily discussions play a significant role in their demonisation (Nikolaou, 2013: 51).

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2. Literature

2.1. Cultural capital

Cultural capital is widely recognised in educational research (Lareau & Weininger, 2003, pp. 567-568). It plays a vital role in integrating an explanation of social inequalities within the educational context into 'social reproduction' (Goldthorpe, 2007: 1). An individual's cultural capital can take three forms: a) the embodied (or inherent) state, that is, long-term dispositions of the mind and body; b) the objectified (or external) state in the form of cultural goods and attributes; and c) the institutionalised state (Bourdieu, 1983: 243) represented by school titles (Thanos & Tolios, 2013: 56).

According to Bourdieu, children from privileged backgrounds hold a significant advantage over those from lower socioeconomic classes because they enter the education system already well-equipped to succeed. They experience a clear continuity between family and school culture, sharing a common way of speaking, social interaction styles, and aesthetic preferences with their teachers, which makes the curriculum and teaching methods seem familiar to them. In contrast, for children from different social backgrounds, school represents a distinct and often hostile environment where they do not feel at home. According to the theory of cultural capital developed by Bourdieu and Passeron, a student's success or failure in school depends on the cultural capital of both the school and the family. The cultural capital embraced by the school closely mirrors that of the dominant class (Thanos & Tolios, 2013: 83). Consequently, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds frequently struggle to succeed within the educational system (Sullivan, 2001, p. 893).

The students in the preference classes maintain their advantageous position through practices aimed at distancing themselves from the other conciliar classes. The school advances in the same direction and perpetuates inequalities between social classes (Thanos & Tolios, 2013: 84). Consequently, since the educational system assumes the possession of cultural capital, which is actually held by only a minority of students, there is a significant inefficiency in 'pedagogical transmission'. As Bourdieu (1977, p. 494, op. cit. in Sullivan, 2001, p. 893) explicitly states, by failing to give analytically to everyone what it implicitly requires of everyone, the educational system expects everyone to have what it does not provide.

School bullying, within this framework, cannot be seen merely as a result of individual faults or psychological problems, but as a socially and culturally shaped practice that often reflects and reinforces existing structural inequalities. Students form their habitus based on their social positions and experiences, and these differences can lead to conflicts among students from different cultural or social backgrounds. School bullying can serve as a way to marginalise students whose habitus does not match dominant norms. Additionally, students with cultural and linguistic capital, recognised by the school system, hold a privileged position. Those who differ from this often face bullying as a form of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence involves imposing systems of symbolism and meanings on groups or social classes in such a way that they are perceived as legitimate. This legitimacy hides power relations, while culture facilitates their systematic reproduction. Symbolic violence is "anonymous" and naturalised; presented as "normality," it remains unrecognised as oppression. Within this framework, school bullying can be reinterpreted as a mechanism through which disparities in cultural capital are enforced and legitimised. When students whose habitus—their internalised dispositions and ways of being—differ from the dominant school culture experience marginalisation, this is not merely unfortunate but constitutes systematic symbolic violence. The naturalisation of certain behaviours, languages, and cultural expressions as "normal" while others are marked as deviant creates conditions where bullying is seen as individual misbehaviour rather than structural oppression. The school legitimises this violence by silencing structural inequalities, transforming social oppression into an "individual problem" (e.g., blaming the victim for "oversensitivity"). Bullying is not merely "immoral behaviour"; instead, it operates as a mechanism for maintaining power, reflecting broader societal imbalances. School bullying stems from the interactions of educational authority, social hierarchy, and conflicts within the academic environment.

2.2. Bullying and students with ethnocultural diversity

The intersection of school bullying and ethnocultural diversity presents a significant challenge for modern educational systems worldwide, particularly in countries undergoing demographic shifts due to migration (Pappas, 2023). Research internationally on students from ethnocultural backgrounds reveals that students from these minority groups, such as immigrants and refugees, are not only victims but also perpetrators of bullying. The term "ethno-cultural diversity" refers to the range of cultural capital and distinct cultural identities among individuals (Economidis & Kontogianni, 2011, as cited in Nikolaou, 2013, pp. 52-53). Cultural, ethnic, and racial factors, which differ from those of the dominant group, can influence the incidence of bullying behaviour (Basilici et al.,

2022). Such factors are closely linked to 'power imbalances' between different groups (Nikolaou et al., 2019, p. 336).

In Greece, relevant research is limited, and the findings are often contradictory regarding the link between deviant behaviour and cultural diversity (Aravanis, 2016: 34). Specifically, research indicates that teachers recognise the existence of school violence and acknowledge that both groups of students (native and ethnocultural) are involved in bullying incidents. The most common forms of school bullying among ethnoculturally diverse students include isolation, rejection (Galaziou, 2015), and verbal labelling rooted in cultural diversity, which may also involve racist comments (Fili et al., 2015; Galaziou, 2015; Mandeli & Nikolaou, 2014; Nikolaou et al., 2019; Roubi et al., 2023). Their cultural identity does not appear to directly influence bullying (Fili et al., 2015; Roubi et al., 2023). Additionally, a study found that students with ethno-cultural diversity and disabilities experienced either direct (i.e., physical, verbal) or indirect (i.e., social, cyber bullying) forms of bullying, or a combination of these, along with other types of bullying (Samsari et al., 2024). Conversely, students with an immigrant background might react aggressively and may be involved in violent incidents (Galaziou, 2015). In the research by Mandeli & Nikolaou (2014), it was found that bullying occurs both when natives target students with ethnocultural diversity and vice versa, with immigrants more often experiencing such incidents. Although many students attempt to help the victims, numerous individuals respond to the incidents with indifference (Mandeli & Nikolaou, 2014). Some teachers believe violence is connected to origin and the rejection of diversity, while others argue that school violence can occur regardless of ethnic background. They report that incidents of violence persist even after teachers intervene (Galaziou, 2015; Nikolaou et al., 2019). Furthermore, teachers find it challenging to recognise forms of social bullying, such as exclusion, due to their 'silent' nature (Mandeli & Nikolaou, 2014). Boys were identified as the most common bullies, and students with ethnocultural diversity appeared more vulnerable, both as victims and perpetrators, with a significant number involved in conflicts with native students (Mandeli & Nikolaou, 2014; Nikolaou & Samsari, 2016; Sapouna, 2010).

Research by Nikolaou & Samsari (2016) suggests that positive interpersonal relationships between Greeks and students of ethnocultural diversity help reduce bullying and victimisation, especially when friendships develop between the two groups. Additionally, Sapouna's (2010) research demonstrated that the "collective efficacy" of a classroom, meaning trust and solidarity between students and teachers, decreases victimisation but does not significantly impact the occurrence of bullying. The survey's findings, however, highlight the importance of raising awareness within the school community to create a safe and inclusive environment for everyone. (Mandeli & Nikolaou, 2014).

2.3. Greek education policy for school bullying

Greece's educational system has undergone a significant demographic shift since the 1990s, with students from immigrant backgrounds now comprising approximately 12% of the school population (Giavrimis, 2022). Despite policy reforms encouraging intercultural education, its implementation remains inconsistent, with many schools essentially maintaining monocultural approaches (Giavrimis & Dimitriadou, 2023).

Greece has developed a legal framework over recent decades, mainly to combat school violence. This effort started with Law 4000/1958, which aimed to address juvenile delinquency. Notably, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, corporal punishment was prohibited in Greek primary schools. However, increasing concerns about school bullying in the past five years led the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs to enact Law 4777/2021 ("Measures to tackle violence and bullying in schools"). Key actions included establishing Anti-Bullying Committees in all schools (Art. 47), implementing a Digital Anonymous Reporting Platform (Art. 48) via schoolsafety.gov.gr, and requiring annual teacher training on bullying prevention (Art. 50). Law 4808/2021 ("Child and adolescent mental health") allocated funding for school psychologists—one per 500 students—to assist victims and established Student Support Offices in all regional directorates. Schools must submit incident reports within 72 hours and implement restorative practices (Ministerial Decision F1/89650/Δ1/2022).

Due to ongoing bullying, Law 5029/2023 ("We Live Harmoniously Together – Breaking the Silence") was enacted, emphasizing prevention and response systems, comprehensive teacher training, and a specific incident-reporting platform. In April 2024, Greece introduced a National Strategy and Awareness Campaign against school violence, which includes a reporting website (stop-bullying.gov.gr), an increase in the number of social workers and psychologists within schools, the incorporation of active citizenship into curricula, and stricter school regulations. The Helpline 197 and the Greek Ombudsman for Children handle escalated complaints. Notably, policies lack specific provisions for bullying involving students with ethnocultural diversity, whether as bullies or victims.

This study extends and enhances existing research in three main ways. First, although earlier Greek studies have documented cases of bullying involving ethnoculturally diverse students (Galaziou et al., 2015; Mandeli & Nikolaou, 2014; Nikolaou & Samsari, 2016), they mainly employed descriptive or correlational methods that may overlook underlying structural factors. Second, by focusing on English language teachers, who serve as linguistic and cultural mediators in multilingual classrooms, we gain insights from educators uniquely positioned to observe cross-cultural interactions. Third, using Bourdieu's theoretical framework, we move beyond individualistic explanations of bullying to examine how educational structures and practices may perpetuate inequality through symbolic violence.

The present study aimed to explore the views of English language teachers who have worked in primary schools on the island of Lesbos regarding bullying within the context of including students with ethnocultural diversity. The primary objectives of this research are to: (1) examine how English language teachers conceptualise bullying in multicultural contexts; (2) identify perceived causes and consequences of bullying involving ethnoculturally diverse students; (3) investigate in the Greek educational system how disparities in cultural capital influence bullying dynamics, and (4) critically assess current intervention strategies by examining structural inequalities. Through this investigation, we aim to enhance both scholarly knowledge and practical methods for developing more equitable and inclusive educational environments.

3. Method

This study has complied with the Research Publication Ethics stated in "Wager E & Kleinert S (2011) Responsible research publication: international standards for authors. A position statement was developed at the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, Singapore, July 22-24, 2010. Chapter 50 in Mayer T & Steneck N (eds) Promoting Research Integrity in a Global Environment. Imperial College Press / World Scientific Publishing, Singapore." For this reason, the authors state that they conducted the research in accordance with the framework of ethical principles.

The qualitative method was chosen as the most commonly used approach for collecting research data. This method centres on in-depth interviews, enabling both the researcher and participants to interpret and share their experiences through interaction (Isari & Pourkos, 2015, p. 91). Additionally, it offers the opportunity to understand the complexity of human experience, promote dialogue between researcher and participants, explore the research topic from the participants' perspective, and allow them to express their thoughts (Isari & Pourkos, 2015: 94).

3.1. Participants

Fifteen English language teachers from primary schools on Lesbos (Greece) took part in the current research. The selection of participants was carried out using a criterion sampling method. This approach involves choosing cases that meet specific criteria based on the research aims (Isari & Pourkos, 2015: 78). The main criterion was that all participants should be English language teachers who have worked in a primary school on the island of Lesbos. English teachers were chosen because they can serve as mediators for integrating students with ethnocultural diversity and facilitating their linguistic communication with native students. Their daily cross-cultural interactions enable them to notice subtle bullying patterns that homeroom teachers might miss. Moreover, their role in teaching a globally dominant language can expose power imbalances related to cultural capital, and they frequently use interactive teaching methods that emphasise social dynamics. Age and years of service were also taken into consideration. The gender imbalance (14 women, one man) reflects Greece's primary education demographics. Teaching experience ranged from 2 to 33 years, showcasing diverse generational perspectives on bullying and policy changes. While experience enhanced incident recall, newer teachers provided insights into contemporary training gaps. Table 1 indicates that the participants' ages range from 26 to 58 years, with the majority being female teachers.

3.2. Tools of research

The research tool used for data collection in this qualitative study was the semi-structured interview, as it provides the researcher with greater flexibility during the questioning process. The interview guide was developed based on Greek and international literature on bullying and the integration of students with ethnocultural diversity into the educational system. It explored four thematic areas. In the first section of the interview, questions focused on conceptual approaches to school bullying (definition, forms, identification strategies). The questions were such as: "What does the term school bullying mean to you?", "What forms of bullying do you know?". The second section addressed causes of school bullying, with questions such as: "What are the causes that drive an ethnoculturally

diverse student to bullying?", "What role, if any, do you consider language barriers play?". The third section discussed consequences and responses, including the impact on students, intervention strategies, outcomes, and ways to address bullying within the context of integrating students with ethnocultural diversity. In this section, questions such as: "What are the consequences faced by student-victims, whether an ethnoculturally diverse or native student?" are included. The fourth section examined issues related to educational policy, such as curriculum demands, school policies, and resource availability, with questions such as: "How do you think the school curriculum affects the treatment of school bullying in the context of the inclusion of migrant students?", "Have you attended a training seminar on the management of school bullying in the classroom?", "What do you think the State should do to eliminate incidents of school bullying?".

Table 1. Sex, age and years of service of participants

Participants	Sex	Age	Years of service
P1	Female	36	4
P2	Female	42	6
P3	Female	42	16
P4	Female	45	16
P5	Female	30	10
P6	Female	37	15
P7	Female	54	30
P8	Female	42	11
P9	Male	37	14
P10	Female	30	5
P11	Female	42	22
P12	Female	58	32
P13	Female	58	33
P14	Female	35	2
P15	Female	26	3

3.3. Procedure of the investigation

The interviews were conducted from June 2024 to November 2024. Participants were selected based on characteristics such as years of service, gender, and specialism (English). The interviews took place in the participants' private spaces and lasted approximately 40 minutes. The participants were informed about the ethical considerations (anonymity and confidentiality) and signed a consent form. Following the collection of information, the process of coding and data analysis began, using a thematic analysis approach. We followed reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) through iterative phases: familiarisation with the data; producing initial codes; constructing candidate themes; reviewing themes against the dataset; defining and naming themes; and producing the narrative account, coding privileged semantic content while attending to latent meanings related to cultural capital and symbolic violence. To enhance credibility, we kept analytic memos and an audit trail, compared rival explanations, and checked the coherence of cases. Data management and coding were conducted manually, with no automated tools used. Initially, the researcher transcribed, recorded, and coded the raw interview transcripts to identify similarities and differences. The resulting categories, subcategories, and themes shaped the final interpretation of the bullying phenomenon (Giavrimis, 2023).

All participants gave written informed consent after receiving detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and data handling. Pseudonyms were allocated, and identifying details were removed from transcripts. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw without repercussions. Considering the sensitive nature of discussing bullying and potential criticism of educational systems, we assured participants that findings would be presented constructively, focusing on systemic improvements rather than individual blame.

Regarding the limitations of the research, they include the lack of generalisability of the results and the focus of the research on the island of Lesbos. Several limitations should be acknowledged. The study's focus on Lesbos limits the applicability of its findings to other Greek regions with different demographic compositions. Additionally, interviewing only English language teachers offers a specific but limited view of school dynamics. Third, the cross-sectional design captures current perceptions but cannot reflect changes over time. The study was intentionally restricted to public primary schools, excluding private and special education settings, as population and bullying patterns may vary in these settings.

4. Findings

The analysis of participants' discourse identified five main themes: (a) Conceptualisation of school bullying, (b) Types and frequency of school bullying involving students with ethnocultural diversity, (c) Causes of bullying. This included three subcategories: Family Cultural Capital as a Mediating Factor, Causes of School Bullying among Ethnoculturally Diverse Students, and Educational System as a Reproductive Mechanism. (d) Consequences of school bullying reflecting institutional responses, and (e) Strategies for prevention and intervention of school bullying.

4.1. Conceptualisation of school bullying

Bullying, as defined by teachers in this research, is a repeated and deliberate form of violence aimed at causing harm, which can occur both between students and, in some cases, between teachers and students.

P1: "... repeated and deliberate aggressive behaviour... carried out by a student or a group of students towards another, intended to harm, either physically, emotionally or psychologically ..."

Some participants reported that they perceive bullying as a form of violence, underlining the seriousness of the phenomenon: P4: "... bullying is violence...", P10: *a form of violence ...*

Additionally, several teachers highlight the power imbalance that underlies the bully-victim relationship. P2: *"... the one who thinks he is stronger against the...the one who thinks he is weaker..."*

In addition, many teachers define bullying as a deliberate act, stressing that it is intentional. P4: *"... It is always deliberate ..."*

Teachers state that they are aware of all theoretically documented forms of bullying and identify mainly six primary forms in school practice: verbal (swearing, nicknames) P1: *"... verbal bullying, such as the use of mocking comments, a nickname that can be said, a swear word..."*, physical (hitting, pushing) P3: *"...physical bullying, of course, which is hitting, pushing, kicking..."*, social (marginalization) P3: *"...to social bullying, which is reinforced by spreading rumours, destroying school objects, isolating from... the whole class..."*, racial (racist expressions due to ethnicity) P13: *"... in racial bullying when belittling or calling someone names because of their ethnicity..."*, online (insults via the internet) P1: *"...cyber bullying, online bullying, through social networks or a platform, email or whatever..."* and emotional/psychological (undermining behaviour that affects the victim psychologically) P2: *"... the emotional-psychological bullying, where... uh... in essence, you manipulate the other person and... without calling them names, you have a passive-aggressive behavior"*.

Bullying is primarily recognised through signs of social isolation, significant emotional changes (such as fear, sadness, crying, low self-confidence, or even symptoms of depression), as well as alterations in students' behaviour and school performance (such as avoiding lessons, absenteeism, a lack of interest in school, or refusing to participate in activities).

Within this thematic axis, teachers consistently described bullying as repeated, intentional aggression characterised by a power imbalance. They identified six main types: verbal, physical, social, racial, cyber, and emotional/psychological, aligning closely with international definitions of these types. Several participants linked racial bullying directly to ethnocultural differences, citing derogatory comments targeting students' nationality or ethnicity.

4.2. Forms and frequency of school bullying incidents involving students with ethnocultural diversity.

A small percentage of teachers reported that they have observed incidents of bullying between students with ethnocultural diversity and natives, but these are limited to verbal characterisations related to origin.

P8: *"In the old days, especially, let us say, you would hear one kid say to another, 'You damn Albanian, go away,' I know, 'we do not want you, we do not want to hang out with you.'"*

P9: *"...in some village, racist type bullying. That is, in particular, there was a little girl from Ukraine and a student; whenever he conflicted with this little girl, he used the term 'Bloody Ukrainian' or similar terms, using her place of origin."*

One teacher highlighted an incident of verbal and physical bullying in the DYEP programme. However, this incident involved two children from different cultural backgrounds, Somali and Afghan, rather than between native pupils and those from ethnoculturally diverse backgrounds.

P4: *"But in the program that was in the DYEP, there was the incident between a Somali and an Afghan child, which was both verbal and physical intimidation. I was pretty scared. I got in the way, and they attacked me with stones".*

Most participants do not report more frequent incidents of bullying from native students towards those with ethnocultural diversity or vice versa. The majority of incidents observed by teachers stem from interactions among native students. They emphasise that bullying is not linked to ethnicity but is more related to the children's character and their experiences. Many participants indicated that bullying depends on a child's inclination to mock others, irrespective of the relationship or background of the student who is victimised.

P1: *"The truth is, I have not noticed bullying more often from natives to immigrants or vice versa, that is, I have not noticed in children of this age that there is racial bullying ..."*

P5: *"... I think it has nothing to do with the... well, with the origin of the students, but with their character ..."*

Furthermore, it was reported that bullying by natives towards students of ethnocultural diversity, or vice versa, is not more frequent, as children tend not to make such distinctions. The targeting primarily concerns weak, shy children or those with peculiarities, who are considered more vulnerable.

P6: *"..... I think the kids, on their own, do not even get into the process of making such a distinction... They see weak kids, shy kids, kids with idiosyncrasies, who are easy targets for bullying, regardless of their background, that is".*

Most participants reported that native students mainly exhibit bullying towards those with ethnocultural diversity. Some argued that this stems from the sense of superiority and dominance that natives feel in the school environment, often targeting students with ethnocultural diversity.

P2: *"In my experience, it is primarily done by natives to immigrants. The most significant percentage I have seen, though, is the native-immigrant divide, mainly due to the sovereignty issues that the native sometimes perceives".*

Only three teachers reported instances of bullying by ethnocultural minority students towards natives, who form groups to assert themselves over others or intimidate them to include them in the broader community.

P7: *"... an immigrant has created, we could say, his little gang that imposes on others and bullies other children".*

P14: *"... many immigrants are being bullied. Maybe because they want to fit in. Maybe to become part of the whole".*

In this thematic axis, most participants reported that incidents between native and ethnoculturally diverse students were rare, with verbal harassment being more common than physical violence. However, some noted that cultural background can become a significant factor in interpersonal conflicts, especially in rural schools where diversity is less prevalent. Cases of bullying among ethnoculturally diverse students from different countries were also observed, indicating that "diversity" is not a uniform category but contains its hierarchies and tensions.

4.3. Causes of school bullying

4.3.1. Family cultural capital as a mediating factor

Regarding causes, these problems are associated with the influence of family and friends, as well as a lack of emotional support and psychological motivation among native students. Specifically, there is competition for academic success among native students, along with feelings of superiority, jealousy, and attention-seeking behavior.

P6: *"Another reason is that they experience voices or situations of violence in the home, and therefore, they reproduce them in the school environment. Furthermore, having been victims themselves, they often become bullies."*

P5: *"Maybe it is the parents' perceptions that he hears them, experiences them, and therefore, he has made them his own, so he projects them outwards."*

P1: *"There is competition in...in lessons, in school, in the classroom, for school performance."*

Cultural factors were also referenced. The participants' responses highlight the difficulty many students encounter in accepting differences, whether in terms of physical appearance, language, or cultural habits. In various manners, customs, and cultural characteristics, individuals can become targets of bullying.

P9: "...that students are usually, rather too often, not ready to accept people different from them, either externally or culturally in general, with a different language, different habits..."

Finally, the influence of the Internet, where children are frequently exposed to content featuring violence and bullying, was also cited as a contributing factor to school bullying.

P5: "... still influenced by the internet, because we cannot control what children see and are exposed to..."

4.3.2. Ethnoculturally diverse students' characteristics as a defence mechanism

Among students with ethnocultural diversity, bullying is cited as a defence mechanism to avoid social exclusion, alongside low self-confidence and feelings of rejection.

P3: "Many immigrants, because of their nationality, have a little low self-confidence and self-esteem and feel insecure because they have come to a foreign country, and often they experience a feeling of rejection from native children."

P12: "Is it to become the centre of interest? To get attention? To get him fans, too?"

P4: "It is like a defensive element to be able to cope in the general social school environment, and that is why they manifest bullying..."

4.3.3. Educational system as reproductive mechanism

A significant number of teachers view the curriculum as challenging and hold high expectations for their students. The increasing difficulty of lessons and the multitude of tasks intensify the competition between native students and those from ethnoculturally diverse backgrounds.

P1: "The programme is very demanding in everyday life..."

Many participants also emphasised the difficulty faced by students with ethnocultural diversity in adjusting to the new educational environment. The lack of language communication and the feeling that an ethnoculturally diverse student does not belong or feels isolated can lead to psychological pressure, which may manifest in hostile or aggressive behaviour towards others.

P8: "... may feel like a stranger, ... does not speak the language, cannot understand the other children, cannot understand the teacher, so all this may lead the child to misbehave towards others, to do something to react..."

A small number of participants also mentioned the favourable attitude of teachers towards native students. Praise for outstanding students, who are often indigenous, can lead to feelings of marginalisation among students from ethnoculturally diverse backgrounds and exacerbate competition and inequalities.

P1: "Teachers, maybe they have a more favourable attitude towards native students sometimes, uh, so that creates competition within the classroom..."

On the other hand, one teacher pointed out that group activities promote cooperation among students, thereby reducing competition. At the same time, the second teacher stated that, in general, the school curriculum is indeed competitive. However, her personal experience with students of Albanian origin has been positive, as the natives have been welcoming towards them. P6: "I do not think there is competition between native and international students. I do not think there is any competition between students from different countries."

To summarise the above, teachers identified three levels of causes: a) Individual and familial causes, such as students' exposure to violence at home, low self-esteem, or a desire for peer acceptance; b) Cultural causes, including difficulties accepting differences in language, appearance, and customs, or the persistence of stereotypes that lead to school bullying incidents; and c) Structural causes, with a competitive academic culture, language barriers, and teacher biases favouring native students being the main contributors to school bullying.

However, some teachers also display indifference, influenced by outdated perceptions that consider bullying to be a "normal" part of childhood, thereby downplaying its seriousness.

P8: "... but there are also those who are completely indifferent and say, "Oh, well, it is okay, it is nothing, it is not important", P5: "I feel that maybe many times, we have made it so... we have become so familiar with it that, many times, it goes unnoticed, as if it does not exist, because we think it is normal ...".

These results reveal how symbolic violence becomes naturalised within educational settings.

4.4. Consequences of school bullying reflecting institutional responses

Teachers described consequences for both bullies and victims that exposed institutional approaches focused on managing rather than transforming bullying dynamics. Responses varied from communication-based interventions to punitive measures, with limited evidence of structural reforms.

A key consequence of the student-victims, as mentioned by most teachers, is informing parents. P10: *"Often, this reaches the family level, meaning contacting the child's parents or guardians and discussing the event."*

Beyond the family setting, the consequences for student victims include notifying the school principal and other specialists, such as psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists, to intervene quickly and determine the causes of the bullying behaviour. P4: *"The principal will also intervene to talk to the student-victim."*, P12: *"We will also be accountable to the special psychologists and social workers we have in our school..."*

The consequence for student bullies is a reprimand. Over half of the participants argued that they approach the bully to admonish them and make it clear that bullying behaviour is unacceptable. P5: *"We start from the observation-reproach part, P1: there is a discussion about how to behave, what is the proper behaviour, and about respect towards others..."*

Finally, several teachers pointed out that bullies also face punitive consequences, such as written reprimands, suspension, and changes to the school environment. P5: *"...up to the 'punishment' of any punishment that might revive him, in a way, without talking about... that violence is met with violence..."*, P9: *"...in punishment, in restriction of freedoms, a break, for example..."*

For the victims, there are significant psychological and social repercussions, including anxiety, fear, depression, social isolation, and avoidance of school. P1: *"Indeed, the consequences are psychological, uh... mainly we see people who feel anxiety, who have low self-esteem end up depressed or, in very extreme cases, even self-harming..."*

4.5. Strategies for prevention and intervention of school bullying

Most participants reported that the school is engaging in an informed discussion with experts, such as psychologists and social workers, emphasising the effort to address this phenomenon.

P1: *"Many times, there are briefings by the school, regarding bullying, involving...teachers, students, parents who choose to attend, uh...for awareness raising in general and for information."*

P5: *"We invite experts, even non-school people, to talk to the children ... to understand experientially even better, that it is healthy ... to integrate these students"*

Furthermore, to address this phenomenon within the context of integrating students with ethnocultural diversity, teachers reported that differentiated teaching, teamwork, and intercultural activities are promoted in the skills programmes delivered in primary school classrooms.

P2: *"Project with the children all together, we work in groups, the groups are deliberately mixed ... no discrimination"*

P8: *"By doing differentiated instruction, you will give the child who is an immigrant and is weaker something else to solve that is within his or her capabilities and will be able to meet."*

P10: *"It is also part of the skills workshops ... to have children do a whole thematic cycle of activities on bullying"*

5. Discussion

The present study aimed to highlight the primary views of English language teachers on the island of Lesbos regarding bullying in the context of integrating students with diverse ethnocultural backgrounds. The survey results clearly indicate that participants view bullying as violence or harmful behaviour that is repeated and meant to cause damage. This aligns with findings reported in the relevant literature (Fili et al., 2015; Galaziou et al., 2015; Mandeli & Nikolaou, 2014; Olweus, 1993). At the same time, the teachers in the study recognise all forms of bullying, and according to their responses, the relationships between native students and those with ethnocultural diversity in the Primary Schools of Lesbos are generally positive, mainly when based on shared interests. Teachers observe that incidents of bullying mainly involve native pupils. However, there is a low frequency of

bullying between native and ethnocultural pupils. Participants' reports suggest that bullying is not always connected to pupils' ethnicity. Many teachers believe that the character and personal experiences of students are more influential, although incidents are generally limited to verbal insults with racist or stereotypical overtones. These findings align with research conducted within the Greek educational system (Fili et al., 2015; Galaziou, 2015; Mandeli & Nikolaou, 2014; Nikolaou et al., 2019; Roubi et al., 2023). The low reported frequency of explicitly ethnic-based bullying, contrasted with persistent verbal racist incidents, suggests that cultural violence often takes subtle, normalised forms that go unnoticed as structural oppression (Bourdieu, 1994). The dominance of verbal over physical aggression reflects Bourdieu's (1973) concept of symbolic violence, which is carried out through meaning-making rather than force. Furthermore, the linkage of verbal violence with cultural references and stereotypes in these incidents underscores that cultural capital influences the interactions and relationships between native and ethnocultural students, contributing, alongside other factors, to shaping the atmosphere within the school environment (Galaziou et al., 2015). These findings are further supported by research in Greece (Galaziou et al., 2015; Psalti & Konstantinou, 2020), which reports that ethnocultural diversity does not appear to be a risk factor for the expression of bullying phenomena.

The discourse of the research participants demonstrates that prejudices originating from the family environment and its cultural capital can result in negative behaviours. Within the family, systems of durable and transferable dispositions are established and function as foundational structures and principles. These practices and representations produce and organise themselves in ways that can objectively adapt their expression without presupposing a conscious aim or explicit knowledge of the procedures necessary for their realisation (Bourdieu, 1990). Teachers of our research believe that bullying relates to the family environment, challenges in accepting diversity, social pressure, and exposure to violent content online. The cultural capital internalised by children includes not only their ethnocultural background but also various aspects of their family's cultural resources, which shape different types of cultural knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Bourdieu, 1986). This internalised code, or cognitive acquisition, equips the social actor with empathy and the ability to "decipher" cultural relations and objects (Johnson, 2008). In this sense, social practices are extended through their effects. We can state that members of a social group, having acquired a set of principles reflecting social constructs as a result of their socialisation, behave in ways that reproduce these constructs (Bourdieu, 1990). The refusal to accept diversity, intolerance, lack of empathy, self-centredness within the modern social structure, and, in some cases, stereotypes and prejudices, create a social environment unfavourable to the development of healthy mental spaces.

At the same time, teachers highlight that elements of educational policy and the school curriculum in Lesbos reinforce competition between native and ethnocultural minority students, due to high demands for performance and grades. Furthermore, language and cultural differences prevent students with ethnocultural diversity from participating, as grading and competition between native and non-native students, along with high performance expectations, increase instances of bullying. Students with ethnocultural diversity often encounter disadvantages, as this inequality can lead to tensions, marginalisation, and feelings of inferiority (Giavrimis, 2022; Giavrimis & Dimitriadou, 2023). According to Bourdieu (2004), education through symbolic violence reproduces structures and functions as a system for producing knowledge and values. Education is the primary mechanism for the 'encoding' of social symbols and the maintenance and transmission of cultural elements (values, linguistic hegemony, etc.). Ethnoculturally diverse students encounter the 'nature' of the education system and prevailing cultural elements that often differ from their own cultural capital, resulting in lower learning readiness and varied school achievement (Bourdieu, 1994).

In the Greek educational system, interculturality and bilingual education are only superficially represented at the institutional level, while in practice, the system remains monocultural and monolingual. Frequently, the education system devalues knowledge, skills, and experience, thereby undermining the culture of students with ethnocultural diversity. The "hidden" curriculum, alongside classroom subjects and "linguistic hegemony", legitimises the ethnocultural separation perpetuated by the school by imparting to children attitudes, perceptions, and habits aligned with the social positioning of the dominant model (Giavrimis, 2023; Giavrimis & Dimitriadou, 2023). It overlooks the cultural capital that children bring. It emphasises the importance of culturally dominant and accepted capital, which increases social and educational inequalities by favouring the privileged and disadvantaging those who are culturally different. Additionally, teachers' bias reflects a systematic misrecognition, where they unconsciously reward dominant cultural capital. Through self-fulfilling prophecies, students with valued cultural capital receive more support, thereby reinforcing their initial advantages. The legitimisation of educational practices conceals power relations, while the system systematically reproduces them (Bourdieu, 1986; 1990). Bourdieu describes 'symbolic violence' as a subtle yet effective means of enforcing normality and discipline in schools, often without the clear awareness of those involved (Giavrimis, 2023; Swartz, 1997).

Therefore, the effects on victims of bullying are severe, including psychological distress, social isolation, and declining school performance. Bullies often receive reprimands from teachers and parents or are referred for psychological support to help them understand and control their behaviour. Several teachers also noted that bullies face punitive actions. Regarding the management of bullying incidents, teachers report that this is primarily achieved through discussions and collaboration with managers, parents, mental health specialists, and educational activities. It is approached pedagogically, as evidenced by their suggestions. Participants emphasise the importance of effective communication, trust, and a safe school climate in reducing bullying. The practice of 'symbolic violence' through punitive, pedagogical, or advisory processes seeks to establish and legitimate as an objective reality a cultural arbitrariness, which succeeds when the context and mechanisms of its enforcement are not socially recognized (Bourdieu, 1994, 1998).

Furthermore, they promote the sharing of information with students, provide teacher training, collaborate with parents and specialists, and establish clear guidelines and sanctions as outlined by the Ministry of Education. From Bourdieu's perspective, the initiatives described can be understood as methods of transmitting cultural capital. Ministry guidelines establish what is regarded as legitimate behaviour and knowledge, thus reinforcing the dominant culture. In this sense, although such measures aim to promote fairness, they also risk entrenching existing educational inequalities. The response should be sociocentric and, in line with the theory of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1973), it is essential to promote reflection, adopt a differentiated approach, increase opportunities for participation, develop collective consciousness, encourage the expression of experiential knowledge, integrate cultural elements, and make the school accessible to the community.

6. Conclusion

Teachers in our study understand bullying based on the international literature, highlighting the infrequent occurrence of such incidents in the school environment between native pupils and those from ethnocultural backgrounds, which generally appear in verbal forms, mainly involving racist comments. While ethnocultural origin is not the leading cause of bullying, the individual traits of the person involved seem to be crucial. It appears that aspects of the family environment's cultural capital and the educational system play a significant mediating role in the occurrence of bullying incidents. Schools, through informative, counselling, and pedagogical-didactic practices, as well as interventionist and punitive measures, aim to prevent or address the occurrence and consequences of bullying. The teachers in our survey support providing information, training for both teachers and parents, and fostering a school environment of empathy, intercultural understanding, and equal access to educational resources.

This study enhances understanding of school bullying in multicultural settings, particularly through the perspectives of English language teachers in primary education on an island and a border region. It demonstrates how differences in cultural capital manifest in and are perpetuated through bullying, providing evidence that teachers recognise the complexity of bullying but lack frameworks to address its structural dimensions. The study also emphasises particular methods by which educational systems perpetuate inequality through bullying and shows that current Greek anti-bullying policies require culturally responsive updates. For policy and practice, findings emphasise the importance of integrating critical pedagogy and cultural capital theory into both future and ongoing teacher training, aiding teachers in recognising and challenging symbolic violence. It supports the development of multilingual and multicultural curricula that value diverse cultural resources and go beyond behavioural management to tackle structural inequalities. Additionally, it recommends establishing cultural capital audits for schools to identify and challenge systemic biases.

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Author contribution statements

The authors conducted the research design and implementation, analysis, and article writing equally without using AI applications.

Disclosure statement

The authors reported no potential conflicts of interest.

Ethical committee approval

This study has complied with the Research Publication Ethics stated in "Wager E & Kleinert S (2011) Responsible research publication: international standards for authors. A position statement was developed at the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, held in Singapore from July 22 to 24, 2010. Chapter 50 in Mayer T & Steneck N (eds) Promoting Research Integrity in a Global Environment. Imperial College Press / World Scientific Publishing, Singapore." For this reason, the authors state that they conducted the research in accordance with the framework of ethical principles.

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Dimensions and effects of brand experience and brand advocacy in the new
generation consumer

Serap Bozkurt, řenay Yavuz

Dimensions and effects of brand experience and brand advocacy in the new generation consumer

Serap Bozkurt¹ and Şenay Yavuz²

¹Corresponding author, Faculty of Art and Design, Beykoz University, İstanbul, Türkiye, E-mail: serapbozkurt@beykoz.edu.tr, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5722-6252>

²Faculty of Communication, Maltepe University, İstanbul, Türkiye, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8130-7121>

Article Info	Abstract
Research Article Received: 25 July 2025 Revised: 18 August 2025 Accepted: 8 September 2025 Keywords: Brand experience, Brand advocacy, Consumer behavior, Sustainability, Experiential marketing, New generation consumers	<i>The present research examines the effect of brand experiences on brand advocacy behaviors within the new generation of consumers raised within the dynamics of the digital age. The impact of brand experiences on the levels of brand adoption and advocacy among this new generation of consumers, who have grown up in close interaction with technology, was analyzed using data collected from 930 mobile phone users. The dataset was analyzed through the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique, which demonstrated that brand experiences positively affect brand advocacy. Especially physical shopping experiences and brand reliability/facilitation strongly trigger advocacy behaviors." The research findings also reveal that the subdimensions of brand experience and brand advocacy highlight the necessity for brands to adopt strategies based on communicative brand experiences to build sustainable relationships with their target audiences. The results provide critical strategic insights for brands aiming to appeal to the digital consumer profile.</i>

1. Introduction

The present era, often referred to as the digital age, the information age, or the technology age, is witnessing a continuous process of change and transformation. These terms are used due to the rapid advancement of digital technologies, accelerated access to information, and technological progress in today's world. The pace of change in this period stands out as a process shaped by dynamics that differ significantly from those of previous eras. In particular, due to the effects of digitalization, the profiles and consumption habits of new generation consumers have diverged markedly from traditional patterns. This generation is often referred to as "digital natives" (Prensky, 2003), and under the influence of globalization, they define themselves as global citizens. It has been observed that this consumer group, which is constantly interacting with technology, tends to have a low level of concern about long-term planning or adopting future-oriented thinking.

With the advancement of technology, the internet, and smart devices, the ways people communicate, access information, and conduct business have undergone fundamental changes—transforming social, economic, and cultural structures on a global scale. This research aims to investigate the impact of brand experiences on brand advocacy, to help brands establish a sustainable strategic edge and foster a lasting connection with the new generation of consumers. Specifically, it seeks to identify the experiences, actions, and interactions that lead to brand advocacy behaviors among new generation consumers, and to offer strategic recommendations that will help brands better understand and strengthen these behaviors. Within this framework, brand experience has generally been conceptualized in the existing literature across four dimensions (Brakus et al., 2009). This study, however, proposes a three-dimensional typology, which represents an original contribution, particularly in explaining brand advocacy among digital natives.

In the study, while examining the association between brand experience and brand advocacy, it is emphasized that brand advocacy is not merely limited to word-of-mouth communication; rather, it represents a broader and

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deeper sphere of influence. Word-of-mouth communication may include both positive and negative statements about brands, whereas brand advocacy should be considered a concept associated exclusively with positive experiences. In this context, the study examines whether strong experiential bonds formed between the consumer and the brand contribute to the brand's sustainable competitive advantage and the creation of lasting advocacy in the consumer's eyes.

Fundamentally seeking answers to the questions: *What is the impact of brand experiences on brand advocacy?* And which brand experiences lead to stronger advocacy behaviors in consumers? This study was conducted based on a widely used technological product—mobile phones. The results, however, may vary when applied to other product categories. Nonetheless, by focusing on the new generation of consumers, this research also offers insights for more comprehensive studies targeting the service sector or different consumer segments.

2. Literature review

2.1. The concept and importance of brand experience

Brand experience is a concept that encompasses behavioral, emotional, sensory, and cognitive responses triggered by brand-related stimuli, supported by the brand's identity, story, visual elements, packaging, presentation, and modes of communication. These experiences play a critical role in forming psychological bonds that strengthen consumers' attachment to the brand. Especially today, marketing professionals recognize that understanding how consumers interact with brands is fundamental to developing effective marketing strategies (Mascarenhas, 2006; Morrison & Crane, 2007).

Since brand experience is formed at every point where the consumer interacts with the brand, brands need to manage all touchpoints and provide a thoroughly integrated experience. Providing a consistent and positive experience at all touchpoints related to the brand helps strengthen the brand, gain a competitive advantage, increase customer loyalty, and enhance the brand image. Identifying the factors that influence the consumer experience and improving these factors enables businesses to enhance their competitiveness and achieve sustainable growth. When businesses communicate with consumers, they can reach potential customers and increase the satisfaction of existing ones, thereby boosting product or service sales and gaining qualities such as being preferred and remembered (Akdeniz & Kömürçü, 2021). Therefore, the notion of brand experience is gaining more prominence in the current marketing landscape.

In the past, marketing primarily focused on the physical characteristics, pricing, and quality of products. However, modern consumers not only purchase a product or service but also value the experiential and hedonic aspects of the consumption process (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999). Marketing practitioners argue that brand experiences can create emotional bonds that support genuine brand loyalty, thereby surpassing “false loyalty” that cannot be sustained by factors such as price or quality alone (Dick & Basu, 1994; Kumar & Advani, 2005). In this context, brand experience has gained increasing importance in marketing strategies. Various studies aimed at understanding how consumers experience brands have led to the development of numerous concepts and measurement tools, such as brand personality, brand advocacy, brand community, and brand loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009; Aaker, 2009; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). The scale developed by Brakus et al. (2009) aims to measure brand experience across four core dimensions, behavioral, emotional, sensory, and relational, and has been widely used in many studies (Brakus et al., 2009; Machado et al., 2014; Şahin et al., 2011).

Brand experience has become a central concept in both theoretical and practical aspects of modern marketing approaches. Understanding consumers' interactions with brands holds critical value for building strong emotional bonds, enhancing long-term customer loyalty, and sustaining competitive advantage in the marketplace. Additionally, recent international market reports highlight the significance of understanding Generation Z consumer behavior in the digital era. Forbes (2024), Deloitte (2023), and Nielsen (2022) highlight that Gen Z consumers exhibit distinct patterns of brand loyalty, advocacy, and digital engagement, making their experiences with brands particularly critical in shaping advocacy behaviors.

2.2. Dimensions of brand experience

Brand experience can be described as a multifaceted and evolving concept that lies at the center of today's marketing strategies and consumer behavior. It encompasses the entirety of perceptions, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors formed and developed across all interactions between the brand and its customers (Becan & Eaghani-oskoui, 2019). Brand experience is not limited to the product or service itself; instead, it encompasses various

touchpoints, including brand communication, customer service, packaging, store atmosphere, and even interactions with other consumers (Bayazit et al., 2019). The sum of these experiences contributes to the formation of the consumer's overall impression of the brand and fosters the development of a sustained relationship with it.

Brands utilize brand experience as a strategic means to set themselves apart and foster consumer loyalty in today's highly competitive market. In today's competitive arena, the replicability of products and services is increasing, making it more challenging for brands to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Yıldırım & Çatır, 2020). Therefore, brands aim to establish emotional connections and increase brand loyalty by offering unique and memorable experiences through experiential marketing strategies (Hamzah et al., 2023). Experiential marketing deepens the consumer's interaction with the brand, enabling the formation of emotional and memory-based bonds. This approach goes beyond merely offering a product or service; it seeks to strengthen the consumer-brand relationship through lived experiences.

According to the International Experiential Marketing Association (IXMA, 2015), experiential marketing offers consumers the opportunity to internalize a brand and create lasting impressions. Pine and Gilmore (2011) describe this process as an experience where "the brand is the stage, and the consumer is the actor." In this context, the experience economy is viewed as a strategy by which brands move from delivering "goods" to "services," and ultimately to "experiences," as a means of distinguishing themselves from competitors.

Brands aim to create personal and memorable experiences for consumers, going beyond offering an ordinary shopping or service interaction. Consumers may develop emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses related to the brand before purchasing a product, during the shopping process, or while using the product. These responses can either support brand loyalty or generate negative perceptions of the brand. In experiential marketing, prominent types of experience include product, shopping, service, user, customer, and event experiences. Each type uniquely shapes the consumer's interaction with the brand, triggering various sensory, emotional, or cognitive reactions. These responses shape the brand's cognitive position in the consumer's mind and its potential for fostering long-term attachment.

Brakus et al. (2009: 53) developed a brand experience scale that defines the components of experience across four dimensions: sensory, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive. According to this scale, brand experience is explained as the sensory, emotional, behavioral, and mental responses generated in consumers by the brand's visual elements, packaging, identity, communication, and other strategic planning efforts. The concept of brand experience was first introduced by Schmitt (1999: 64), who approached it from a holistic perspective, emphasizing that experiences should be examined across five main dimensions.

Sensory brand experiences encompass the brand's visual aesthetic elements, including color, logo, design, packaging, and architecture, as well as sensory appeals. Dirsehan (2010) states that these sensory experiences are formed in the consumer's mind through the five basic senses (taste, smell, sight, hearing, and touch). For instance, a specific scent or taste may create a positive perception of the brand. Konuk (2014) argues that for an intense sensory experience, all senses should be considered, emphasizing that brands appealing to all five senses have a lasting impact on consumer perception. Such sensory experiences are effective in enhancing brand loyalty and advocacy.

Emotional brand experiences involve interactions that evoke a range of emotional states in consumers, such as happiness, excitement, and love. Konuk (2014) defines emotional brand experiences as those that appeal to the consumer's feelings, ranging from simple emotions like fondness to deeper emotions such as pride or love. Batı (2013) states that emotions have a significant impact on consumer preferences. Richins (1997) identifies fundamental emotions likely to be experienced during consumption and emphasizes that brands influence consumers through emotional appeals. For example, brands can foster positive emotions toward themselves by investing in social responsibility projects and effectively communicating these initiatives (Efendioğlu et al., 2022).

Cognitive or intellectual brand experience enables consumers to acquire knowledge about the brand and develop positive perceptions toward it. Şener (2016) defines cognitive experiences as "rational appeals aimed at providing information about a product or service and influencing consumer preferences." Such experiences are often delivered through technological products, design elements, or promotional activities, encouraging consumers to think about the brand.

Behavioral/active brand experiences influence consumers' lifestyles, habits, and interactions with others. Featherstone (1991) states that individuals express their identity through preferences such as appearance, eating and drinking habits, and lifestyle choices. Konuk (2014) argues that behavioral experiences establish a connection

between consumers' lifestyles and brands, integrating the brand into daily life. In this context, the experiences offered by the brand enrich consumers' lives and support their socialization.

The relational dimension encompasses the role a brand plays in the consumer's social identity and sense of belonging. Schmitt (1999) emphasizes that this dimension also affects the consumer's relationships within their social environment. In this context, it is important that consumers can express themselves through the brand and develop a sense of community with like-minded individuals. Today's consumers tend to connect with brands through experiences that help them reach their idealized identity and perceive the brand as an extension of their personality.

2.3. Components of experiential marketing and their impact on consumer behavior

Experiential marketing is a marketing approach that focuses on sensory experiences to enhance consumers' emotional and cognitive interaction with the brand. Within this framework, brand components also influence consumers' sensory, emotional, and mental aspects, thereby strengthening their connection with the brand and shaping consumer behavior. By offering products and services that meet consumers' needs and expectations, brands can increase consumer trust (Esch et al., 2010; Tavşan & Erdem, 2021).

Elements that form brand identity—such as logo, color, slogan, label, packaging, and brand story—reinforce brand experiences by shaping the brand's image in the consumer's mind (Yıldırım, 2015). Logos and colors not only contribute to the physical recognizability of the brand but also influence emotional perception. For example, warm red tones are often preferred in energetic food brands, while colors like blue and white, which evoke a sense of trust and cleanliness, are commonly used in the cleaning and healthcare sectors (Teker, 2002). These sensory stimuli help consumers retain the brand in their memory and distinguish it from other brands (Keller & Richey, 2006). Slogans are among the most effective communication tools of a brand. A well-crafted slogan conveys the brand's value clearly and concisely, offering a promise to the consumer. When this promise is designed in alignment with the sensory, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of brand experience, it enhances the brand experience. It plays a significant role in creating brand equity (Yıldırım, 2015). In this sense, slogans strengthen the consumer's bond with the brand and influence their purchasing decisions.

Through brand mascots, the abstract personality of a brand is made tangible, contributing to the consumer's identification with the brand. Mascots reach the consumer within the framework of a story created for the brand, helping to establish an emotional connection. Research indicates that brand mascots have a positive impact on consumer behavior, and associating the brand with a beloved character can increase brand loyalty (Kraak & Story, 2015). Compared to celebrity endorsements, mascots offer a more controlled and brand-appropriate character, which in turn enhances the brand's credibility (Arunrangsiwed, 2015). Reaching consumers through personalized messages also holds a significant place in experiential marketing. Aristotle's persuasive appeals—ethos, pathos, and logos—aim to influence consumers by appealing to their emotions or logic. These personalized touches make consumers feel special and valued, which in turn helps foster loyalty toward the brand (Baudrillard, 2017).

Brand storytelling contributes to the brand's ability to occupy a meaningful place in the consumer's mind. A story that consumers can relate to enables them to form an emotional bond with the brand, thereby enhancing brand loyalty (Aker, 2020). A compelling brand story creates a lasting impression by incorporating elements such as credibility, brevity, empathy, and humor (Chiu et al., 2012). Especially in the digital age, when consumers share their brand-related experiences on social media, it enhances consumer support for the brand and stimulates favorable peer-to-peer communication. Packaging and labeling are among the key components that influence the connection consumers build with a brand through the functionality and aesthetic design of the product. Consumers experience the brand through its packaging, and the functional benefits provided by the packaging are associated with the brand's reliability and quality (Farese, 1991). Elements such as color, shape, and design features guide consumers toward the brand. Additionally, the information provided on the label—such as product origin and sustainability features—positively affects brand perception and enhances consumer trust.

The effect of colors in brand identity appeals to the sensory dimension of the brand and captures consumer attention. The selection of specific colors creates an associative insight of the brand in the consumer's cognition. Warm colors like red evoke energy and stimulate appetite, while blue conveys trust and a sense of coolness. Establishing a memorable color palette for corporate brands is a factor that strengthens consumer loyalty (Teker, 2002). Experiential marketing creates a direct impact on consumers' purchasing decisions and brand loyalty by integrating emotional, cognitive, and sensory elements into their relationship with the brand. The proper design of brand components enables the brand to gain a meaningful and lasting place in the consumer's consciousness. In

this way, the consumer establishes an emotional link with the brand and perceives it not merely as a product or service, but as an experience, thereby strengthening their loyalty to the brand.

2.4. Brand advocacy as a strategic marketing tool

Brand advocacy is emerging as a concept of increasing importance in the fields of marketing activities and consumption behavior, referring to the voluntary support and recommendation of a brand by its customers. Brand advocates actively promote the brand's products or services, provide positive feedback, and encourage potential customers to prefer the brand, thanks to the positive experiences and emotional bonds they have developed with the brand (Akdeniz & Kömürcü, 2021). The American Marketing Association (AMA, 2024, 2025) associates the concept of 'brand advocacy' with community, sharing, UGC (user-generated content), and organic content strategies. Brand advocacy emerges as a result of the emotional bonds consumers build with brands, leading them to develop loyalty and even recommend the brand to others. Various terms are also used to describe brand advocacy, such as 'brand evangelist,' 'brand spokesperson,' 'brand enthusiast,' or 'brand missionary,' reflecting different levels of consumer commitment (Choudhury, 2019; Doss, 2013; Matzler et al., 2009; Singh, 2015).

Brand advocates are consumers who have a distinct sense of loyalty to a brand and actively support it. These individuals not only purchase the brand but also recommend it to others, defend it, and spread their positive experiences. This behavior results from strong emotional bonds established through the alignment of consumer interests and preferences with the brand (Lawer & Knox, 2006). Brand advocacy not only reflects the consumer's trust in the brand but also plays a key role in ensuring the brand's long-term sustainable success in the market (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997). The process of developing brand advocacy among consumers is shaped by the experiences starting from their first interaction with the brand. A consumer may encounter a brand through TV, magazine, or newspaper advertisements, or via another consumer. With today's technological advancements, consumers have easier access to brand-related messages; thus, it is known that consumer recommendations influence between 20% and 50% of all purchasing decisions (Bughin et al., 2010). Especially for first-time buyers or those purchasing expensive products, recommendations from other consumers serve as a valuable guide. In fact, certain individuals go so far as to launch blogs or social media profiles to either commend or critique companies, thereby sharing their experiences with a broader audience.

Brand advocacy is related to word-of-mouth communication; however, it goes beyond merely conveying a positive message—it is also a reflection of deep loyalty to the brand. In his book *Start With Why*, Simon Sinek attributes Apple's success to the brand's capacity to attract committed brand advocates. According to him, brand advocates significantly contribute to a brand's long-term success by spreading the brand within their communities and demonstrating their commitment to it (Sinek, 2009). Brand advocacy can differ in both social and physical aspects. *Social brand advocacy* refers to consumers defending the brand against criticism from others, whereas *physical brand advocacy* involves the brand becoming a part of the target group's lifestyle, where the customers integrate the brand into their life both visually and verbally (Aksoy, 2017).

Brands can create brand loyalty and gain a competitive advantage by influencing consumers' perceptions, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors related to the brand. Since brand experience is formed at each moment of engagement between the customer and the brand, it is important for brands to carefully manage all touchpoints and provide an integrated experience. It has been found that brands that value environmentally friendly technologies positively influence consumers' overall brand experience (Uzunkaya, 2021). Discovering consumers' knowledge about brands has drawn the attention of both researchers and practitioners (Demirağ, 2023).

In today's marketing literature, it is observed that the concept of brand advocacy has not been sufficiently examined, and its measurement is generally conducted through Peer-to-peer communication. However, Peer-to-peer communication may not solely represent brand advocacy, as negative experiences can also be shared within this form of communication. In this context, addressing brand advocacy as an independent concept in more detail is essential for brands to develop effective strategies in this area (Wilder, 2015). Previous research has often overlooked how employer branding and consumer engagement in online communities contribute to brand advocacy. For example, studies such as Yılmaz et al. (2019) on employer branding in the hospitality industry and Dessart (2021) on customer brand engagement in user-initiated online brand communities demonstrate the importance of context and consumer-driven interactions. By addressing these gaps, the present study expands the understanding of how brand experience dimensions influence advocacy among new-generation consumers.

The importance of brand advocacy for companies lies in its ability to support customer acquisition through consumer loyalty and contribute to building a credible brand image. Firms that adopt customer-oriented approaches in their marketing strategies aim to maintain long-term market performance by cultivating a healthy base of brand advocates. The contribution of brand advocates to the sustained achievement of a brand is considered the ultimate test of CRM (Customer Relationship Management) provides a sustainable competitive advantage (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997; Jillapalli & Wilcox, 2010). Brand advocacy, which emerges as a consequence of meaningful brand experiences, is the ultimate outcome of a loyalty process shaped from the initial consumer interaction with the brand. By strengthening this loyalty, brands can both attract new customers and enhance the brand perception of existing ones.

2.5. Key factors shaping brand advocacy among consumers

According to Morgan and Hunt's (1994) commitment–trust theory of relationship marketing, loyal customers are more likely to engage in cooperative behavior. Similarly, Palmatier (2008) suggests that relational loyalty toward a brand increases the likelihood of repeat purchases without considering competing brands. This loyalty spreads through user-driven brand-supportive organic communication and may trigger empathetic behavior toward the brand. Brand advocacy refers to consumers voluntarily sharing the brand with other potential customers out of love and affection for the brand.

Advocacy is not limited solely to the feeling of loyalty; it also includes the actions of defending a brand both socially and physically. Such behaviors arise from a combination of factors such as brand identification, participation in brand communities, trust in the brand, and brand communication. These characteristics not only strengthen the consumer's attachment to the brand but also enable them to act as a voluntary ambassador or advocate of the brand. Brand advocacy among consumers refers to behaviors exhibited with the aim of protecting a brand's success and image, stemming from their emotional bonds and loyalty to the brand. These behaviors can be examined in various dimensions, such as brand identification, trust, loyalty, social interaction, and participation in brand communities. As a powerful force in contemporary marketing, brand advocacy goes beyond mere customer satisfaction; it represents a deep attachment fueled by genuine enthusiasm and the desire to share positive experiences. This passionate support manifests in various forms—from word-of-mouth recommendations and social media endorsements to active participation in brand communities and co-creation of content (Setiawan et al., 2022).

Consumers form their social identity through shared values and self-concepts associated with brands. In this process, rather than focusing on functional benefits, they develop brand identification through mutual interactions with the brand. Especially in the case of hedonic products, consumers move closer to their ideal self-image, which in turn strengthens their self-perception (Belk, 1988; Levy, 1959; McCracken, 1988). Trust in a brand is built when the brand consistently fulfills its responsibilities toward consumers. Consumers perceive a brand as an entity with a personality, and in moments of indecision, trusting the brand facilitates their decision-making process (Doney & Cannon, 1997). Brand trust is directly related to loyalty and belief in the brand's promises (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Brand loyalty is a key factor influenced by consumers' commitment to and preference for a brand. Aaker (1996) characterizes loyalty as an outcome shaped by accumulated usage experiences. In contrast, Oliver (1999) portrays it as a strong and enduring intention to repeatedly purchase a favored product or service in the future, even in the face of factors or marketing attempts that might encourage switching. Loyal consumers strengthen a brand's strategic edge in the market by reinforcing their commitment to the brand (Ballester & Alleman, 2001). Word-of-mouth communication is a form of communication that lies outside the brand's control, shaped by the information consumers receive from those around them. In this process, the sharing of positive or negative experiences by consumers plays a critical role. Interpersonal communication contributes to the brand's credibility and is influential in shaping attitudes toward the brand (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004). This functions as a mechanism that enhances brand loyalty. In an era dominated by digital connectivity and information overload, brand advocacy emerges as a reliable and effective source of information—resonating with consumers who seek authentic opinions and experiences, beyond the clutter of traditional advertising (Tonder & Petzer, 2023).

Consumers seek a feeling of connectedness within a group through their interactions with brands. On social media, brands develop various methods to engage with consumers. Participation in and belonging to a brand community enables consumers to form emotional bonds and increases their loyalty to the brand (Duygun, 2020; Goulding et al., 2013). Brand advocates actively support and promote the brand due to their emotional attachment. These

consumers make commitments on behalf of the brand and contribute to positive word-of-mouth marketing strategies. Today's technologies allow advocacy behaviors—such as taking on the role of a voluntary brand ambassador—to be carried out more quickly and effectively (Walker, 2010).

Brand advocates not only preserve the brand's positive image but also defend it against negative comments. Their resistance to brand detractors and negative information builds a strong fan base that reinforces the brand's long-term stability. Brand advocacy helps personalize brand experiences by increasing consumers' loyalty and support for the brand (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997; Jillapalli & Wilcox, 2010). Brand advocacy behavior in consumers has a multidimensional structure and is a significant factor that strengthens brands' market positions by deepening their relationships with consumers.

3. Methodology and findings

This article was derived from a doctoral dissertation titled "The effect of brand experience on brand advocacy in the new generation consumer: A field research," accepted by the Department of Public Relations and Promotion, Maltepe University Graduate Education Institute. The study was approved by the ethics committee of Maltepe University, as per its decision dated April 10, 2020, numbered 2020/02-02.

The theoretical propositions were tested using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique. SEM is referred to as a new-generation data analysis technique by Bagozzi and Fornell (1982). It is a suitable and straightforward process for modeling the interactions between dependent and independent variables. It allows for a systematic and comprehensive approach to modeling (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The sample group for this research includes the new generation of consumers who have grown up intertwined with technology. The sample consists of 930 individuals who use mobile phones and agreed to participate in the research. Of these participants, 475 were female and 455 were male. Regarding age distribution, 252 individuals were between 18 and 25 years old, 407 were between 26 and 33 years old, and 271 were above 34 years old. Additionally, the participants were university students at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels. Based on the dataset obtained from the participants, the effect of brand experiences on the level of brand adoption and advocacy was analyzed. The data were evaluated using the SEM method, and it was concluded that brand experiences have a substantial and favorable influence on brand advocacy.

According to the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results for both scales, the factor loadings of all items in both the brand experience and brand advocacy scales ranged between 0.76 and 0.99. These values exceed the thresholds accepted in the literature, supporting the construct validity of the scales. Additionally, the relationships between all items and the latent variables are significant at the 99% confidence level ($t > 2.58$). The CFA fit indices meet the expected threshold values. The findings indicate that the scales used are valid and reliable.

Table 1 presents the sub-dimensions of the Brand Experience scale, which was adapted and developed from the Retail Brand Experience Scale by Khan and Rahman (2015, 2016). Upon examining the items grouped under the first factor of the scale, this factor was named "Communicative Brand Experiences", and it was found that the reliability level of the Communicative Brand Experiences dimension was high (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.949). When the items grouped under the second factor of the scale were examined, the factor was named "Physical Brand Shopping Experiences", and it was determined that the reliability level of this dimension was also high (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.948). Looking at the items under the third factor, the factor was named "Experiences of Brand Reliability and Facilitation", and this dimension also demonstrated a high level of reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.904). As a result, the dimensions of brand experience were explained in three sub-dimensions as follows:

Communicative brand experiences

This dimension encompasses the way a brand interacts with consumers. It is shaped through various touchpoints, including advertising campaigns, social media content, and customer service. Clear, sincere communication that aims to build an emotional bond strengthens the overall brand experience. Primarily through digital channels, effective communication leaves a positive impression on consumers and supports brand loyalty.

Physical brand shopping experiences

This includes all touchpoints a consumer experiences in a store or physical environment. Elements such as store atmosphere, staff attitude, product presentation, and layout directly affect this experience. Positive physical experiences help shape a favorable perception of the brand. In this context, the physical environment significantly influences a consumer's initial impression and overall attitude toward the brand.

Experiences of brand reliability and facilitation

This reflects how trustworthy the brand is perceived to be by consumers and how much it simplifies their daily lives. Product and service quality, transparency of processes, and after-sales support play a critical role in building trust. At the same time, ease of interaction with the brand ensures the continuity of positive experiences and increases customer satisfaction.

Table 1. Factors and reliability scores of brand experience dimensions

Items	Factor loadings	α
Factor: Communicative brand experiences		
9. Every piece of information I receive about this brand through mass media increases my interest in it.	0,604	0,949
7. I find it interesting to connect with this brand through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.	0,634	
17. I find this brand's events interesting in a sensory way (visually, audibly, etc.).	0,652	
8. I feel good when I receive any information or message about this brand.	0,660	
16. This brand's activities are important to me and evoke positive emotions (e.g., concerts, festivals, trial stands at sales points, etc.)	0,667	
22. The things said about this brand evoke positive emotions in me.	0,695	
19. The things said about this brand capture my interest.	0,718	
18. The events of this brand are emotionally appealing to me.	0,764	
20. I feel like a part of the stories told about this brand.	0,787	
21. I find the stories told about this brand entertaining.	0,806	
Factor: Physical brand shopping experiences		
10. The way this brand arranges its shelves is appealing.	0,651	0,948
12. The proper arrangement of this brand's store shelves makes me feel good.	0,689	
11. The sales points of this brand leave a strong impression on my mind.	0,696	
13. I really enjoy shopping from this brand because the sales staff make things easier for me.	0,772	
15. The willingness and readiness of this brand's sales representatives to help provides me with a better shopping experience.	0,776	
14. I feel good when purchasing this brand because the sales staff have the necessary knowledge.	0,799	
Factor: Experiences of brand reliability and facilitation		
3. When I think of excellence, this brand comes to mind.	0,641	0,904
6. The transparency in this brand's billing process strengthens my trust in the brand.	0,645	
4. With its simple, well-prepared and clear invoices, this brand makes me feel good.	0,678	
5. The ease of this brand's ordering process makes me feel at ease.	0,681	
2. Whenever I come across this brand name, I feel excited.	0,684	
1. This brand name stimulates my senses (visual/auditory, etc.).	0,760	

Source: Bozkurt, (2021).

Table 2 presents the sub-dimensions of the brand advocacy scale, which was adapted and developed from Wilder's (2015) study titled "Brand Advocacy: Conceptualization and Measurement." Upon examining the items grouped under the first factor of the scale, this factor was named "Brand Equity and Identification", and it was found that the reliability level of this dimension was high (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.962). When analyzing the items grouped under the second factor, the factor was named "Brand Loyalty", and this dimension also demonstrated a high level of reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.944). For the items grouped under the third factor, the name "Defending the Brand" was considered appropriate, and this dimension also showed a high reliability level (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.930). The overall reliability of the newly adapted 19-item scale was determined to be 0.974. As a result, the dimensions of brand advocacy were explained in three sub-dimensions as follows:

Brand equity and identification

This relates to the meaning consumers attribute to the brand. The more the consumer identifies with the brand, the stronger the bond becomes. Brand identity, symbols, logos, slogans, and emotional communication elements play a role in forming this identification. The connection between the brand and individual values can lead the consumer not only to prefer the brand but also to represent it.

Brand loyalty

This refers to the consumer's ongoing commitment to the brand. In this dimension, the consumer does not consider alternative brands and repeatedly chooses the same one. Loyalty extends beyond repeat purchase behavior and encompasses the consumer's overall attitude and emotional attachment to the brand. For brands aiming for stable long-term income, brand loyalty is a key strategic advantage.

Defending the brand

This includes behaviors such as recommending the brand to others, making positive comments, and defending the brand against criticism. This represents the most effective form of word-of-mouth marketing. When consumers voluntarily speak on behalf of a brand, it is a strong indicator of trust and satisfaction. Therefore, brands should focus on creating experiences that turn consumers into advocates.

Table 2. Factors and reliability scores of brand advocacy dimensions

Items	Factor loadings	α
Factor: Brand equity and identification		
8. I would be a perfect salesperson for this brand.	0,488	0,955
19. I believe in the values this brand possesses and develops.	0,707	
13. This brand says a lot about my personality.	0,730	
14. The image of this brand is consistent with how I want to see myself.	0,737	
15. This brand reflects what is important to me in life.	0,814	
17. This brand shares the same values as I do.	0,823	
16. I have many things in common with this brand.	0,839	
18. My values are very similar to the values that this brand holds.	0,848	
Factor: Brand loyalty		
10. I will continue to purchase even more of this brand's products in the next few years.	0,686	0,944
20. I recommend this brand to others when asked for advice.	0,689	
22. I frequently recommend this brand to others.	0,704	
12. I intend to remain loyal to this brand in the future.	0,736	
21. This is the first brand I recommend to others.	0,770	
11. I am very likely to purchase this brand's products again.	0,811	
Factor: Defending the brand		
1. If a friend or acquaintance says something negative about this brand, I defend it.	0,570	0,939
2. If a friend or acquaintance says that a competing brand is better than this one, I explain why I disagree.	0,558	
3. If a friend or acquaintance makes fun of this brand, I stand up for it.	0,678	
6. If I think you should use this brand, I try to convince you to give it a try.	0,691	
9. I have made an effort to get someone to try this brand.	0,692	
7. I have persuaded others to try this brand.	0,715	
4. If a friend or acquaintance questions the quality of this brand, I try to convince them.	0,761	
5. If a friend or acquaintance says they don't like this brand, I try to prove why it is a good brand.	0,773	

Source: Bozkurt, (2021).

According to the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results for both scales, all items in the brand experience and brand advocacy scales had factor loadings ranging between 0.76 and 0.99. These values exceed the thresholds accepted in the literature, supporting the construct validity of the scales. In addition, all items were found to be statistically significant at the 99% confidence level ($t > 2.58$) in their relationships with the latent variables. The CFA fit indices also met the expected threshold values. The corresponding fit indices are summarized in Table 3. These findings demonstrate that the scales used in the study are valid and reliable

Table 3. CFA fit indices for brand experience and brand advocacy scales

	X^2/df	p	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	AGFI	NNFI	NFI	RMR	SRMR
Brand experience	4,008	0,000	0,057	0,99	0,93	0,91	0,99	0,99	0,054	0,038
Brand advocacy	1,326	0,002	0,019	0,99	0,97	0,97	0,99	0,99	0,030	0,019

Source: Bozkurt, (2021).

Figure 1 illustrates a model developed to demonstrate the impact of brand experiences on brand advocacy, based on the SEM path diagram of the scales used in the study “*The Effect of Brand Experience on Brand Advocacy in the New Generation Consumer: A Field Study*” (Bozkurt, 2025).

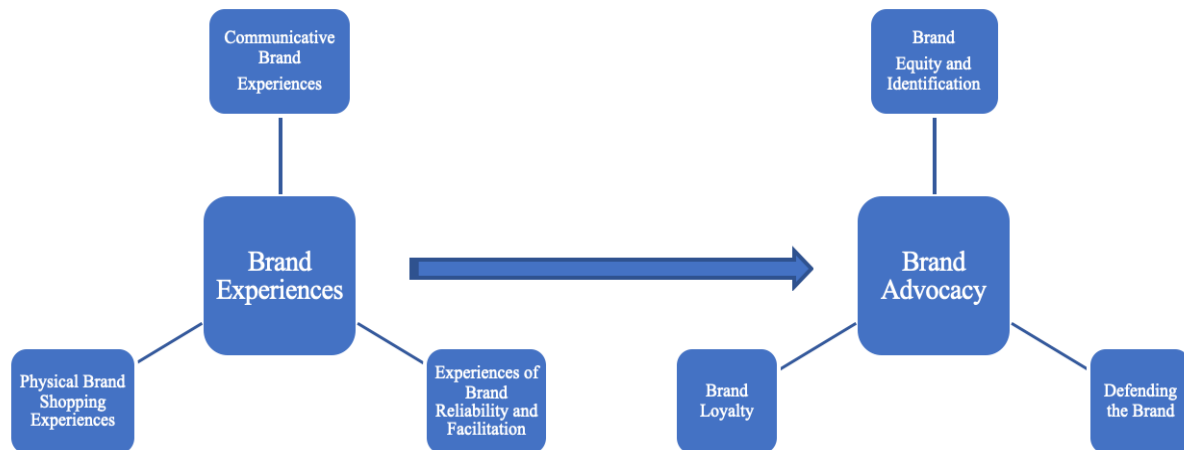


Figure 1. Structural model of the relationship between brand experiences and brand advocacy

As shown in Figure 1, communicative brand experiences, physical brand shopping experiences, and brand reliability and facilitation constitute the dimensions of brand experiences and contribute to the development of brand advocacy in consumers. Brand advocacy, in turn, can be examined in three dimensions: brand equity and identification, brand loyalty, and defending the brand.

4. Discussion and conclusion

According to the scales used in the study, the research SEM model defines brand experiences in three dimensions: “communicative brand experiences, physical brand shopping experiences, experiences of brand reliability and facilitation” also in three dimensions: “brand equity and identification, brand loyalty, defending the brand” as illustrated in the path diagram (Figure 1).

The concept of brand experience in this study was operationalized through three interrelated dimensions. Communicative brand experiences reflect how brands engage with consumers via advertising campaigns, social media content, and customer service interactions. Clear and sincere communication, especially in digital channels, strengthens emotional bonds and reinforces loyalty. Physical brand shopping experiences include in-store elements such as atmosphere, staff behavior, product presentation, and layout, which shape first impressions and long-term attitudes toward the brand. Finally, experiences of brand reliability and facilitation emphasize trust, transparency, and the extent to which a brand simplifies consumers’ daily lives. These dimensions collectively illustrate how experiential interactions can create strong emotional and functional ties with consumers.

Similarly, brand advocacy was conceptualized across three distinct but complementary dimensions. Brand equity and identification refer to the alignment between brand values and consumers’ self-concept, reinforcing the symbolic and emotional meaning of the brand. Brand loyalty reflects an ongoing commitment that extends beyond repeated purchasing, indicating resistance to competitors and a stable long-term preference. Defending the brand encompasses proactive behaviors such as recommending the brand, countering criticism, and voluntarily promoting positive word-of-mouth. Taken together, these advocacy dimensions highlight that advocacy is a dynamic outcome of deeper consumer–brand relationships, driven by both rational and emotional commitments.

The data-based results of the study indicate that new-generation consumers are strongly influenced by brand experiences, and these experiences significantly drive brand advocacy behaviors. In particular, physical brand experiences and the brand’s reliable and facilitative features have a decisive impact on brand loyalty and advocacy behaviors. Although communicative brand experiences are reliable, their impact remains limited in the digital age due to the effect of negative word-of-mouth communication. The experiential bond between the consumer and the brand not only creates momentary satisfaction but also encourages the consumer to advocate for and represent the brand. In this context, it has become inevitable for brands to adopt experience-oriented approaches aimed at securing long-term market distinction and cultivating lasting relationships with new-generation consumers.

4.1. Theoretical implications

These findings make significant contributions to the theoretical understanding of brand experience and advocacy. The study refines experiential marketing theory by demonstrating that communicative brand experiences alone are insufficient in the digital age, where negative word-of-mouth dominates. Instead, physical experiences and trust-related dimensions emerge as stronger and more sustainable drivers of advocacy. This supports and extends the frameworks of experiential marketing (Schmitt, 1999; Pine & Gilmore, 2011) and commitment–trust theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), highlighting the central role of consumer trust in transforming loyalty into advocacy. Furthermore, by operationalizing advocacy in three dimensions—equity and identification, loyalty, and defending the brand—the study advances consumer behavior research and underscores that advocacy is not merely an outcome of satisfaction but a deeper psychological and relational bond between consumers and brands.

This approach also enriches existing literature by providing empirical support for the notion that communicative brand experiences may not be sufficient in isolation to drive advocacy in the digital age. Instead, physical experiences and trust-related dimensions have a more lasting effect, suggesting a refinement of experiential marketing theories in the context of Generation Z and digital-native consumers. Furthermore, the study advances consumer behavior theory by linking experiential marketing with commitment–trust theory. The results suggest that consumer trust, when reinforced by consistent and positive brand experiences, is the true mechanism that transforms loyalty into advocacy. This theoretical linkage also demonstrates how consumer psychology and marketing communication interact, opening the door for more interdisciplinary research in branding, sociology, and digital communication studies.

4.2. Practical implications

These findings are also concretely supported by contemporary brand practices aimed at enhancing consumer experience and fostering advocacy. For instance, Starbucks enriches in-store experiences through personalized services (Starbucks, 2023), while Apple seamlessly integrates online and offline shopping (Apple, 2023). In Turkey, Trendyol strengthens consumer advocacy tendencies with user-friendly digital solutions such as Trendyol Go (Trendyol, 2024), while LC Waikiki builds trust through its sustainability campaigns (LC Waikiki, 2023). These practical examples demonstrate how the results of this study can be reflected in marketing strategies.

Drawing upon the results of the research, a number of strategic suggestions can be proposed. First, it is crucial for brands to establish a sustainable and strong communication language in digital environments. Communication strategies enhanced by personalized and consistent messaging that appeals to consumers' emotional needs are likely to strengthen the long-lasting connection between the consumer and the brand. Second, building trust-based relationships should not be limited to product or service quality alone; it must also be supported by the quality of after-sales services, transparency of processes, and the brand's approach to social responsibility.

In addition, brand experiences developed through sensory, emotional, and relational touchpoints, which are the basis of experiential marketing, transform the consumer's connection with the brand into a personal relationship, thus encouraging brand advocacy beyond brand loyalty. These managerial insights underscore that advocacy requires systematic investment in consumer-centered strategies rather than short-term promotions. Moreover, brands should invest in digital community-building practices to create long-term advocacy. Establishing online platforms where consumers can share experiences, provide feedback, and interact with both brands and peers will amplify advocacy behaviors. Such communities not only extend the brand's reach but also generate authentic user-generated content, which is more persuasive than traditional marketing messages. Managers should recognize that digital communities are no longer optional supplements but vital spaces for strengthening consumer trust and loyalty.

4.3. Limitations and future research directions

These results should also be considered within the cultural context. Since the sample is drawn from Turkey, the findings reflect consumer values shaped by local social and cultural dynamics. Therefore, the generalizability of the results may be limited, and future studies should include cross-cultural comparisons. The results derived from this research have been evaluated in the context of high-visibility products such as mobile phones. Future research can provide a broader perspective on the sustained relationship between brand experience and advocacy by including different product categories, service sectors, and cultural contexts. In addition, future studies could benefit from combining quantitative methods with qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews or netnography, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how consumers articulate their advocacy behaviors in different environments.

Furthermore, the study primarily focused on consumer perspectives, without addressing the role of organizations and employees in fostering advocacy. Future research could integrate internal branding perspectives to examine how employee engagement and organizational culture influence consumers' advocacy behaviors. Similarly, the role of artificial intelligence and personalized recommendation systems in shaping advocacy deserves closer investigation, as AI-driven interactions are becoming an integral part of digital brand experiences.

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Ethical committee approval

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Teaching intangible cultural heritage elements of Isparta through creative drama

Fatma Doęanay Ergen, Berke Sıktař

Teaching intangible cultural heritage elements of Isparta through creative drama

Fatma Doğanay Ergen¹ and Berke Sıktaş²

¹Corresponding author, Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Isparta, Türkiye, E-mail: fatmaergen@isparta.edu.tr, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2818-8944>

²Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Isparta, Türkiye, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-1278-6560>

Article Info	Abstract
Research Article Received: 23 August 2025 Revised: 9 September 2025 Accepted: 9 September 2025 Keywords: Cultural heritage, Intangible cultural heritage, Creative drama, Isparta	<i>The study aimed to investigate how tourism guidance students teach Isparta's intangible cultural heritage elements to secondary school students through creative drama. The study utilized qualitative research methods such as interviews. Seven intangible cultural heritage elements of Isparta were presented to 100 secondary school students by tourism guidance department students using creative drama. Subsequently, interviews were conducted with 24 students after the activity. The findings were examined through content analysis, and it was observed that participants learned about carpet weaving, Uluborlu wrestling, felting, Uluborlu cherries, and miniature horse-drawn carriage making. They also understood that the motifs on carpets and rugs carry specific meanings, felt is durable, miniature horse-drawn carriages are no longer sold as widely, and patience is required for making miniature horse-drawn carriages. Another important finding is that participants were unanimous in reporting that they had learned about Isparta's intangible cultural heritage elements.</i>

1. Introduction

The importance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) lies not in the cultural manifestation itself, but rather in the wealth of knowledge and skills transmitted through it from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this knowledge transfer applies to both minority groups and mainstream social groups within a state. It is essential for both developing and developed states (UNESCO, 2023). Therefore, the issue of cultural heritage is considered crucial for our country in terms of preserving and passing on our culture to future generations. In this regard, each State Party, following the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, shall prepare and update an inventory of ICH within its territory to identify and safeguard it. Provincial inventories form the basis of national inventories of ICH (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate of Research and Education, 2023). Therefore, it seems that province-based ICH studies are also critical. In this context, Isparta province has a significant potential in terms of ICH. A total of 24 assets were recorded in both the national and provincial inventory of Isparta province (Isparta Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2019). It is essential to introduce these elements to future generations and enhance learning effectiveness by engaging students through creative drama, rather than relying solely on traditional methods.

Upon examining the literature, it becomes apparent that no study directly addressing this subject has been identified; however, similar studies exist. In this context, as a similar study in teaching ICH through creative drama, Yalçınkaya (2015) has carried out creative drama practices based on teaching through games on Turkish wedding traditions. Another similar study on teaching cultural heritage through creative drama was conducted by Şimşek and Kesici (2012), who used drama as a teaching method to help children from Aydın understand where they live, their historical structures, why the environment is essential, and what they can do to protect the cultural heritage in their city. Similar studies have been conducted on the use of creative drama to enhance the effectiveness of education and training in the tourism sector (Bulut & Uzun, 2021; Demir, 2023; Kazoğlu & Şahin, 2021; Özoğlu & Sezerel, 2019; Sezerel, 2020; Sezerel & Özoğlu, 2019). There are studies on the ICH of Isparta province, but these studies do not include the element of creative drama (Beyhan & Gürkan, 2015; Çeliker & Genç, 2019; Elçi

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& Kalkan, 2023; Genç & Tolacı, 2019; Göde & Tatlıcan, 2016; Unal, 2020). While some of these studies are directly on the elements included in the ICH list of Isparta province, such as carpets and Isparta pottery (Beyhan & Gürkan, 2015; Unal, 2020), some of them are studies on the traditional Isparta bread, Isparta marriage customs, Isparta dishes and social practices of Sarıkeçili nomads related to the traditions, customs and traditions of Isparta province in terms of cultural heritage (Çeliker & Genç, 2019; Elçi & Kalkan, 2023; Genç & Tolacı, 2019; Göde & Tatlıcan, 2016). When foreign literature is examined, it is seen that there are limited studies on ICH with drama and these studies are; designing a new system compatible with 3D scene creation and VR technology (Yu et al., 2025), ICH and its protection in drama, a model based on artificial intelligence, human-computer interaction and digital technology (Ren, 2025), using drama in education programs of museums (Wang, 2014), policy evaluation for developing the tourism value of ICH related to drama (Zhao et al., 2022). Although similar studies exist on this subject, the absence of a study focusing on ICH elements and creative drama in Isparta province within the scope of ICH elements has been a decisive factor in conducting this study, which aims to contribute to the literature. In addition, it is thought that both the tourism guidance department students studying in Isparta and the secondary school students will be informed about the ICH elements and will contribute to their effective learning through creative drama. In the study, firstly, the concepts of cultural heritage and creative drama are explained, and the study is presented under the headings of method, findings, results, and recommendations.

2. Literature

2.1. Intangible cultural heritage of Isparta

The concept of cultural heritage inherently encompasses both culture and heritage. Cultural heritage is a more specific category than 'culture,' with 'heritage' serving as a qualifier to narrow it down to a manageable set of elements. The concept of "heritage" also provides one of the fundamental features that determine the legal significance of the expression (Blake, 2000: 67). The concept of cultural heritage is defined as "*the totality of values belonging to a society, including all kinds of works that exist physically and have been made by humans, inherited from the past and desired to be bequeathed to the future for various reasons*" (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2009). Cultural heritage is not limited to monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants. For example, it includes oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices related to nature and the universe, and the skills required to produce traditional crafts (UNESCO, 2025). The concept of ICH is expressed as "cultural products and production processes such as oral narratives, oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festivals, folk knowledge, practices related to the universe and nature, handicraft tradition" (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums, 2025).

Isparta province has significant cultural heritage potential, having hosted numerous civilizations throughout history. Isparta, one of the important settlement centers of the Pisidia region, is known to date back to prehistoric times, and the settlement history of the area begins with the Paleolithic (Old Stone) Period. After Alexander the Great's rule, the region was successively governed by the Kingdom of Pergamum, the Seleucids, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Abbasids, the Anatolian Seljuks, and the Ottomans (T.C. Isparta Governorship, 2025). The region is home to numerous artifacts, including traces of civilizations such as the Pisidia Antiokheia Ancient City, St. Paul Church, Rock Tombs, and the Ulu Mosque, a Seljuk work (Isparta Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2025). On the other hand, Isparta province is one of the important regions in terms of ICH values. The elements of Isparta recorded in the Provincial and National Inventories are: Minstrel Tradition, Nevruz Ceremonies, Semah, Hidirellez, Ashura Day, Bosphorus Tunes, Carpet Weaving, Felting, Rug Making, Uluborlu Laces, Rain Prayer Tradition, Coppersmithing, Camel Dance, Tooth Wheat, Uluborlu Wrestling, Henna Night, Arabic Game and Mani Singing, while the elements recorded in the provincial inventory are: Eğirdir Embroidery, Miniature Horse Carriage, Çarpana Weavings, Log Throwing, Caresses and Keloğlu's Marriage Dance (Isparta Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2019). While recording our ICH is crucial for its transmission to future generations, teaching it to younger generations is also considered crucial for sustainability. In this context, various methods are being used to ensure effective learning in education and training processes, and one of the most significant efforts in this area is the inclusion of creative drama in learning processes.

2.2. Creative drama

The historical definition of creative drama, developed in the U.S., is based on two conceptual distinctions. First, creative drama differs from traditional theater. Second, it is closely linked to childhood development (Woodson,

1999: 201). The official definition, adopted by the Children's Theatre Association of America in 1972, is "an improvisational, process-centered, non-performative form of drama in which participants, guided by a leader, imagine, enact, and reflect on human experience." Creative drama is a general term encompassing all forms of educational interactive drama used in the classroom (Kaaland-Wells, 1993). First of all, creative drama is not only an artistic form, but more importantly, it facilitates experiential learning, aiming to foster participants' personal development. Second, creative drama is improvisational, process-oriented, and non-performative, differing from traditional theater. It is generally not performed for a formal audience. Third, the source of creative drama is people's life experiences (Liu, 2019: 250).

The traditional education system has witnessed numerous efforts over the years in conjunction with changes in society. The educational process should be organized to ensure the individual development of a person to the full extent of her abilities, enabling her to integrate into society in the best possible way. Creative drama represents learning through experience and emphasizes each person's individuality. Drama activities create space for gaining new experiences and active participation in various creative drama situations (Svabova, 2017: 113). Learning in drama is a form of reconstruction. It is a way for students, whether children or young people, to evaluate what they have learned and their knowledge from a new perspective. Acquired concepts are examined, and new meanings are assigned to them. Experiences and lives are reexamined. All of these processes lead to a natural learning process. The knowledge acquired through drama is not the rote, theoretical knowledge acquired within school disciplines. Drama utilizes knowledge from various disciplines, but this time, the knowledge is structured within uniquely established subjective and objective relationships with the world. Educational institutions generally fail to provide this type of learning. Therefore, the use of drama in education is a necessity. Drama activities are designed to foster democratic, diverse, and creative children, adolescents, and young people who can recognize diverse and complex relationships, think critically, and exhibit tolerance and creativity (San, 1990: 582).

Education plays a crucial role in preserving ICH, a vital part of cultural identity, and passing it on to future generations. In the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), it is stated that educational, awareness-raising and informative programs should be organized for the general society and especially for young people (Yalçinkaya, 2015: 22). In this context, carrying out studies to ensure more effective learning by using creative drama to teach ICH and pass it on to future generations will contribute.

3. Methodology

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The study aimed to teach Isparta's ICH elements to secondary school students through creative drama. The study utilized qualitative research methods, including interviews. The population consisted of students aged 10 to 17 at a secondary school in the Eğirdir district of Isparta. Isparta province has 23 ICH elements. Considering that covering all of these elements through creative drama would take too long. It might reduce students' attention. Seven elements were selected for teaching: Uluborlu wrestling, rug making, miniature horse carriage making, Uluborlu lace, felting, carpet making, and Eğirdir embroidery. Tourism Guidance Department students prepared dialogues for these elements and incorporated puppets into the creative drama. They asked questions to the audience and involved them in the performance, thereby demonstrating improvisation on stage. The creative drama was presented to 100 secondary school students and lasted 60 minutes. Afterwards, 24 students were interviewed using a nine-question form developed with input from academicians. The study was concluded once responses became repetitive. The event took place on March 18, 2025, and interviews were conducted immediately following the performance.

The findings were examined through content analysis, and the study results were presented under the headings of main and sub-themes, along with frequently recurring codes and participant expressions. To determine the reliability of the research, an academician examined the answers given to the questions posed to the participants in the field of cultural heritage, and the codes of "Consensus" and "Disagreement" were determined. The agreement rate between the opinions was found using the formula explained by Miles and Huberman (1994) "P (Percentage of Agreement %) = $\frac{[Na \text{ (Consensus)}]}{[Na \text{ (Consensus)} + Nd \text{ (Disagreement)}]} \times 100$ " (Arkan, 2017: 100). In this

context, the calculation resulted in a P value of 94%. The reliability coefficient for each subtheme was found to be 98% for the first subtheme, 94% for the second subtheme, and 92% for the third subtheme.

4. Findings

The study's findings were analyzed using content analysis, and three main themes were identified: "Effectiveness of Creative Drama," "Importance of ICH Elements," and "Learning about the ICH Elements of Isparta Province." Six sub-themes were identified under the main themes, with 32 frequently recurring codes. The participants included eight girls and sixteen boys, aged 11 ($n = 10$), 12 ($n = 12$), and 13 ($n = 2$). Table 1 presents the findings regarding the main theme of the effectiveness of creative drama.

Table 1. Findings regarding the main theme "effectiveness of creative drama"

Sub-themes	Codes	f
Evaluation of creative drama	The best puppet show I've ever seen	23
	Watching the Hacivat and Karagöz play at school	21
	It was fun	20
	Loved the puppet named Cabbar	19
	It was educational	11
	Loved the puppet named Cino	10
	Loved the songs that accompanied the drama	10
Information obtained through creative drama	Carpet weaving	24
	Uluborlu wrestling	24
	Felt making	22
	Uluborlu cherries	20
	Miniature horse-drawn carriages	20
	Motifs in carpets and rugs have meaning	15
	The durability of felt	15
	Mini horse-drawn carriages are not sold as well as they used to be	12
	Patience is required for horse-drawn carriages	6
	Uluborlu lace	4
	Eğirdir embroidery	4

Opinions on the main theme of the effectiveness of creative drama are presented below.

Participant 1: *"We had watched the Hacivat and Karagöz play at school, but this puppet show was better than Hacivat and Karagöz. I loved the puppet Jabbar, enjoyed the songs, and had a lot of fun."*

Participant 12: *"They showed us the play at school, but I liked your play better. We had a lot of fun. I learned a lot. I really liked the puppets, Jabbar and Cino. The songs were fun, too."*

Participant 5: *"I learned about the carpets, rugs, and felt of Isparta. The motifs have meaning. Felts are said to be durable. It takes patience to make these."*

Participant 8: *"I learned about carpet weaving, Uluborlu wrestling, and Uluborlu cherry. I also learned about miniature horse carriages, but apparently, horse carriages were not sold as much as they used to be. I learned things from the game that I didn't know before."*

Table 2. Findings regarding the main theme "importance of ICH elements"

Sub-themes	Codes	f
Awareness of ICH elements	Our culture	14
	belongs to our country	10
	I don't know	4
Importance of ICH elements	These elements are important	20
	They are important because they are our culture	8
	We need to know them so we can spread them	6

Examining students' opinions on the theme of the effectiveness of creative drama, it was found that they had previously watched the Hacivat and Karagöz play at school. Still, it preferred the puppet show conducted in this study. They appreciated the puppets and songs, and found the creative drama both entertaining and educational.

Among the ICH elements learned, carpet weaving, Uluborlu wrestling, felting, and miniature horse carriage making were mentioned most frequently, whereas Uluborlu lace and Eğirdir embroidery were mentioned less often. They also indicated that they learned several key points: motifs in carpets and rugs carry symbolic meanings; felt is durable; miniature horse-drawn carriages are less commonly sold than before; and making miniature horse-drawn carriages requires patience. Table 2 presents findings related to the main theme of the importance of ICH elements.

Views on the main theme of the importance of ICH elements are presented below.

Participant 21: *"I know these are our culture. These are things that belong to our country."*

Participant 4: *"I didn't know, but now I know."*

Participant 15: *"Yes, these are important things that belong to us, things that are our culture. We need to know."*

Participant 7: *"It's important because it's our culture, and we need to spread it. We need to know it to spread it."*

When the opinions on the main theme of the importance of ICH elements are examined, it is understood from the short answers they gave that the students know the subject in general terms but do not have a detailed grasp of it. However, they seem to have a general understanding that it belongs to our country and is part of our culture. They were aware that we needed to know these elements to promote them, but they lacked knowledge about why. Table 3 presents the findings related to the main theme of learning about the ICH elements of Isparta province.

Table 3. Findings regarding the main theme of "learning the ICH elements of Isparta province"

Sub-themes	Codes	f
Learning and transferring the elements of ICH of Isparta province	Yes, I learned it.	24
	I'll tell my family when I get home.	22
	I'll tell my friends.	18
	I knew about Uluborlu cherries and wrestling before.	4
The Importance of ICH elements of Isparta province	Important	24
	It's important because it belongs to our country.	18
	We need to know that it belongs to us.	15
	To pass it on to future generations.	5

Opinions regarding the main theme of learning the ICH elements of Isparta province are presented below.

Participant 3: *"Yes, I didn't know, but I learned now. When I get home, I'll tell my mom, dad, and brother. I'll even tell my friends. Will you play this game with them?"*

Participant 24: *"Yes, I know, I learned now, but before that, I only knew about Uluborlu wrestling. My family took me there. I learned the rest through this game. I'll tell my family and friends."*

Participant 6: *"Things that belong to Isparta, to our homeland, are important, so we need to know them. If we know, we can teach them to others."*

Participant 2: *"Yes, these are important to us, to our homeland. We need to know them so we can pass them on to future generations."*

When the opinions regarding the main theme of learning the ICH elements of Isparta province are examined, the students are unanimous that they have learned these elements. Among these elements, only 4 students stated that Uluborlu wrestling was known before. On the other hand, students seem to agree that these elements are important. They stated that they consider these elements to be part of their homeland and important to pass on to future generations.

5. Discussion

Isparta's history dates back to prehistoric times, and the province has been an important settlement center in the Pisidia region, hosting many civilizations. In this context, the province possesses both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. While documenting these values is crucial, educating younger generations about them is also essential for preserving cultural heritage. Creative drama, on the other hand, is reported to improve both individual

and group skills in children in the short term, while in the long term, it provides benefits such as self-sufficiency, problem-solving, collaboration skills, a sense of presence, empathy, and the ability to put creative ideas into action, which are globally recognized as essential qualities for success (Pinciotti, 1993). In this context, when the important findings of this study, which aimed to teach the elements of the ICH in Isparta to younger generations through creative drama, are evaluated; it is seen that within the ICH elements, the participants mostly learned carpet weaving, Uluborlu wrestling, felting and miniature horse carriage making, and also learned that the motifs in carpets and rugs have meanings, that felt is durable, that miniature horse carriages are not sold as much as they used to be and that it is necessary to be patient for miniature horse carriage making. Another important finding is that participants unanimously agreed they learned about Isparta's ICH elements. They believe these elements belong to their country and culture, and consider it important to pass them on to future generations. Finally, some participants were already familiar with Uluborlu wrestling but had not heard of other elements. Based on the findings, this study is considered beneficial both for teaching students practical skills and providing information about Isparta's ICH. Based on the findings, this study is believed to be beneficial both in teaching students skills and in providing them with information about Isparta's ICH.

5.1. Theoretical implications

The findings from this study offer significant contributions to the literature in the fields of cultural heritage education, creative drama, and pedagogy. This study is considered to contribute to the literature because no other study has been found in the province of Isparta covering ICH elements and creative drama. Furthermore, it is seen that creative drama is an effective pedagogical method for conveying ICH to students, and in this context, it makes a unique contribution to the literature on cultural heritage education. Furthermore, from a pedagogical perspective, creative drama proves that it can be an innovative tool for learning and transmitting cultural values across different age groups.

5.2. Practical implications

The findings from this study demonstrate that creative drama methods can serve as an effective teaching strategy for educators to convey cultural heritage. Student-centered practices such as puppetry, singing, and improvisation enhance the enjoyment and retention of learning, offering teachers innovative methods to enrich course content. For example, teaching cultural heritage could be enhanced by incorporating technology, including mobile applications and VR headsets. On the other hand, visits to artisans' workshops can be arranged with students, allowing students to learn these elements by observing and experiencing them directly from the artisans themselves. Furthermore, for policymakers, the study suggests that integrating cultural heritage education into curricula through creative drama-based methods can strengthen students' awareness of cultural identity. Furthermore, considering the findings that some participants were previously familiar with Uluborlu wrestling and Uluborlu cherries, it can be said that the festival held in Uluborlu was effective in this regard. Some participants appear to have attended the festival with their families. Therefore, it is believed that organizing festivals, celebrations, and activities focusing on SOKUM elements in Isparta province, especially those involving games that will appeal to children, will be effective in teaching these elements to younger generations. Furthermore, inviting and honoring master craftspeople, such as those who create miniature horse-drawn carriages, during these events will also be an opportunity to demonstrate the value placed on artisans. Furthermore, these events will also benefit the promotion of the region. Thus, the study offers concrete recommendations that encourage interdisciplinary collaborations on the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage.

5.3. Limitations and future research directions

This research has several limitations. First, it was conducted at a single secondary school in Eğirdir district, Isparta, with a limited number of participants. This limits the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study employed qualitative methods, and students' responses reflect context-specific, subjective perspectives. The impact of the creative drama process was assessed only in the short term; long-term learning outcomes were not evaluated. Future research could provide more comprehensive insights into cultural heritage education via creative drama by collecting data from different regions and larger sample sizes. It is recommended that future studies assess learning outcomes in both cognitive and affective domains, using quantitative or mixed-method designs.

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Author contribution statements

F. D. Ergen: Idea/Concept, Design, Supervision and Consultancy, Sources and Materials, Data Collection and Processing, Analysis and Comment, Literature Review, Writing, Critical Review.

B. Sıktaş: Idea/Concept, Design, Supervision and Consultancy, Sources and Materials, Data Collection and Processing, Analysis and Comment, Literature Review, Writing, Critical Review.

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