

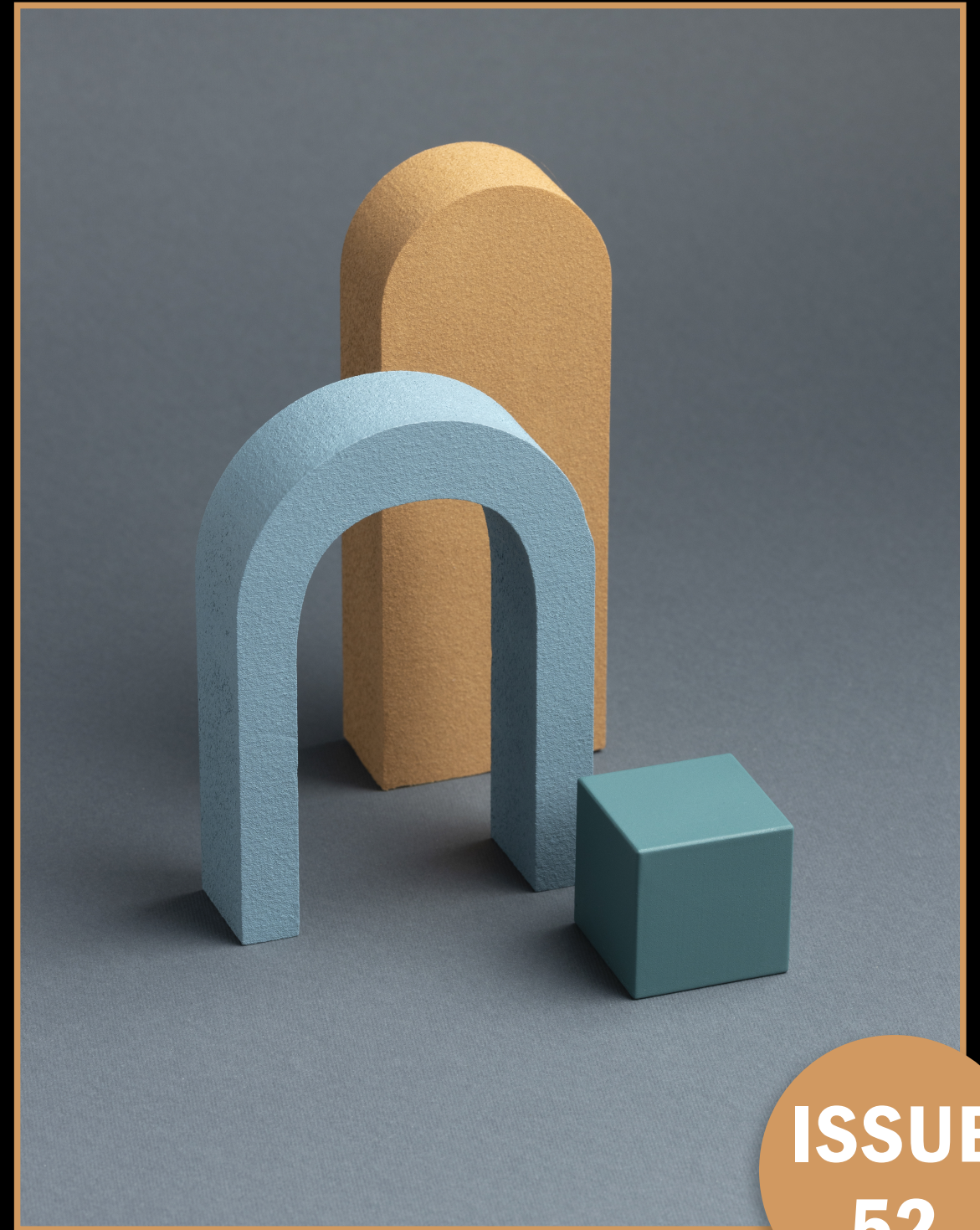
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## Issue – 52, 2023

### Content

- 179 **Erdal Çetin**  
*ResearchArticle / Body Shaming Experiences of Elite Female Athlete*
- 191 **Suhan Akıncı Oktay**  
*ResearchArticle / A Textual Analysis of Turkish Advice Letters in the Construction of a Persuasive Agony Aunt*
- 207 **Nergis Dama**  
*ResearchArticle / Missing Subjects of Social and Economic Development: Women with Headscarves*
- 224 **Esra Özmen**  
*ResearchArticle / Examining Women’s Intention to Use E-Scooters with Technology Acceptance Model: Istanbul Case*
- 239 **Sena Doğruyol & İlknur Tayınmak**  
*ResearchArticle / Do You Feel Hopeless? The Mediation Role Of Self-efficacy Between Resilience and Hopelessness in Adults*
- 252 **Özlem Efiloğlu Kurt**  
*ResearchArticle / Investigating the Mobile Learning Readiness Level of Managers in the Digital Transformation Process of Companies: An Empirical Study*
- 266 **Okan Türk & Musa Suiçer & Yunus Doğan**  
*ResearchArticle / The Mediating Role of Organizational Identification in the Effect of Organizational Support Perceptions of Employees in Accommodation Businesses on their Prosocial Service Behaviors*
- 276 **Yılmaz Kaplan & Mehmet Emirhan Kula**  
*ResearchArticle / The Circular Economy, the SMEs, and the State: How to Govern a Circular Institutional Change Process?*
- 291 **Dilara Nergizhan Koçer**  
*ResearchArticle / Sports in the Early Republican Period: The Turkish Sports Association Magazine as an Ideological Apparatus*
- 307 **Suhan Akıncı Oktay & Seçil Dayioğlu Öcal**  
*ResearchArticle / Dosing Criticism with Praise: E-Feedback in L2 Student Writing*
- 317 **Beyza Gültekin & Francis Mumuluh Veuphuteh**  
*ResearchArticle / Price Sensitivity, Perceived Food Quality, and Intention to Purchase Fast Food in the Context of Health-Consciousness of University Students*
- 335 **CORRECTIONS**

## **Editorial**

The OPUS Journal of Society Research (OPUS JSR) brings together a diverse range of theory, practice, and research in the pursuit of understanding human behavior in its social context. The interdisciplinary viewpoint lays the groundwork for presenting and establishing a holistic relationship with other disciplines, concepts, and methods. The OPUS JSR allows researchers to use an interdisciplinary approach to present different interpretations and alternative points of view. The theoretical frameworks that underpin the analyses and interpretations of the subjects under study are as important as the intersection of disciplines. This framing can lead to greater clarity of multiple, even contradictory findings, allowing for a better understanding of social dynamics that would otherwise be invisible if scholars concentrated on a single set of theoretical dynamics.

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# Body Shaming Experiences of Elite Female Athletes

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## Abstract

Women face many problems in the sports environment; one of them is "body shaming" experiences. Especially elite female athletes may have some negative experiences due to the characteristics of their profession. The study which addresses this subject is a qualitative research that aims to reveal the experiences in which elite female athletes are humiliated over their bodies. For the study, interviews were conducted with 13 female athletes residing in Batman, Diyarbakir, and Istanbul who play sports in branches such as gymnastics, wrestling, athletics, kickboxing and boxing. According to the data obtained from the interviews, the participants are exposed to different forms of body shaming experiences, both in the sports environment and in the social fields outside the sports environment. The participants are faced with disturbing comments and practices in the process of capturing the body measurements specific to the sports branches in the sports environment. In addition, they encounter sexist expressions in social relationships about their bodies that they develop through training. Athletes are exposed to comments that include pressure, and psychological violence in the sports culture where gender-based power relations are intense.

**Keywords:** Body, Body Shaming, Sports, Violence.

## Öz

Kadınlar, spor ortamında pek çok sorun ile karşı karşıya kalmaktadır. Bu sorunlarında biri de beden utandırma deneyimleridir. Özellikle elit kadın sporcular mesleklerinin özelliklerinden dolayı bazı olumsuz deneyimler yaşayabilmektedirler. Bu konuyu ele alan çalışma, elit kadın sporcuların bedenleri üzerinden utandırıldığı deneyimleri ortaya koymayı amaçlayan nitel bir araştırmadır. Çalışma için Batman, Diyarbakır ve İstanbul'da ikamet eden ve jimnastik, güreş, atletizm, kick boks, boks gibi branşlarda spor yapan 13 kadın sporcu ile görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmelerden elde edilen verilere göre katılımcılar, hem spor ortamında hem spor ortamının dışındaki toplumsal alanlarda, farklı şekillerde beden utandırma pratiklere maruz kalmaktadır. Katılımcılar, spor ortamında spora ve spor branşına özgü beden ölçülerini yakalama sürecinde rahatsız edici yorum ve pratiklerle karşı karşıya kalmaktadır. Ayrıca toplumsal ilişkilerde, antrenmanlar yoluyla geliştirdikleri bedenlerine dair cinsiyetçi ifadelerle karşılaşmaktadır. Cinsiyet temelli güç ilişkilerinin yoğun yaşandığı spor kültürü içinde sporcuların maruz kaldıkları bu yorumlar; baskı ve psikolojik şiddet içermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Beden, Body Shaming, Spor, Şiddet.

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## Introduction

In the sports environment, most individuals, especially women and children, may be exposed to the experience of body shaming, which is a form of maltreatment and humiliation (Willson & Kerr, 2021; McMahan, McGannon & Palmer, 2022). The violence that a young female athlete, who has elite level achievements in the field of gymnastics, has been recently subjected to on social media has been striking in terms of revealing these experiences. The “muscle pile” analogy coming from her followers to her photo she shared on social media contains reflections of the traditional view that has developed around the female body. This situation, which includes a tendency towards humiliation of women, also indicates the existence of a widespread opinion in the society that sports are the field of manhood.

Body shaming may appear at school, in the environment of friends (Gam, Singh, Manar, Kar & Gupta, 2020), in the family (Martínez-González, Pérez-Pedraza, Alfaro-Álvarez, Reyes-Cervantes, González Malabet & Clemente-Suárez, 2021) and in digital environments through social media (Schluter, Kraag & Schmidt, 2021; Bilgin Ülken & Yüce, 2020). However, it can be said that body shaming experience finds larger area in the sports environment due to the fact that the body is at the center of sports activities. Again, it is possible to say that it is seen more on female athletes (McMahon et al., 2022; Willson & Kerr, 2021), especially due to practices of masculine domination (Bourdieu, 2015).

Body shaming can be defined as the act of asserting negative comments, making critical comments, using a sarcastic tongue, humiliating the person in individual relationships or on social media about the shape, size or appearance of the body (Schluter et al., 2021; Schooler, Ward, Merriweather & Caruthers, 2005; Webb, Fiery & Jafari, 2016). In the sports environment, body shaming emerges as repressing, insulting the body and its functions with verbal expressions or humiliating the person over weight and

appearance (Willson & Kerr, 2021). As a matter of fact, Kosteli, Raalte, Brewer & Cornelius (2014) remarks that sports do not always offer a protective environment for athletes. According to them, athletes who want to stay physically fit, especially in some branches, may face more pressure. In their study, they detected that athletes have such a thin body perception that they become vulnerable to eating disorders. A similar finding is seen in the study of Slater & Tiggemann (2011), in which they stated that women participating in physical activities have more shame and anxiety regarding their appearances.

Different forms of interpretation may develop towards the body due to gender-based relationships in social sense. While those who are strong and muscular emphasize masculine and superior, those who are slim, thin and lean represent woman. This point of view facilitates the establishment of a superiority relationship towards woman in parallel with the roles shaped by the social hierarchy and the reconstruction of this superiority relationship within the field of sports. This situation is founded with a culture in which physical attractiveness and beauty belong to females (Günindi Ersöz, 2010, p. 45). Again, its relationship established with social norms and cultural structure places the body to the center of organizations (Amsterdam, Claringbould & Knoppers, 2017). In this sense, the body is interpreted with its emotional, social and cognitive characteristics, despite the reference made to physical and motor characteristics. In other words, the individual's thoughts, attitudes and value judgments about her/his body gain importance with the way it was interpreted by other people. (Öngören, 2015, p.28).

It is no doubt that one of the people who try to explain the body around social and cultural discourse is Bourdieu. The concepts of “habitus”, “field” and “doxa” stand at the core of Bourdieu's ideas regarding the social construction processes of the body. According to Bourdieu (2005), habitus is the most basic disposition of ours, and it has been internalized

in the practices (of our body). Habitus, which is located in the body and represented by the body, finds the finest representation in the sports organization in this sense (Amsterdam et al., 2017). Bourdieu (2005) indicates that habitus needs doxa to become operative. According to him, doxa as the whole of opinions that dominate the society, prevails in many fields and makes individuals a part of the established rules in the relevant field. Doxa, which accelerates the processes of legitimization and normalization by giving a sense of belonging, makes the social fields in which the individual exists become operative (Koytak, 2012, pp. 91-92).

Bourdieu (2016, p. 137) emphasizes that there are general and absolute laws of fields, and that these laws develop under the monopoly of field-specific thought and authority. Willson & Kerr (2021), in their study addressing body shaming as a form of emotional abuse, determined that participants socialize in a sports environment where success in sports is valued above everything else and their bodies are judged over their aesthetics and appearance. In this aspect, body shaming can be defined as a common emotional experience resulting from the perceptions of reaching cultural standards specified by narrow patterns, and the discomfort created by this experience.

In this sense, the present study focuses on the negative experiences that elite female athletes in Turkey go through in the sports field and the socio-cultural field outside the sports field over body and appearance through Bourdieu's "doxa" and "field" concepts. Moreover, it also discusses how perceptions and comments regarding their bodies gain a place in the sports field and socio-cultural field outside the sports field.

## Method

In the study, qualitative research and phenomenology method, which is the design of qualitative research, were preferred. Phenomenology focuses on the form individuals approach a phenomenon, their perceptions and the way they make sense of the phenomenon

(Cresswell, 2021; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). Accordingly, concentrating on body shaming experiences of female athletes and their way of making sense of these experiences in the study was an important reason for the preference of this research design.

## Data Collection Tool

In the study, individual interviews, which are used in examining complex and stratified structures such as individuals, groups, cultures, and social relations, and which are the data collection technique of qualitative research, were preferred. (Kümbetoğlu, 2005; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). The fact that body shaming experiences that women are subjected to in the field of sports are not an individual and isolated actions and that when they are exposed to the actions in question, the presence of sexist expressions unfolding around their bodies and an attitude that humiliates women was effective in preferring the qualitative research method, which enables in-depth analysis of an event. A semi-structured interview form was prepared to be used in individual interviews. Qualitative (Tondo, 2022; Willson & Kerr, 2021) and quantitative (Arumugam, Manap, Mello, & Dharinee, 2022) studies, which were previously conducted on the subject, were utilized in the preparation of the questions. In the forms, next to giving place to a specific topic and list of question, without digressing from the subject of the interview, unplanned questions shaped by the response given by the participants were also included. As well as those about demographic information, the questions with regard to the social environment's comments on the body while performing sports and after quitting sports and how these comments differ in the sport and social fields were asked in the interview form. In the interview form, the individuals were asked about the changes in their bodies and their attitudes towards this change, their opinions about other people's bodies, and what kind of attitude and reaction they developed in disturbing situations towards their bodies before and after starting sports. How the changing bodies of female athletes with



their sports practices affected their own selves, the reactions they encountered socially and what attitude they had in the face of such reactions were also included among the questions.

## Participants

The participants were selected from Istanbul, Diyarbakir and Batman provinces. The interviews were conducted with 13 elite female athletes who play/played sports of wrestling, judo, gymnastic, boxing, kick boxing and athletics. In this sense, the participants consisted of individuals who participated at least at the national level tournaments, internalized the sport and shaped their lives with the sport. The code names given to the participants as well as the information regarding their age and sports branch were stated below.

*Table 1. Characteristics of the participants*

Code	Age	Branch	Education
Zeynep	22	Athletics	Undergraduate student
Aycan	24	Gymnastics	Bachelor degree
Belgin	19	Athletics	Undergraduate student
Candan	37	Wrestling	Bachelor degree
Yildiz	20	Kick box	Undergraduate student
Sevgi	23	Muay Thai, Kick box	Undergraduate student
Tuba	20	Gymnastics	Undergraduate student
Seray	30	Gymnastics	Bachelor degree
Mehtap	22	Wrestling	Undergraduate student
Suna	21	Boxing	Undergraduate student
Ayşe	19	Wrestling	High school graduate
Esra	28	Wrestling	Bachelor degree
Büşra	38	Athletics	Bachelor degree

## Data Collection and Analysis

Before commencing the study, an approval was received from Batman University Ethics Committee (Date: 12.05.2022; Decision Number: 2022/05). Afterwards, the interviews were made by the researcher, and the data were collected in about two months time. The participants were informed about the study topic before the interview. A special permission was received from each participant to audio record the interviews. After understanding that the participants who were given information about the study were comfortable and peaceful, it was ensured that the voluntary consent form was read and signed. During the interview, attention

was paid that no hierarchical relationship existed between the participant and the researcher and that the interview was conducted in a friendly environment. The individuals were reminded that they had the option of not answering the questions they do not want. In the face of the answers given, the actions that would disturb the individual, affect their answers or express any opinion were avoided. Again, the participants were asked at the end of the interview whether there is any inconvenience in using the data collected, and permission was requested for the last time to use the data. No participants stated that the information they shared in the interview could pose any inconvenience for them.

The data that were audio recorded were then transformed into written texts. The findings obtained were interpreted by the content analysis method. The opinion of a second researcher was consulted for the coding of the data in the analysis process. After the assessments made separately, the analyses of the two researchers were compared and the final themes were identified. The information collected from the participants was themed in the form of perceptions and reactions within the "sports field" and "social field". The data were analyzed in depth and the ones who were similar to each other were gathered in the axis of the same theme, and the evaluations were performed within the framework of specific concepts.

## Results and Discussion

The field concept that was utilized in the process of the analysis, thematization and interpretation of the findings in the study refers to the positions structured by laws and power relations in a certain institution along with individuals (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2021). From the field concept, the data obtained from the participants were interpreted according to the characteristics of the two distinct fields. The positive perspective of having a strong, muscular body, which is considered as the results of sportive

success and goals within the field of sports, turns into a contradiction in the social and cultural field. Both the experiences they are exposed to in the process of processing the body in sports and the fact that the body shaped by sports enforces women against the prevailing doxa in the social field are among the negative experiences lived by female athletes.

### Body Shaming Experiences in the Sports Field

In the field of sports, doxa creates a mentality in which hard work comes to the fore so that the body transforms into a strong, muscular, athletic and flexible structure, and more importantly, reaches a strength that obtains the victory. This understanding, which is most often formed within the framework of the characteristics of the male body, is shaped by the prevailing social view. Studies (Hunter, 2004; Thorpe, 2009; Kavasoglu & Macit, 2018; Öztürk & Koca, 2014) demonstrate that the process in which the muscular female body transforms into a social body is under the influence of this prevailing discourse.

Under this theme, retaining a fit image in the sports field comes before individuals as an imperative task of the sport. Performance athletes, in particular, need to regulate their bodies by constantly working out. The female athletes stated that when they failed to meet the expectations in the sports field, they are subjected to body shaming, and this causes them discomfort.

The participant code-named Zeynep, who was interviewed for the aim of providing data for the study, stated that she was humiliated in the sports environment because she could not constantly maintain her ideal body with the following sentences:

*Since our financial situation was not very good, I was not able to do sports for twelve months of the year. I was working in the summer months. We were not able to go to training. When I returned, my hips, breasts and face were getting chubby. My hips were getting very large. I was not feeling comfortable when I wore trousers, which was bothering me very much. When I came, my other friends had entered the training season, the full season. They were so fit.*

*Their weights were quite good. So they were looking at me, and saying that that was puffy; this was puffy; you have become this; you have become that, you cannot recover; these kilos you have gained give you heaviness. I was being very embarrassed. (Zeynep, Athletics)*

Emotional and psychological factors related to the body constitute the parts of the individual's socialization processes, such as self-perception and identity. People give messages and influence others with bodily shapes and symbols in some fields (Bilgin, 2016, p. 220; Okumuş, 2009, p. 3). Ramadhany & Putri (2021) determined in their studies that body shaming experiences that individuals are exposed to on Instagram lower their self-confidence. Indeed, one of the points of action results from the comments others make of bodily characteristics. This is observed in the sports environment in the most obvious way.

Every branch in sports is closely related to the body and fictionalize its ideal body through the sportive success. While being overweight and shaping the weight with muscle is advantageous in some sports, being muscular but as thin and lean as possible can bring success in some sports. Sometimes, the weight class in which they will compete provide information about how athletes need to shape their bodies.

One of the participants, Yıldız, played sports in a branch in which being overweight creates a distress, and because of this situation, she had a sports history that was tested almost with hunger:

*While I was eating, one of my friends told me "What more are you eating, don't you see your condition, why are you still eating?" After that, as a child, I became obsessed about it and started sit-up exercises. Last time I was doing a thousand sit-ups. In the mean time, I think I've also grown taller. Then I could not recognize myself as I was getting thinner and thinner. There are also weight classes. You have to get into a weight class. Particularly a weight class the trainer specifies. You have to lose weight to reduce that weight class. You are on a diet. When you cannot lose weight, there is no insult you do not hear. I was becoming an enemy to my own body. (Yıldız, Kick box)*

Similarly, Gam et al. (2020) determined that individuals who do not have ideal bodies (obese, etc.) may be more exposed to body shaming. Seray, who experienced a similar situation, express that they face these problems more often especially at the beginning of adolescence, the periods in which individuals become more interested in their bodies and are more sensitive to comments.

*I was very young when we first started. I do not remember exactly. But as time passes and competition increases, talks about our movements and our weight are increasing. When we could not perform a movement, first we hear a scolding from the trainer for sure: 'if you do not lose those weights, of course, you cannot do it!' The same goes for friends as well. Of course, there were also some who rejoiced deep down inside. Then you become ambitious. You get on a diet for days. At the beginning of adolescence, these were too much (Seray, Gymnastics).*

This situation is in line with Foucault's (2015) views that the body will be a useful force as long as it is productive. According to him, the body is meaningful for the individual and is encircled by the power as long it is productive. In other words, in the moment when the individual thinks that she/he becomes a power with her/his body, in fact -in a contradictory way- her/his dependence also increases

Esra, another athlete, expressed that her being skinny and underweight was a concerning situation for her in the sports environment:

*Since I was already underweight, my father had me sign up for wrestling. As a told you before, there was also a trainer he had known before. We were with him. When I first started, I do not forget both their gaze and what they said to me. I used to wear loose clothes all the time. I never forget, at the first days; one of my friend said, 'Go do athletics with this body, at least it will work.' I was eating at home, but I was not able to put on weight. Sometimes I was eating as much as to choke. Naturally I grew up some more after adolescence. I also became a fine wrestler. But I still keep the words spoken in those days in my mind. (Esra, Wrestling)*

In their study that investigated the perpetrators of the body shaming experience,

McMahon et. al. (2022) determined that trainer, teammate (partner), parent and team managers emerge as four perpetrators in the formation of sportive success anxiety in the individual. In the study, athletes stated that they were punished with different training and exercises in negative situations regarding their bodies. In a study by Lucibello, Koulanova, Pila, Brunet, & Sabiston (2021) conducted with adolescent females, it was revealed that athletes hear negative comments towards their bodies from their teammates and from the opponent team's athletes and coaches in competitions. Willson & Kerr (2021), on the other hand, reported that in the case that the discipline about the body is not ensured and the body measurements specified by the trainer are not reached, the athletes are threatened with suspension from the sports environment. Again, it is seen that messages over the body are given to create hierarchy among athletes, to motivate athletes in competitions and trainings or to demoralize them.

Consequently, in the sports environment, when individuals do not have a body image appropriate for the characteristics of the sport they perform, they can be humiliated and subjected to body shaming by their social environment. In this stereotyped culture, the possession of body dimensions that are specified by sports and sports branch can become important for women, and they may experience more trouble if they do not have those dimensions.

### **Body Shaming Experiences in the Social and Cultural Field**

According to the data obtained from the participants, another field where body shaming is experienced is the social and cultural field. The situation, which is shaped by success and strong body image in the sports field, is conveyed to a different point in the social field. Especially when it is digressed from the gendered body in the social field, the common and acceptable body image, it can be contrary to the prevailing doxa and create a crisis in individuals. The



image of strong and muscular individual in the sports environment can compel the female figure reminded by doxa in the social field. This circumstance can cause individuals to experience unhappiness in certain cultural activities such as wedding, dating and marriage. All these are undoubtedly closely associated with the hegemonic masculinity expressed by Connell (2019), on the other side of this, the perception of femininity exists. Femininity and masculinity create the sets of assumptions, expectations and behaviors attributed to or associated with the genders in question in a society (Günindi Ersöz, 2016, p. 27).

It is a well-known fact that the socialization attributed to women in the common patriarchal environment in both traditional and modern societies puts a great emphasis on bodiliness and physical attractiveness. Because bodies are trained and processed within the social structure, and the process of the transformation of the torso into a body takes place with social elements (Bingöl, 2017, p. 88). Bilgin (2016, p. 219) says that these seemingly ordinary actions are based on an ideological foundation. According to him, this situation is a cultural, political and economic intervention against the body. Indeed, it is possible to say that there is a similar construction process for the sports field as well. It is observed that a part of the perspective that includes positive or negative aspects in the social field is based on physical attractiveness and ideal body.

Based on Foucault's bio-power approach, Fleming (2014) says that biocracy strengthens the power relations that control individuals and their bodies. The biocracy's process of normalizing some bodies with certain standards or abnormalizing bodies that are outside the set standards finds correspondence mostly in sports institutions (Amsterdam et al. 2017, p. 338). Just as, the standards in sports on emulating the body to something or shaping it in certain dimensions are shaped according to the doxa specific to the field of sports, so the development in the socio-cultural field continues in this way. Bourdieu (2015, p. 50) says that the ruled people look at the relations of domination with the categories that have been created according to

the rulers' point of view, which leads to the fact that these categories seem as if they are natural. This relation of domination affects the practice according to at which social field (sports, family, cultural areas, etc.) it is in. Perhaps, this domination is the reason why a female athlete, who feels so comfortable, and possesses a positive body perception in the sports field, experiences distress in other cultural and social fields.

One of the participants, Sevgi, expressed the problems she experienced with respect to her body in the social field as follows:

*Again, I lived a process of muscling while doing sports. Because my abdominal muscles and arm muscles have started to form. Then my leg muscles, which are currently still very intense. Because we are exercising leg muscles very much. Then, my girlfriends around me started making fun of me. I also lived such a process. When I mentioned about my sportive successes, they were immediately hitting me from there. You know, 'You are muscular, in the future they will sag. It will be like this or that...' Needless to say, I believed whatever people said, since I did not have much information on individual sports. You are influenced. You sorrow involuntarily. Because you really think it will be just like that. (Sevgi, Muay Thai, Kick Boxing)*

Karagöz & Karagün (2015) indicated in their study that athletes who do judo come first among the athletes with a negative body perception. Again, it is possible to say that women having the most problems in the social field are those who do heavy combat sports such as wrestling, taekwondo and karate. In this regard, the comparisons made by Mandal (2014, p. 79-80) between active or less active sports groups revealed that women's satisfaction levels with their bodies are lower than men and that men's body perceptions are more positive.

Because of the prevailing relations in the society, one of the important aspects that legitimizes the ideal body perception is the body norms coded over its contrast (non-ideal) (Topaloğlu, 2010, p. 271). Indeed, the glorification of being thin, on the other hand, the defamation of being overweight (Hacısoftaoğlu & Bulgu, 2012, p. 183) constitute an important place in body perception. Again, another

prominent aspect here is the designation of female body measurements. The masculinization of the external appearance in women or the negative judgment about the muscular female body are characterized as "troublesome bodies". According to Öztürk & Koca (2014, p. 337), in a mentality where the femininity of bodies outside of femininity squeezed into an elegant, desirable, attractive body is questioned, muscular and athletic female athletes are seated on the target board and questioned.

This fear of being questioned and criticized was observed in some participants.

*It would not be a problem when you first start sports, and you are proud of your body as long as you achieve success. When people look at you, happiness occur inwardly. But, after you become a young lady, it changes. For example, when you want to have a relationship with someone of the opposite gender or in a social environment... It changes when you want to wear a beautiful dress while going to a party, a wedding. The statement, "she is like a man", bothers you. The gazes in the wedding hall bother you. What we experience in our daily life is starting to become hard on us. (Suna, Boxing)*

Büşra, who is also a teacher, said that despite quitting sports, she receives similar reactions from her family and students:

*I was not that overweight. But I was being criticized because of my gait and some of my behaviors. For example, as I said, my family still makes fun of me saying my body is masculine. 'You are like man.' Students at the school say 'my teacher, what kind of gait do you have? It's like you're going to beat a man.' Such things always happen. We got used to it as well. (Büşra, Athletics)*

Tondo (2022), in his study on female students, determined that the participants were very uncomfortable with the body shaming experiences they were exposed to, especially in the first period. According to Bourdieu, via doxa, individuals most often accept widespread opinions without knowing much about it. In this sense, views and beliefs that are seen as an obvious consensus but not criticized develop under the influence of doxa. This is regarded as

an unquestionable fact, some concrete cases of this arise as symbolic violence applied to women (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 2013). Bourdieu (2015) states that symbolic violence is shaped through the hidden inclinations and sensitivities of the individual and develops by taking support from dominant opinions and domination relationships.

The common discourse about having a strong body and a "man-like" muscle or body is also seen in the study of Kavasoğlu & Macit (2018). The study draws attention, in the themes of "Masculine domination over the body" and "Troublesome bodies", that having a muscular body is transformed into a troublesome body for females and that the female body is dominated with discourses within the gendered social structure. Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) say that with the objectification theory, bodies are gendered and interpreted in this way. In relation to this, Li (2021) remarks that one of the sources of women's body shaming experience in Chinese society is the objectification of the body.

Leyla and Candan are among the participants most widely exposed to this discourse:

*Yes, 'You are like a man; you do not look like a woman.' Everybody was saying. Even when I was passing by the street, they would say, 'Girl is like a man, look!'. Since the clothing is also in that style... Perhaps, as there are too many men around me, I might be acting like them. But most of them are like that. Girls doing this sport are masculine. (Leyla, Kick Boxing)*

*Well, 'Your physique does not befit to woman at all', 'It's getting worse every day', 'You look like a man...' Even my sisters, although they are physical education teachers, used to say 'Candan, you should quit it, when we look behind you while you walk, it is like a man is walking.' Yes, it was generally negative. (Candan, Wrestling)*

For the postmodern consumption culture, we live in, Köse (2016) says: "In this new era, where technology has been effective, the social purchasing power provided by the advantages provided by physical images to the individual has increased so much that it is much more appreciated than the highest level of individual

effort and talent can achieve." Indeed, one last aspect that draws attention in this regard is the anxiety to maintain the aesthetic body acquired through sports after quitting sports. Some participants verbalized that they experienced such an anxiety after quitting sports:

*You experience the distinction after quitting sports. While you eat like you used to, you cannot do sports as much as you used to. When you cannot fit in the clothes, when you sag, people's comments start to come. Some was saying, 'We said not to do this sport. Look at your physique'. Some was saying, 'As times go, you'll be like a bear.' Let alone my household, my friends outside, there was a talk about my body every day. I did not have any successes that I could tell and be proud of anymore. It has always been making me happy until now. Maybe, I am more obsessed with my weight now; I do not know that either, but the comments of the people around myself were really offensive, they still are. (Esra, Wrestling)*

As a result, it was seen that the elite female athletes interviewed in the present study were exposed to comments developed under the influence of the prevailing doxa, as in the sports environment. As a matter of fact, this situation creates a pressure for athletes in terms of the wish to do sports, its frequency, the branch of sports and when they need to end the sport. A significant part of the participants express that they experience tension in the social field due to stereotypes about the body. Although this situation, which Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2021) expresses as the divided habitus, causes a challenge and a renewal in some participants, it was observed that the participants usually have a tendency to create a harmony between the field and the habitus.

## Conclusion

The data obtained in the present study revealed that female athletes are exposed to body shaming experience in different ways both in the sports environment and in the social field. Especially the characteristic of sports developing around the body and discourses and practices advanced within the social structure and hierarchy in which women are tested with their bodies constitute a form of psychological

maltreatment. The view rooted in the society facilitates the discourse and practices of humiliation over the body.

Comments made under the influence of the prevailing doxa both in the sports field and in the social field outside the sports field develops around the measurements that are cut out for to the body of athletes and particularly female ones. Due to consisting of negativities towards female athletes, these comments create a heavy burden on them. The comments that the female participants experienced from individuals in their sports environment demonstrate that sport is done for ambition and competition rather than for education, recreation and health. As a matter of fact, the reason why the emotional abuse experienced by elite athletes is based on a more severe experience results from the fact that sports are performed within a strong competition tradition.

The present study revealed that body shaming experience for athletes develops based on the characteristics of the sports environment and that the field it affects the social relations of the individual is the social and cultural field. The prevailing hegemony that the nature of sports is men-specific nature and the body form it creates is masculine, makes the main focus of comments regarding the body of female athletes. The expressions socially growing around the "male body" discourse cause a reactivity to be born against body characteristics, which are seen as the key to happiness and success in the sports environment and obtained as a result of long exercises. The prevailing social doxa requires sensitivity because of its unchallengeable or irresistible nature. Because of this, athletes who cannot resist the comments coming from the social environment can take more radical decisions such as quitting sports.

Although the stigmatization and humiliation related to the body made in the field of sports is a heavy experience that athletes are exposed to, all authorities in the field of sports socialize with this culture. For an appropriate sport and team environment, confronting this culture and producing solutions appear as indispensable necessities for all actors of sports. Both reducing the tendency to threaten athlete's prosperity

through body, weight and eating habits in the sports environment and raising awareness of the athletes for the discourses that they can face in the social field would contribute more to the prosperity and well-being, which is one of the purposes of doing sports.

Finally, studies about this subject conducted in Turkey are seen to be limited. Today, with the development of social media, both men and women can be subjected to body shaming due to their different bodily features. In this sense, it is possible to carry out qualitative and quantitative studies on different construction processes of body shaming in the sports environment, which is also the subject of the present study, and other social institutions.

*Limitation of the study:* The study data were limited to the experiences of female athletes competing in individual sports. Again, only female athletes were included in the study, and it focused on body shaming experiences they were subjected to.

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# A Textual Analysis of Turkish Advice Letters in the Construction of a Persuasive Agony Aunt

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## Abstract

*As a representative form of popular culture, the continuation of advice letters written by the agony aunts in newspapers can demonstrate society's needs. Despite its commonality in everyday life, advice can be termed as a 'complex and interesting speech act' (Hyland and Hyland 2012) since sometimes it does not end in one sentence like other speech acts (e.g., requesting, apologies and thanking) (Trosborg 1995). Based on data from a collection of 100 advice letters written by the Turkish agony aunt gathered from the years 2020-2021, a textual meta discursive analysis of advice letters is conducted to evaluate the types and frequencies of textual markers to find out how the agony aunt utilizes these textual elements to put forward her arguments. The findings reveal that 1) logical markers are extremely essential for persuading advice seekers and 2) adversatives and additives are necessary for providing a logical basis when advising advice seekers. The paper concludes by indicating that textual markers are essential for persuading advice seekers and potential readers when giving advice.*

**Keywords:** Advice Letters, Logos, Logical Markers, Additives, Adversatives, Writer-Responsible Texts, Reader-Responsible Texts, Textual Markers.

## Öz

*Popüler kültür temsilcisi olarak, öğüt mektuplarının gazetelerde Güzin abla tarafından yazılmaya devam edilmesi toplumun ihtiyaçlarının göstergesi olabilir. Günlük hayatta yaygın olmasına rağmen, öğüt 'kompleks ve ilginç' bir söz eylemdir (Hyland and Hyland 2012) çünkü bazen diğer söz eylemler (örneğin rica, özür ve teşekkür) gibi bir cümlede bitmeyebilir (Trosborg 1995). 100 öğüt mektubundan elde edilen verilere dayanarak öğüt mektuplarının metinsel meta söylem analizi yapılarak, Güzin ablanın argümanlarının nasıl ortaya koyulduğu tartışılmaktadır. Bulgular, 1) öğüt mektuplarında metinsel belirteçlerin kullanımında farklılıklar gözlemlendiğini ortaya koymaktadır. 2) öğüt arayanları ikna etmek için mantıksal belirteçler son derece önemlidir. Öğüt isteyenlere öğüt verirken mantıklı bir temel sağlamak için karşıtlık bağlacı ve ekleyici bağlaçlar gereklidir. Makale, öğüt verirken öğüt arayanları ve potansiyel okuyucuları ikna etmek için metinsel işaretlerin gerekli olduğunu belirterek sona ermektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Öğüt Mektupları, Logos, Mantıksal Belirteçler, Yazar Sorumlu Metinler, Okur Sorumlu Metinler, Metinsel Parametreler.

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## Introduction

With the invention of newspaper print culture, advice columns (i.e., advice letters) have been one of the key elements of popular culture (Hendley 1997). However, recently together with the appearance of online communication, electronic advice data became available and researchers started investigating electronic advice data extensively as well (Bates Figueras 2020; Locher 2013). In Turkey, the advice letter history in Turkish starts in the 1960s with Güzin Sayar and proceeds from 1998 till the present with Güzin Sayar's daughter Feyza Algan. Güzin Sayar's daughter, Feyza Algan, is prolonging his mother's mission of advice-giving. Thus, Turkish advice history has witnessed two agony aunts. Advice letters in Turkish started appearing online as well. Despite its commonality in everyday life, it is termed as a 'complex and interesting speech act' (Hyland and Hyland 2012) since sometimes a piece of advice may not even end in one sentence like other speech acts (e.g., requesting, apologies, and thanking) (Trosborg 1995). For example, it is possible to thank simply by using 'Thank you' and apologize through 'I am sorry' but there can be many forms of advice. The advice can be realized in several ways such as through the use of markers of unreality, conditional clauses, and tentativeness through the use of hedges like perhaps, maybe and possibly, imperatives, modals, questions inviting introspection and action (Leech 2014; Yılmaz 2022; DeCapua and Denham 2007; Hudson 1990 Locher 2006). On one side while you are offering advice for the benefit of the other person, on the other side it may mean that you are giving importance to your own opinion more than anything else (Leech 2014). Thus, this makes advice a face-threatening speech act (Brown and Levinson 1987: 65) and for that reason, it is utilized with rhetorical facilities depending on the contextual parameters of the situation concerning advice. As mentioned previously, advice may be given in a long letter rather than one sentence. This makes advice worth studying to determine the metadiscursive boundaries.

Coined first by Zelling Harris in 1959, the term metadiscourse refers to the writer's and reader's way of representing the text in terms of personalities, attitudes, and assumptions (Hyland 2005). According to Hyland (2005), the writer and the reader interact with each other while the text is produced. Hyland mentions that "Metadiscourse is the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community" (Hyland 2005: 37). This definition allows researchers to study different genres to understand how they function in discourse.

Dafouz-Milne makes a distinction between two macro functions of metadiscourse: textual and interpersonal. The former refers to the textual organization and the latter refers to the writer's stance towards the content and the potential reader (Dafouz-Milne 2003: 97) and demonstrates how the writer engages with the reader in argumentation (Neff-van Aertselaer & Dafouz-Milne, 2008).

Majority of the research in metadiscourse centers around academic genre (e.g., Abdi et al., 2010; Bunton 1999; Dahl, 2004; Hyland, 1998; Hyland 2005a; Hyland, 2005b; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Mauranen, 1993b; Vande Koople, 1985). Similarly, according to Adel (2018) academic genres as regards metadiscourse received too much interest from researchers. Other scholars applied metadiscourse to different genre types as well. Some studies highlight the importance of Daily speech (Schiffrin 1987), textbooks (Crismore 1989), oral narratives (Norrick 2001), scientific discourse (Crismore and Farnsworth 1990), advertisement texts (Fuertas-Olivera et. al. 2001), company annual reports (Hyland 1998b), university students texts (Hyland 2000), argumentative essays (Ho and Li 2018), hotel manager's review response (Ho 2020), workplace request emails (Ho 2018), policy documents (Ho 2016). As can be observed metadiscourse carries importance for uncovering different types of texts and their underlying rhetorical structure. It is due to this reason that the study of different genres and their meta-discursive structure can reveal important

aspects of genres in particular and culture in general.

### Review the letters of advice

A large body of literature has dealt with advice as a speech act. The studies compared advice-giving practices of native speakers of English and ESL/EFL participants from Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, Arabic, Spanish, Turkish, Iranian and others to understand how advice differs structurally and pragmatically in a cross-cultural context (Hinkel 1994, 1997; Tavakoli & Tavakoli 2010; Nida 2020; Hosni 2020; Feng 2015; Babaie & Shahrokhi, 2015; Baca 2011; DeCapua & Findlay-Dunham, 1993; Yılmaz 2022). These studies, however, attempted to make the comparison between native and non-native languages to identify advice-giving practices of different languages and cultures.

When it comes to advising letters which are defined ‘as a form of communication including suggestions, recommendations, and pieces of information to receivers’ (Yang 2021), it can be observed that they have not been studied extensively like requests, apologies, and refusal letters (Kimoga 2010; Richard and McFadden 2016; Ho 2010; Ho 2018). Advice letters could deal with a range of problems from relations to marriages. They are seen as private spaces in public institutions (Philips 2008). A large-scale study was conducted by Locher (2006) on advice letters. She studied the content structure of advice letters, relational work in advice letters, identity construction of the advice-giver, and problem letters of advice seekers. Similarly, Morrow (2012) examined Japanese online advice-giving tendencies in the internet discussion forum. By doing a discursive move analysis, he finds that assessment and advice were the building blocks of communication. Yang (2021) studied a different form of Chinese advice letter called ‘changyi shu’ which appears in a form of unsolicited advice written by governments, hospitals and schools during the COVID-19 pandemic to call for immediate action in terms of metadiscourse. The study compares how government and hospital official letter writer's engagement with staff and citizen letter recipients. However, the textual

organization of these letters needs to be studied to uncover how the advice giver interacts with the advice seekers to reveal the dynamics of advice-giving in such columns. The next sections will provide a detailed account of the textual markers of advice letters.

### Methodology

#### Data

The data comprises of 100 advice letters gathered from the online website ([www.hurriyet.com](http://www.hurriyet.com)) from the years 2020-2021. All the letters published in the aforementioned years were taken into the corpus. The total number of words in advice letters written by the agony aunt was 18357 within a 100-advice text.

#### Data Collection

In order to find out the textual markers in the corpus, advice letters were read many times and examined carefully. Second, the contexts of the textual markers were determined to observe the functions these markers fulfill.

#### Data Analysis

In order to analyse textual markers of advice texts Dafouz-Milne’s (2008) taxonomy was used. In addition, since examples are from Turkish, textual markers were employed which gave rise to the compilation of other studies in Turkish. In table 1, the eclectic taxonomy adapted from Dağ Tarcan (2019), Güçlü (2020), Uluçay and Hatipoğlu; Göksel and Kerslake (2005); Şen (2019) can be observed:

*Table 1. Categorization of Textual markers adapted from Dağ Tarcan 2019, Güçlü 2020, Uluçay and Hatipoğlu, Göksel and Kerslake 2005*

Macro category	Functions	Examples
Logical Markers	Express semantic relationships between discourse stretches	Ve (and), -(y)a/ile, da ‘and’, da ‘too’ bile ‘even’ ‘and what’s more’ ‘and also’ and what...’
Sequencers	Mark particular positions in a series	Bu yazı, bu köşe, bu durum (This article, this column, this situation)

Reminders	Refer back to previous sections in the text	Benim yazılarımı okuyorsan (If you are following my column...)
Topicalisers	Indicate topic shifts	-e göre (according to me.), -e bağlı olarak
Code Glosses	Explain, rephrase or exemplify textual material	Reformulators Bu demek, diyorum ki, diğer bir deyişle, anlamına gel-, tanımla-, the use of parentheses Exemplifiers Gibi, vb. vs.(etc.), mesela/örneğin
Illocutionary markers	Explicitly name the act the writer performs	Umarım (I hope), öneririm (I recommend), kutlamam (I congratulate), kutlamak (I celebrate), tebrik etmek (I congratulate), teşekkür etmek (I thank), tavsiye etmek (I recommend), dilerim (I hope), kusura bakma (I apologise)
Announcements	Refer forwards to future sections in the text	Aşağıda belirtildiği gibi "as stated", bölümlerde "below", aşağıdaki "the below", bir sonraki "the next", ilerleyen "in the nexts sections"

Table 1 demonstrates the categories (Logical markers, sequencers, reminders, tropicalizes, code glosses, illocutionary markers, announcements) that were identified and then, the contextual and pragmatic functions were determined and classified accordingly. The analysis of the quantitative data was done manually.

Under the textual metadiscourse heading there are seven categories that have been summarised in Table 1. The first of these categories is logical markers that express relations between main clauses while helping the readers to form pragmatic connections by guiding them through the text. They signal additive (ve (and), zaten (besides)) , adversative (ama (but), ancak (however)) and conclusive (bu nedenle (because of this)) relations in the text. The second category is the sequencers that mark particular positions in a series. The sentence 'ondan sonra sen dönmüşün evine' (Y18) 'After that you returned back home (Y18)' is an example that guides the reader to follow the actions happening in the text. Reminders refer back to previous sections in other

parts of the text by retaking an argument, amplifying it or summarising some of the previous argumentation (Dafouz-Milne 2007: 98). In the following sentence the agony aunt utilizes a reminder to indicate the points that she and the advice seeker share:

Ama kayınvalide gelin sürtüşmesi filmlere, karikatürlere, fıkralara konu olmuştur, **bildiğin gibi.** (Y17)

But the mother-in-law and bride controversy has been subject to movies, cartoons and anecdotes, **as you know.** (Y17)

In the example, by using the reminder 'as you know' to the advice seeker refers to the shared values of each other to strengthen solidarity (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Tropicalizes indicate topic shifts for guiding the reader to follow the argument. This extract from our corpus is an example of a topic shift:

**Sorunuza gelince,** bana göre evli ya da evlilik dışı ilişkilerde en ciddi sorun, cinselliği sadece fiziksel yönden değerlendirmek, sevgi, aşk, duygu yönünü görmezden gelmektir. (Y70)

**As for your question,** in my opinion, the most serious problem in married or extramarital relationships is to evaluate sexuality only from the physical side, ignoring love, affection and emotional side of it.

The agony aunt starts by general overview and evaluates the advice seeker's situation by the topicaliser 'as for your question'. Code glosses explain, rephrase or exemplify textual material. Following Hyland (1998b:443) Dafouz-Milne included parentheses and colons as examples of code glosses. The related example from the corpus is as the following:

Sevgili kızım, bu genç adam seni tehdit etmiyor, sana şiddet uygulamıyor, seni beraber olmaya zorlamıyor. (Tabii, eğer benden saklamıyorsan.) My dear daughter, this young man does not threaten you, does not use violence against you, does not force you to be together. (Of course, if you're not hiding it from me). In this example sentence from the corpus, the adviser mentions her comments but in the parentheses section of the sentence she reflects her hesitation about the unreality of the conditions.



Illocutionary markers name the act the writer performs in the text (Dafouz-Milne 2007: 98). By using this marker, the writer makes specific to readers the function he is performing. However, some writers refrain from using these markers because they think that they are being speculative about their reports or their message is on wishes and predictions (Vande Kopple 1985, 91). On the other hand, the agony aunt utilizes these markers to form personal boundaries. She shows her stance in the text as in the example from the corpus:

Prof. Dr. Osman Müftüoğlu hocamızın önerdiği yöntemi denemeni **tavsiye edebilirim**. (Y8)

I **can recommend** you to try the method suggested by Prof.Dr. Osman Müftüoğlu (Y8)

Announcements refer forwards to future sections in the text in order to prepare the reader for prospective argumentation examples include ‘as will be seen below’. Since advice texts did not mention about upcoming material, there was no announcement in our corpus.

## Results and Discussions

The main focus of this study was to uncover the textual markers in advice letters and this section of the study provides a general distribution of the main categories of textual markers in Turkish advice letters. In the following sections, the frequently employed textual markers, their contextual parameters and the pragmatic functions they fulfill will be identified and discussed through Table 2. The results are explained in two categories as quantitative and qualitative.

### Quantitative Results

The quantitative results are based on the descriptive statistics in the context of the markers in the advice letters. The total number and the percentage of the markers are used in the tables to indicate the distribution of the textual markers (Table 2) and the distribution of logical markers (Table 3) in the letters. These statistical analyses are meaningful in the meta discourse studies in linguistics (Hyland, 2005; Hyland and Jiang 2022;)

**Table 2. Overall distribution of the textual categories in advice letters**

Textual markers	Function	Number	% Total Textual markers
Logical markers	Express semantic relationships between discourse stretches	712	67.6%
Code glosses	Explain, rephrase or exemplify textual material	156	14.8%
Topicalisers	Indicate topic shifts	96	9.1%
Sequencers	Particular positions in a series	55	5.2%
Illocutionary markers	Explicitly name the act the writer performs	28	2.6%
Reminders	Express semantic relationships between discourse stretches	5	0.4%
Announcements	Refer forwards to future sections in the text	0	0
Total		1052	100

The total number of words in advice texts was 18.357 and the total number of advice letters was 100 and the total number of textual markers used in advice texts by the agony aunt was 1052. As can be observed from table 2, the most frequently employed textual marker in advice texts. The logical markers make up 67.6% of the advice text. Logical markers are like prints for the reader to follow; in that they show how the writer combines ideas and how he settles his argument structure as well as how the writer thinks (Hyland 2005: 50). What is more, they mark ‘semantic and structural relations between discourse stretches’ (Dafouz-Milne 2003: 97) ‘form links between arguments and ideas by explicitly marking semantic relations (Mur Duenas, 2007: 37) and show readers pragmatic connections of additive (and, furthermore...), adversative (but, however...), conclusive (finally, at last...) and consecutive (so, as a result. .) ties in the text. This above finding is consistent with the study conducted by Dafouz-Milne (2003) who examined Spanish and British newspaper opinion columns and found that logical markers were standing out in terms of textual orientation. The results of the current study also comply with the findings of Yang (2021), who compared government and hospital advice letters and found that governments utilise frames (sequencers) and transition markers (logical markers) to rationalise and implement their arguments to citizens than hospitals. Hyland (2005: 74) compared CEO’s letters and directors’ reports. His analysis revealed that CEO’s letters were employing these markers more frequently than directors’ reports since in CEO’s letters the reader

is expected to grasp the reasoning of the writer. However, it is interesting to indicate the importance of these markers not only for non-academic genres but also for academic genres. Hyland (2005: 55), for instance, asserts the importance of these markers for academic discourse in forming an academic argument. For instance, in a study conducted by Hyland (2005) on postgraduate dissertations transitions were used prominently to mark boundaries within academic discourse. Dağ Tarcan (2019) studied academic articles from different disciplines (i.e., psychology, history, sociology, educational sciences, philosophy, linguistics and tourism). Adopting Hyland's (2005) framework as a basis for her study, she found that history and linguistics disciplines were employing logical markers more frequently than other disciplines.

When other textual markers are considered, they did not occur significantly since their frequency of use was low in the corpus. Code glosses which explain, rephrase or exemplify textual material were employed by 14.8% (number=156) in the corpus. Topicalisers indicate topic shifts and their frequency is 9.1% (number=96). Sequencers that mark particular positions in the texts were employed 5.2% (number=55) in advice texts. Illocutionary acts name the act the writer performs is utilised 2.6% (number=28) in advice texts. Reminders which express semantic relationships between discourse stretches occur 0.4 % (number=5). Announcements which refer to future sections in the text are not utilised at all in advice texts since advice texts are not long and do not include sections like academic texts. Therefore, it is pertinent to discuss and highlight the functions of logical markers in the context of advice letters in Turkish through examples.

### **Logical markers and their functions in advice letters**

According to Hyland (2005: 75), writers make the argument structure more prominent by using logical markers. Logical markers appear with different labels in metadiscourse studies: logical

connectors (Vande Kopple 1985: 9), connectors (Mauranen 1993a, 1993b), logical connectives (Crismore et al. 1993; Hyland 1999, 2000), text connectors (Bunton 1999) and transitions (Hyland, 2005; Hyland and Tse 2004). In connection with logos (i.e., the appeal to reason), logical markers are known to mark internal connection within discourse (Hyland 2005: 55), guiding the readers through the parts of the texts, creating cohesive ties that bring logic and help the reader to follow. Writers minimize the processing efforts of the readers by providing the line of argument (Abdi 2010).

When the writer does not appeal to reason and uses a low number of logical markers, the reader has to make a greater effort to decode the writer's ideas and grasp the semantic relationship between different parts of the text (Mur Duenas 2007: 50). Nevertheless, belonging to specific language communities, every text displays different practices to communicate with its readers (Venuti 2000).

However, according to Mauranen (1993), these markers "are not only superfluous, but the sign of a poor writer" (1993:8) in the Finnish school system. The scarce use of these markers might be an indication of respecting the readers and leaving that textual processing to them which is connected to politeness and face considerations. Therefore, people from different cultural backgrounds usually develop different practices of writing which in turn creates different concerns about politeness and face issues (Hinds 1987). While some cultures use connectives scarcely, other cultures may prefer to help the reader to follow the text and employ them abundantly. Thus, for this specific genre, the agony aunt shares her opinion and these markers provide support for her arguments (Yang 2021) by showing the logical boundaries in the text. Similarly, in CEO's letters logical markers were used frequently since the writer wanted to project his reasoning to the readers (Hyland 2004). From this result, it can be considered that logical markers have an important place in the Turkish writing community. As argued by Yang (2021), when the readers change from staff to citizens, the authors used higher rates

of logical markers than when designing a text for staff which means that authors pay attention to the organization of the text more when readers are citizens who can vary in educational and social backgrounds. The agony aunt justifies her advice with these markers when she is presenting her positive and negative evaluations (Locher 2006:184) when she is dealing with the problems of advice seekers. Since the anonymous readers of advice letters can have different educational and social backgrounds, she attempts to make those readers understand and think about the advice she is offering to them (Locher 2006:184).

Logical markers can mark additive, adversative and conclusive relations. Since logical markers were employed more frequently than other metadiscursive markers, types and frequencies of logical markers found in advice texts will be examined and discussed through tables in the following section of the study.

*Table 3. Subcategories of Logical Markers found in Advice Texts*

LOGICAL MARKERS	NUMBER	FREQUENCY
Adversatives	293	41.1
Additives	255	35.8
Conclusives	132	18.5
Total	712	100

The total number of words in advice texts written by the agony aunt was 18357 within a 100-advice text and the total number of logical markers utilised by the agony aunt was 712. According to table 3, adversatives and additives occurred nearly in equal percentages (41.1%, 35.8 %). While the conclusive form was 18.5 % of the data. Adversatives signal a turning of the discourse in a contrary direction (Göksel and Kerslake 2005: 519). Adversatives are employed when writers are in need of confronting two ideas that the second one modifies the first (Mur Duenas 2007: 46). Additives 'signal the addition of a new item without changing the direction of the discourse' (Göksel and Kerslake 2005: 512). What is more, they signal parallelism and continuation (Mur Duenas 2007: 43) and expand discourse by adding elements to discourse (Hyland 2005: 50). They also indicate a progressive rhetorical style signaling that clauses proceed with arguments and examples (Neff-van Aertselaer & Dafouz-Milne, 2008). The results of the study support directors' reports where

additives were used prominently since they were simple texts composed of defined items like the company's principal activities, details of directors and a summary of trading results (Hyland, 2004: 77). Observed from this perspective, advice letters could be labeled as simple. On the other hand, the frequent use of adversatives in these texts signals that they cannot be labeled as simple texts. This finding supports CEO's letters where adversatives were used frequently to form exceptions to general situations, to show deviations and to change strategies through new demands. According to Hyland (2004: 77), these kinds of topics require the high use of adversatives to argue on different aspects of topics. Since advice letters can change the social norms of a culture (Philips 2008: 97), they are powerful rhetorical creations that participate in the making and remaking of culture (McRobbie 1996: 392). Thus, in doing so they use language as a tool to communicate with their newspaper readers. In addition, they are private spaces which are appearing in a public space. This means that these letters could use language with caution to prevent possible criticisms.

The frequent use of adversatives may be attributed to the fact that while the agony is arguing a personal problem of the advice-seeker, she prefers to use contrary arguments which can be challenging for the reader to grasp. When the sentence marks the end of some process or series of processes conclusive markers are employed. This sense is expressed by items such as finally, at last, in the end and eventually (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 263). It can be said that these markers do not occur significantly in advice texts (18.5%).

As mentioned previously, in the study conducted by Dafouz-Milne (2003), logical markers were used more frequently than other metadiscursive markers. In addition, while Spanish editorial writers used additives, English writers preferred to use adversatives. That can be related to the construction of argumentation differently in different communities. Spanish writers prefer adding positive warrants and building the argumentation in the same direction. English writers, on the other hand, use adversatives frequently and move through discussing the pros and cons of the idea. In addition to this study, another study by Mauranen

(1993a, 1993b) found that Finns move progressively by adding evidence for providing claims to the ideas while Anglo-American writers argue by providing the pros and cons of an idea in a retrogressive fashion. In advice texts, the Turkish agony aunt employs additive markers more frequently than other markers. She moves in a similar direction by adding information to her remarks.

Mur Duenas (2007) also examined English and Spanish research articles and found that connectors were more common in English research articles than in Spanish. She defines English texts as writer-responsible texts, while they can be reader-responsible texts (Hinds 1987) as well. She also asserts from her study that the two types of writing imply different readerships (national versus international). The international text is written for different readerships and builds arguments on contrasts while the nationally written text proceeds by connectors in a different direction. Therefore, it is possible to indicate that advice texts have national readership since the text proceeds by connectors rather than contrasts.

Since the most frequently employed logical markers were adversatives and additives in our corpus, it is pertinent to elaborate on the types of adversatives and additives respectively. Table four shows the types of adversatives employed by the agony aunt:

**Table 4. Types of Adversatives in advice texts**

ADVERSATIVES	Number
AMA (but)	170
ANCAK (however)	28
YİNE DE (nevertheless)	18
OYSA (KI) (however)	11
TAM TERSİNE (on the contrary)	7
BUNA KARŞIN/RAĞMEN/ MUKABİL (In spite of)	5
OLSA DA (although and nevertheless)	4
AKSİ HALDE/AKSİ TAKTİRDE (on the contrary)	3
PEKİ (but, okay, alright)	2
DİĞER TARAFTAN (YANDAN) (on the other hand)	1
LAKİN (but, however)	0
ŞU VAR Kİ (there is also this/that)	0
ÖTE YANDAN (on the other hand)	0
NE VAR Kİ (however)	0
KEZA (likewise, also and as well)	0
TAM AKSİ (on the contrary)	0
DİĞER TARAFTAN (on the other hand)	0
BENZER ŞEKİLDE (similarly)	0
AYNI ŞEKİLDE (In the same way)	0
AYNI ÖLÇÜDE (in the same way)	0

FAKAT (but, although)	0
YALNIZ(but)	0
GENE DE (and yet, still and nevertheless)	0
Total	293

## Qualitative Results

In this part of the results, the qualitative results deal with the specific logical markers in the quantitative analysis in the advice letters. According to table four, the adversative *ama* (but) was the most frequently employed marker since it was used 170 times in advice texts. The agony aunt uses adversatives with more forms of variety than additives in that there are four types of adversatives and two types of additives used by the agony aunt. Though it is Arabic in origin, it is defined as the 'least alien marker in shape'. (Lewis 2000: 209). The popularity of the use of this marker indicates that pragmatically *ama* (but) is central to forming contrastive meanings and violated expectations (Doğan 1994: 204). Serving as a disclaimer in language, *ama* (but) prevents trouble that can rise from communication (Overstreet and Yule 2001). In a study conducted by Ercan (2019: 308-317) *ama* (but) was used as a mitigation strategy to prevent directness or opposing tentatively to utterances in Turkish daily discourse. The conducted studies on discourse markers also report the use of *but* as a highly occurring marker (Abal 2016; Altunay 2009; Bahaziq 2016; Dumlao and Wilang 2019; Kurtul 2011; Yin 2015; Özdamar 2020; Çakır Sarı 2020). Though less frequently used; this marker was used by students who were learning Turkish as a second language in persuasive texts as well (Esmer 2018). This finding means that this marker was taught to these students by Turkish instructors regardless of context and that they learned to actively use them in daily communication. An example from the data is as the following:

(1)

*Sana akıl vermeye çalışırım, öğüt veririm ama "boşan ya da devam et evliliğine" diyemem. Çünkü sonuçta bu senin hayatın. (16 Nisan 2020)*

'I will try to give my mind to you, I'll give you a piece of advice, *but* I can't say a divorce or



continue your marriage. Because after all, this is your life.’ (16 April 2020)

In example (1), the advice-seeker wanted advice from an elder person about her marriage. Although Turkish culture welcomes older people who give advice, the agony aunt refrains from fulfilling this expectation of the advice-seeker. She doesn’t prefer negative interpretations. Therefore, this is similar to Ercan’s (2019) study where she found that Turkish daily discourse frequently employs *ama* (but) as a mitigation strategy to avoid directness and protect the interlocutor’s face by doing so. She does not give voice to potentially sensitive topic like marriage and divorce.

Among the remaining adversatives *ancak* (however), *yine de*, and *oysa* (ki), were also employed quite often. The use of various forms of adversatives may indicate the display of argumentation and the agony aunt’s trial to advise people about their personal problems.

In table four, *ancak* (but) was used less frequently than *ama* (but). Göksel and Kerslake (2005: 520) also state that *ancak* (but) has a restricted occurrence than *ama* (but). Nevertheless, it was still used 28 times in advice letters. When this marker is employed, ‘inability, failure, obligation or a disadvantageous situation’ is expressed (Göksel and Kerslake 2005: 520).

(2)

*Elbette bir genelleme yapmamak lazım ancak kadınlar ne kadar duygusalsa, erkeklerden önce şefkat, sevgi ilgi beklerlerse, erkekler de yapı olarak önce cinsellik düşünür. (9 Temmuz 2020)*

‘Of course, we should not generalize, but the more emotional women are, the more they expect affection, love and attention from men, because of their structure men think of sexuality more.’ (9 July 2020)

In this example, the agony aunt says a generalization cannot be done before the adversative *ancak* (but), but then in the following sentence she contrasts women’s and men’s behavior by indicating the contrast via the adversative *ancak* (but) which indicates the importance of what is coming after the adversative. Therefore, she in a way contrasts with what she says next by generalizing men and women and their behavior in life.

Ancak şunu da sormaktan kendimi alamıyorum, erkeklerin bu ilkeği ne zaman bitecek?

In our corpus *yine de* (yet, but even though) was used 18 times. It can be translated contextually like even though, yet or but. Göksel and Kerslake (2005: 520) state the use of *yine de/gene de* with *ama*. This use is seen in example (3).

(3)

*Eşinin işi gücü olabilir ama yine de sana bir şekilde mutlaka yardımcı olabilmeli. (30 Eylül 2020)*

‘Your spouse may have a job, but even though he should still be able to help you in some way.’ (30 September 2020)

As can be seen from example (3), the agony aunt puts forward her opinion by admitting that the husband has a job in the first sentence but in the second sentence after using *ama yine de* (but even though) she states that the man must help her. She states that even though the husband can have duties to fulfill, he must help to the advice seeker.

In our data, *oysa* occurs 11 times in advice letters. *Oysa* is translated as whereas/however into Turkish and indicates contrasts between two states of affairs (Göksel and Kerslake 2005: 521). When it is found at the beginning of the sentence, it is translated as ‘yet’/‘but’ (Lewis, 2000: 213). This marker does not look forward but backward (Lewis 2000: 213). This is expressed in example (4) where the agony aunt indicates to the advice seeker that the topic of marriage contrasts with men’s way of thinking. She evaluates the advice seeker’s situation by showing her what she did about marriage and what men do not like by using the conjunction *oysa* (however) as an indicator of contrast.

(4)

*Sen ise sürekli “evlenme” konusunu açmış olmalısın. Oysa, erkekleri en çok rahatsız eden konu bu işte. (15 Nisan 2020)*

‘You must have brought up the subject of ‘marriage’ all the time. However, this is the issue that bothers men the most.’ (15 April 2020) In our corpus, additives were employed as well. Table 5 shows the types of additives in advice letters:



**Table 5. Types of Additives in advice texts**

ADDITIVES	Number
VE (and)	206
ZATEN (Besides)	20
ÜSTELİK (In addition)	8
-DIĞI/ OLDUĞU GİBİ (as well as)	6
BUNUN YANINDA/-İN YANINDA (In addition to)	5
YİNE (also)	3
AYNI ZAMANDA (In addition)	2
AYNI ŞEKİLDE (In addition)	1
BUNUN DIŞINDA (In addition)	1
BUNUN YANISIRA/-İN YANISIRA (In addition /to)	1
-DIĞI/ OLDUĞU KADAR (as well as)	1
-CAĞI GİBİ (as well as)	1
TOTAL	255

According to the table, *ve* (and) was used 206 times in advice letters. *Ve* (and) additive marker helps to bind coordinating sentences to one another. By doing this, an expansion of information takes place in which discourse proceeds forward. In addition, the use of this marker can be attributed to the existence of parallel constructions in Semitic languages (i.e., Koranic cultures) (Hatipoğlu and Algı 2016) (Kaplan 1966). Another reason why the agony aunt prefers to use this marker remarkably frequently could be due to its simplicity and ease of use (Ho 2018). This finding is supported by Esmer (2018) who studied persuasive texts written by students learning Turkish as a foreign language. Students who were learning Turkish as a foreign language used additive *ve* (and) more than other markers. Other studies support the use of the additive marker 'and' as well (Abal 2016; Altunay 2009; Bahaziq 2016; Dumlaoglu and Wilang 2019; Kurtul 2011; Yin 2015, Özdamar 2020). In Kurtul's (2011), Aysu's (2017) and Özdamar's (2020) studies, *ve* (and) was the most frequently used conjunction in Turkish. It is also interesting to see that *ve* conjunction was used more frequently in social sciences than in physical sciences (Sarıkaya 2020).

(5)

*Sen akıllı bir kızsın, bundan sonra daha seçici olacaksın ve en doğru olanı yapacaksın, eminim. (11 Haziran 2020)*

'You are a clever girl, from now on you are going to be more selective and you are going to do the right thing, I'm sure.' (11 June 2020)

In example (5), linking two clauses together the conjunction *ve* (and) adds information to the preceding clause. In the sentences being selective and doing the right things are linked together as advice. Therefore, the agony aunt is making additions to her arguments.

(6)

*Aslında kaygılanmak, günlük hayatta sorunlarla baş edebilmek için gereklidir. Anksiyete bozukluğu ise kaygı duygusunun bir tehlike yokken kendini göstermesi, uzun süre devam etmesi ve çok güçlü hissedilmesidir ki böyle bir durum söz konusuysa tedavi gereklidir. Anksiyetesi olan kişiler çoğu kendilerini kontrol edemez ve sakinleşemez. Anksiyetede sürekli devam eden tedirginlik vardır ve bilinçaltında devamlı kendini hissettirir. Panik atakta kişi kendini saldırıya uğramış ve tehlikede hisseder, kalbi hızlı atar ve nefesi kesilir. (31 Temmuz 2020)*

'In fact, worrying is necessary to cope with problems in daily life. Anxiety disorder, on the other hand, is when the feeling of anxiety manifests itself when there is no danger. In many cases, these strong feelings persist for a long time, therefore treatment is required. Many people with anxiety cannot control themselves and cannot calm down. Anxiety is a source of constant subconscious uneasiness. During a panic attack, the person feels as if he is in danger, his heart beats fast and his breathing stops.' (31 July 2020)

As can be observed from example (6), the additive *ve* (and) aids the continuation of discourse. By the addition of this marker, it seems that the agony aunt is evaluating the problem of the advice seeker through a long discourse with four additives. This can be a manifestation of showing solidarity and interest by discussing the problem of advice seeker (Brown and Levinson 1987).

Another additive marker that was employed in advice letters with low frequency compared to the previous marker was *zaten* (besides) which was used 20 times in our corpus. English equivalent of this marker could be "already, in actual, anyhow, in any rate, besides" depending on context (Corcu 2006: 2). It marks old information (Corcu 2006: 3). It has several functions ranging from topic closure, topic extension to contrast indicating (Corcu 2006:

2). In addition, *zaten* has a similar sense with *ayrıca* (Zeyrek et.al. 2012). Example (7) illustrates the use of *zaten* for marking an additive relation in advice letters:

(7)

*Anne ve babanın senin sorunlarını basit bir ergenlik sorunu olarak görmeleri doğal. Birçok aile bunu yapıyor zaten. (31 Temmuz 2020)*

'It's natural for your parents to see your problems as a simple puberty problem. Besides many families are doing this.' (31 July 2020)

In this example, the agony aunt in the previous sentence before the additive marker justifies that 'many families are evaluating such things as simple puberty problems. As an expansion of the topic to what she says the additive marker *zaten* (besides) generalizes what parents do about their children.

(8)

*Genellikle sahte ve yüzeysel ilişkiler bunlar. Asla samimi olmayan, klasik, kalıplaşmış sözlerden ve yazışmalardan ibaret beraberlikler olarak kabul ederim ben bu yakınlaşmayı. Bu nedenle fazla sürdürmemekle çok iyi yapmışsın. Zaten sen çok gençsin ve böyle gereksiz bir beraberliğe ihtiyacın yok. Akıllı bir genç kız olduğunu satırlarından anlamak mümkün. Beni şaşırtan da bu zaten. Mektubundaki sözcükler, 18 yaşındaki bir genç kızın sözcükleri değil. Sanki yaşını başını almış olgun biri gibi yazmışsın. (25 Ağustos 2020)*

'Usually, these are fake and superficial relationships. I will consider such correspondences as never sincere; they are classical and stereotyped relations. So, you did well by not continuing it too much. Besides, you are very young and you do not need such an unnecessary relationship. It is possible to understand from your lines that you are a smart young girl. Besides, this is what surprises me. The words in your letter are not the words of an 18-year-old girl. You have written as if you were a mature person who had reached a mature age.' (25 August 2020)

In this example, the agony aunt justifies what the advice seeker did about the relationship she had. She makes an addition to the topic by saying that the advice seeker is very young and she does not need such a relationship. She finds two rational ideas by the additive marker *zaten* (besides). By saying that she is surprised about the maturity of this 18-year-old girl and she in a way indicates that

she contradicts her thoughts about the advice seeker.

## Conclusion

This paper has attempted to uncover the textual aspects of advice letters by the agony aunt which, to the best of the author's knowledge, has not yet been studied from a metadiscursive perspective. This paper makes both theoretical and methodological contributions. First, this paper examines textual markers of communication in advice letters. Therefore, it broadens the scope of metadiscursive studies from academic discourse to the non-academic arena. Second, the paper applies a metadiscursive framework to a non-English context. Therefore, it indicates the applicability of the framework to a non-English language. Third, if we think that adviser persona changes the social norms inside a culture (McRobbie 1996). This study could help researchers to better understand how these norms are reshaped by the use of language which is a manifestation of the power of popular culture on society. Although lay people are not aware of the effects of such popular texts in changing the norms of a culture, researchers could be able to understand the power of metadiscourse. The results of the study indicate that the agony aunt used logos in her attempts to persuade advice seekers through her advice (Hyland 2005). This demonstrates the agony aunt's use of language while giving advice. The study could have macro and micro perspectives. At the macro level, it was observed that other genres (i.e. opinion columns, government and hospital advice letters, CEO'S letters, directors' reports, postgraduate dissertations and academic articles) made extensive use of these markers as well as advice letters. Other markers (Code glosses, Topicalisers, Sequencers, Illocutionary markers, reminders and announcements) were less frequent in advice texts. At a micro level, among the logical markers, adversatives and additive markers were more frequently used than conclusives. This result indicates the importance of these markers as logical boundaries of arguments. It is not solely sufficient to define the functions of these markers in grammar but the contextual and genre-based differences give clues about how they function in

discourse. The results of this study indicate that advice texts are seemingly simple but structurally complex texts including all the norms and arguments in a society.

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## LIST OF METADISCOURSE MARKERS IN TURKISH

### Appendix 1: LIST OF METADISCOURSE MARKERS IN TURKISH

**SEQUENCERS (SEQUENCING):** Ardından (after) (1), başlangıçta (in the beginning) (0), başka bir/ bir başka (another) (14) , biri (one of them) (0), birinci/si (first/firstly) (1), daha sonra (afterwards) (2), sonraları (afterwards) (0), -dan önce/-dan sonra (before/after) (11), -(y) ıp (after) (21), ikinci/ikinci olarak (second/secondly) (3), ilk/ilk olarak (first) (12), nihai/son (last) (15), öncelikle (first of all) (2), son olarak (lastly) (2) , şu şekilde (as follows) (0)

**LABELLING TEXT STAGES:** Kısaca/sı, (briefly) (0), Son olarak/ Sonuçta (in conclusion) (28) , Bu yazı (this text) (1), Bu yazışma (This correspondence) (1), Bu köşe (This column) (1), Sonunda (11)

**ANNOUNCING GOALS:** Amacıyla (for the purpose of) (3), Amaç (Aim), Araştırma (research), araştırmak (to be discussed), ele al (in) (to be discussed), konu ol (subject to), konu bul (find a topic), sonucunda (as a result of) (1), Bu araştırmada (In this research) (0), Hedefle (to target) (0), Çalışıl (to try) (0), Dene (to attempt) (0)

**ILLOCUTIONARY MARKERS:** Önermek (advise) (1), Ummak (hope) (16), Kutlamak (congratulate) (3), Tebrik etmek (congratulate) (1), Şükretmek (grateful for) (2), Tesekkür etmek (thank) (1), Kusura bakma (apologise) (1) Tavsiye etmek (advise) (2), Dilemek (wish) (1)

**CODE GLOSSES/REFORMULATION:** Anlamına gel- (to mean) (1), Başka bir deyişle/ifadeyle (In other words) (0), bir anlamda (In a sense) (9), bu da gösteriyor ki (This shows that) (0), ...Demektir, Denilebilir ki (It can be said that) (4), özetleyebiliriz (we can summarize as...) (1), The use of colons : (for explanations) (8), the use of hyphen – (0),

The use of slash / (to indicate or) (0), the use of parenthesis (for presenting detailed information) (5), şöyle/ şöyle ki/ demek ki/ öyle ki (that's to say) (6), yani (that is to say) (7), şunu söylemeliyim ki (I must say this)(2), ya da/ veya/ yahut/ veyahut (or) (15), ki (that) (46)

**EXEMPLIFICATION:** Gibi (Such as) (35), Vs (etc.) (2), Vb.(etc.) (0), Örneğin/ Mesela/Misal/Misal olarak/ Söz gelimi (for example)(6), ve benzeri (and such) (0), -DAN olan (from ....) (1), ....olan (that...) (1), ....olarak (as...) (4), Bu tarz (these kinds of) (1), Bu tür (these kinds of) (28), Bunun gibi/Bu gibi (like this) (3), Buna benzer (like this) (0), Böylesi bir (like this) (0), Böyle şey (like this) (0)

**TOPICALISERS:** baktığınızda ( when you examine) (0), açıdan (in terms of), açısından (in terms of) (0), -a dair (about) (0), -a dayanarak(based on) (0), -a gelince (as for) (2) , -a göre (according to) (0), bu açıdan (from this point) (0)

**LOGICAL MARKERS** **ADDITION:** aynı zamanda (In addition) (2), Aynı şekilde (In addition) (1), Ayrıca (0) , Bunun dışında (in addition) (1), bunun yanısıra/-in yanısıra (in addition) (1), bunun yanında/-in yanında, -cağı gibi, dığı/olduğu kadar, dığı/olduğu gibi (as well as) (6), ve (and) (206), yine (also) (3), zaten (besides) (20), üstelik (In addition) (8), Ayrıca (In addition) (0)

**ADVERSATIVE:** -mAsInA rağmen (despite) (0), mEkLE beraber (together with) (0), Fakat (But) (0) , Tam Aksi (just the opposite) (0), Diğer taraftan (on the other hand) (0), ama (but) (170), ancak (however) (28), yine de (nevertheless) (18), Yalnız (but) (0), Gene (de) (even if) (0), Bununla birlikte (0), Buna karşın/rağmen (in spite of that) (0), Buna karşılık (in spite of this) (5), Ne var ki /mamafih,

halbuki/oysa (ki) (however) (11), Gerçi (hoş) (0), Diğer taraftan(yandan)(on the other hand) (1), Öte yandan (on the other hand) (0), Lakin (however) (0), Aksi halde/ taktirde (on the contrary) (3), Tam tersine (7), Olsa da (4) yoksa (otherwise) 18,Olsa/Olmasa bile (even if/even if not) (1), bir yandan (on the one hand) (15)

# Missing Subjects of Social and Economic Development: Women with Headscarves

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## Abstract

*In Türkiye, mandatory education is provided by the state, and therefore, individuals with fragile socioeconomic indicators do not experience barriers of inequality to inclusion to education. However, in about 1997, the women with headscarves also acquired visibility in education and this led to certain social events in Türkiye. The practice widely known as “headscarf ban” that began in 1997 decreed the expulsion of women with headscarves from the higher education process. When it is considered that the mandatory education in Türkiye is 12 years and that the undergraduate education takes 4 years, the headscarf ban during the 1997-2013 corresponds to a period in which a person accumulates her human capital. This study is on how women who have been systematically cast out from education and employment perceive: a) their forfeited role in the development of Türkiye’s economy; b) their own assessment of their lack of employment due to the headscarf ban; and c) being barred from education, their individual losses and Türkiye’s economic prosperity.*

**Keywords:** Headscarf Ban, Human Capital, Social And Economic Development, Inequality, Individual Loss.

## Öz

*Zorunlu eğitim Türkiye’de devlet tarafından verildiği için kırılğan sosyoekonomik özelliklere sahip olan bireyler eğitime erişimde eşitsizlikle karşılaşmamaktadır. Ancak 1997 yılında başörtülü kadınların eğitimde görünür olmaları, toplumsal olaylara yol açmıştır. 1997 yılında başlayan ve “başörtüsü yasağı” olarak bilinen uygulama, başörtülü kadınların yükseköğretim sürecinin dışarıda bırakılmasını içermektedir. Türkiye’de zorunlu eğitimin 12 yıl, lisans eğitiminin ise 4 yıl olduğu düşünüldüğünde 1997-2013 dönemindeki başörtüsü yasağı bireyin beşeri sermayesine yatırım yaptığı uzun bir döneme tekabül etmektedir. Bu çalışma, sistematik olarak eğitim ve istihdamdan dışlanan kadınların: a) Türkiye ekonomisinin gelişmesinde kaybedilen rollerini; b) başörtüsü yasağı nedeniyle istihdam edilmeliklerine ilişkin kendi değerlendirmelerini ve c) eğitimden dışlanmaları sonucunda bireysel kayıplarını ve Türkiye’nin ekonomik refahını nasıl değerlendirdiklerini anlamaya çalışmaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Başörtüsü Yasağı, Beşeri Sermaye, Sosyal Ve Ekonomik Gelişme, Eşitsizlik, Bireysel Kayıp.

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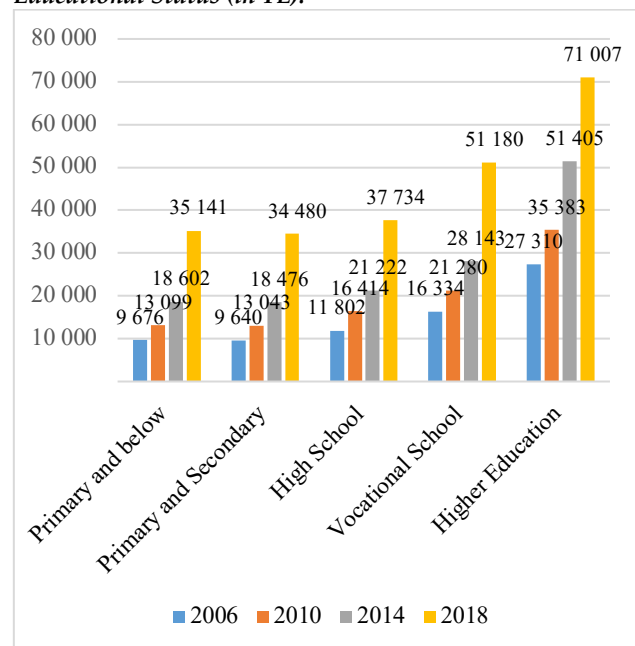
## Introduction

In the classification of a country's development, economic growth is the most commonly used indicator. Using this indicator, according to the World Bank classification, countries are categorized as low-income, medium-income and high-income economies, and are also declared as developed, developing and underdeveloped economies. The defining features of economic growth, for which the economic revenue is the main criterion, are inputs such as physical capital, labor, technology and savings. Whereas the traditional economic growth theories give importance to the rise of physical capital and the increase in savings, endogenous growth theories prioritize the value of technology. The inputs in different economic growth theories vary according to the country's economic characteristics and the conditions of the global economy. However, in traditional and endogenous economic growth theories, the labor force variable has an increasing impact on both input variables and economic growth output. Given that technology changed the entire economic production process in the 2000s, the quality of the labor force that will lead this process gains even more importance. The knowledge, experience and skill of the labor force are defined as human capital. The quality of human capital also shows the nature of a country's economic production process. The value of the product increases when information and skills acquired earlier on are included into the labor force. Based on this premise, the inclusion of each individual into employment and education for employment is of significance.

The education, skill and the educational attainment of the workers that form the labor force also determine the nature of the output in economic production. By being classified as blue and white collar, based on the education level required, the categories of jobs increase the significance of education in shaping the socioeconomic status in Türkiye. The increased income level obtained by being a higher education graduate, consequently improved social status and perceived value of higher education in the society

rendered university education a threshold of socioeconomic ranking. The Graph 1 shows the average annual gross earnings based on educational status. According to this graph, in 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018, the annual average earnings increase as the education level increases. Since income level increases are among the key variables that affect social and economic status, the value attributed to being a higher education graduate increases more. Given the inflation between 2006-2018, which is %167, there is no significant increase in the annual gross earnings. Yet it is observed that the positive correlation between higher education and higher annual gross earnings.

*Graph 1. Average Annual Gross Earnings Based on Educational Status (in TL).*



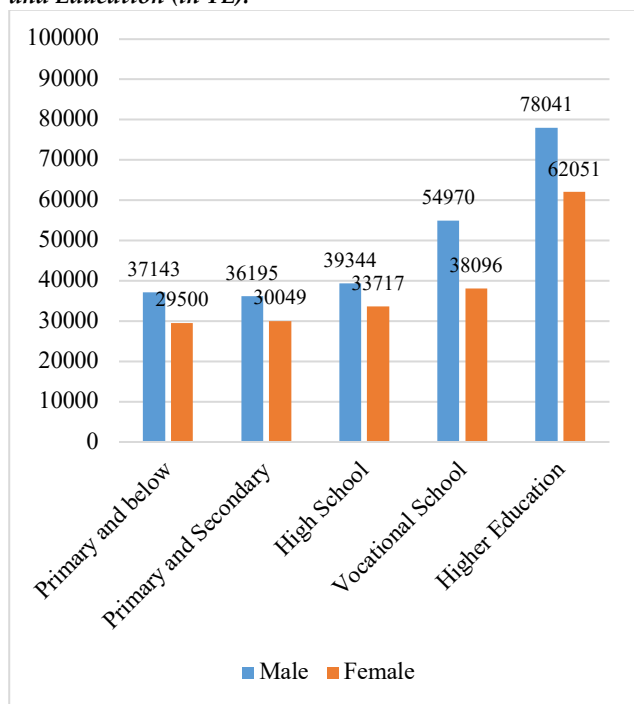
Source: TUIK, Structure of Earnings Survey, 2020.

When annual average earnings based on educational status is examined according to gender, it can be seen that women's average earnings increase as their education levels rise (Graph 2). In 2018, while for a male with primary school education and below, annual earnings were 37,143 TL, they were 78,041 TL for a higher education graduate male. Whereas for a female with primary school education and below, annual earnings were 29,500 TL, they were 62,051 TL for a higher education graduate female. The annual



difference in earnings between men and women is seen at every level of education. The common point is the higher the level of education, the higher the annual profits for both genders.

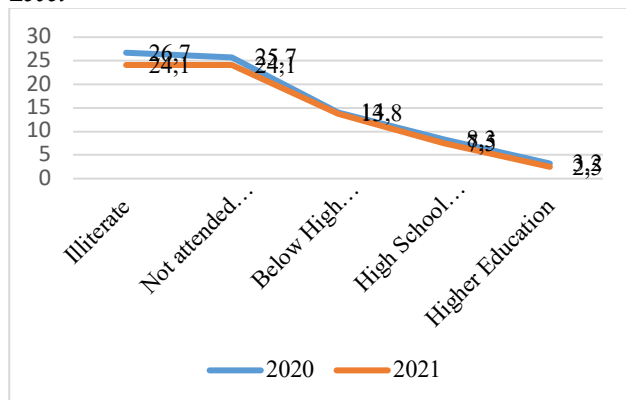
**Graph 2. Average Annual Gross Earnings Based on Gender and Education (in TL).**



Source: TUIK, Structure of Earnings Survey, 2020.

It is seen that there is a negative correlation between education level and poverty. The poverty rate decreases as the education level increases. Preventing participation in education indirectly means an increase in the risk of poverty (Graph 3).

**Graph 3. Relative Poverty Rate Based on Equivalent Household Individual Disposable Earnings and Education Level**



Source: TUIK, Income and Living Conditions Research, 2021.

While education level increases, earnings increase; yet, the rate of poverty has a negative correlation with the education level. Education at all levels in Türkiye is provided as a public service, free of charge. The 12-year term basic education is compulsory, independent of socioeconomic properties. When income levels and poverty rates are examined, the distinguishing threshold appears to be the higher education. Education is a variable that determines socioeconomic status. Women's exclusion from higher education due to the headscarf ban indirectly determines their status.

The headscarf ban in Turkey began in the 1980s. This ban is recognized as an imposition of Turkish secularism. The first headscarf ban was imposed on university students in 1981. On September 12, 1980, a coup took place in Turkey. In 1981, Kenan Evren banned students from wearing headscarves by decree of the National Security Council (Göle, 2012). In 1983, Turgut Özal's prime ministerial government liberalized the headscarf in universities. However, since then, between 1983 and 2013, the headscarf has been one of the most controversial issues in Turkey. After 1998, the ban was strictly implemented. The beginning of the headscarf ban at universities negatively affected the career process for headscarved women. Higher education determines socioeconomic status.

### Literature

The headscarf ban is discussed in literature (Barras, 2009; Kılıçbay & Binark, 2002; Pfister, 2000; Cindioğlu, 2011; Guveli, 2011; Gökırıksel, 2012; Akboğa, 2014; Akbulut, 2015; Çörekcioğlu, 2021) as the formation of an unsafe environment due to discrimination, in general, by workforce, education, sports and the entire public area, and in particular, as well as fashions and forms of veiling for women with headscarves. The headscarf ban has been assessed solely from the aspect of women with headscarves, regarding the perception of safety and satisfaction of men and women who do not wear headscarves. It is argued that the ban exists as a form of gender inequality against women. Therefore, it can be argued that women's rights can be actually studied as a subject of human rights with ontological and methodological

consistency. Within this scope, it can be argued that the economic field is not independent of the developments and events in other areas.

Genç and Ilhan (2012) underscore that the headscarf ban was not limited only to universities. They draw attention to the varying experiences and discriminatory dimensions created by the headscarf ban on politics, public sector, private sector and everyday life. Using the case of Middle East Technical University (METU) as an example, they also state that the headscarf ban is devoid of a political basis as it was argued by the university administrations. Especially in politics, Genç and Ilhan consider the headscarf ban as a form of sexist discrimination, pointing out that a similar situation was experienced in the public sector. And they argued that bans on clothing must be lifted so the women with headscarves can achieve equal conditions with men in the private sector. They also argue that the preferences of women who are discriminated against over their headscarf lead to living spaces being necessarily divided in everyday life, thereby forming a socially insecure environment.

Employing feminist terminology, Azak (2008) draws attention to the discrimination experienced by women with headscarves in public space. Within this scope, she argues that women, with or without headscarves, fight against the same patriarchal order. Therefore, she suggests that other than Muslims, the headscarf ban constitutes an issue only for the feminists. Further criticizing stereotyping of women with religious impetus, Azak states that women were subject to headscarf ban, not just in state institutions, but also in the private sector, despite the fact that the private sector lacked any obligation to do so. In a study on the woman's visibility in the workforce (Karaca, 2013), the subject is discussed in terms of conservative employers and professions that require expertise. Conservative employer determines the visibility of a woman with headscarf according to customer type and profile. This study also states that the women with headscarves would not be promoted, that they were underpaid, that the risks of layoff were high, and that they were never the face of the company.

Furthermore, the study mentions that due to the headscarf ban, it is difficult to find an expert professional woman with headscarf.

Çayır (2012) points out that the number of women exposed to discrimination has increased. He stresses that independent of (conservative, left, liberal, and so on) ideologies, there are shared experiences of discrimination. He also adds that this discrimination also legitimizes violence. The lynching attempts against the Kurds in the Western cities of Turkey have been shown as an example. This attempt proves that discrimination can turn into an act of mass violence. Başak (2009) draws attention to discrimination by using "glass ceiling" metaphor. In her study, she focuses on the barriers that women face, especially in business life. Furthermore, there are studies that explain the discriminatory context of headscarf ban and the deprivation of women from their right to higher education, not just within the social context, but also as a form of gender discrimination within the legal procedures (Süral, 2013). Başkan (2009) highlights the social and political sources of the headscarf ban. According to this study, regarding headscarf ban, the debates on secularism, the self-centered backlashes, the tendency to evaluate headscarf as a political symbol and the arguments that the headscarf is worn only as a result of family pressure are in actuality contrary to the human right that creates the free society.

It can be argued that the discrimination revealed by the research that focuses on women and headscarves also has an impact on the country's economy. Doğan (2005) reviews the arguments that democracy is the prerequisite for economic development. Although there are studies that argue that there is no meaningful relation between democracy and economic growth, there are factors such as political instability, corruption in governance, deviation of public spending from rationality, underdevelopment of human capital and disparity of income that negatively affect economic growth. From the aspect of headscarf and women studies, when democratic rights are not distributed equally, human capital comes to harm and income is distributed unequally. The economic

consequences of discrimination –in general, the gender discrimination, and in particular, the discrimination against headscarf– causes negative results not just for women with headscarves, but also for national economy, due to uncertainty and distrust (Doğan, 2005). Alongside the dimensions of freedom of women and faith, it is also necessary to face the consequences of headscarf ban in the economic field.

While conceptually analyzing the headscarf ban and human capital loss, which is the focus of this study, studies centered on discrimination and human capital have been investigated. In this context, it has been found that the careers of individuals subjected to racial discrimination suffer. With interviews with 224 African men in the United States, almost all of the participants stated that they were subjected to racism and could not obtain a job position according to their qualifications. Accordingly, although blacks are qualified in terms of occupation and education, they are not able to assign senior positions (Jollevet, 2008). Gender-based discrimination is embodied in the world of work. Despite having the same education and work experience, women are paid less than men. This is explained by human capital and discrimination. That is, female workers invest less in their human capital because women expect to stay in the labor force for a shorter period of time. According to this view, women are paid less than male workers because they invest less in their human capital. The discrimination approach argues that gender discrimination in the labor market is reflected in wages (Madden, 1987).

Women with headscarves cannot find a job in the public sector due to the ban. Therefore, headscarved women are employed in the private sector. However, they work in low-status jobs with low wages in the private sector. They face problems in the promotion process and headscarved women are the first to be dismissed from their jobs (Cindioğlu, 2011). The difficulties faced by headscarved women in the labor market are not limited to Turkey. In Australia, Muslim women are less likely to participate in the labor market. Muslim women are also less likely to find administrative employment (Khattab, Daoud, Qaysiya & Shaath, 2020). A study analysing the change in the gender wage gap reveals that access

to education reduces the wage gap. In Bangladesh, the wage gap between men and women decreased by 31 per cent between 1999 and 2009. The reason for this decrease is explained by women's equal access to education (Ahmed & McGillivray, 2015). Therefore, the exclusion of women from education determines their status in the labor market.

Human capital theorists argue that the wage gap between men and women in the labor market is related to supply-side factors (Mincer, 1962; Becker, 1981). Accordingly, women invest less in their human capital because they assume lower expected earnings. However, demand-side discrimination is ignored. Researchers (England, 1992; Harding, 1995; Ferber & Nelson, 2009), on the other hand, argue that there is demand-side discrimination. In other words, discrimination against women leads to unequal practices in the labor market. Therefore, the discrimination women face before entering the labor market also determines their subsequent economic and social indicators. It is also argued that racial and gender discrimination has social costs (Sedgley & Elmslie, 2018). Discrimination is deepened when discrimination is centred first on gender and then on religion. Women who are discriminated against on grounds of gender may also be subjected to unequal treatment because of their headscarf.

A study conducted in Sweden found that ethnic discrimination is widespread in the labor market. The reasons for this discrimination were identified as statistical discrimination, ethnic discrimination, and institutional discrimination. Institutional discrimination is the difficulty of access to public services and practices for migrants (Rydgren, 2004). The headscarf ban in Turkey can be considered as an example of this institutional discrimination. Discrimination against headscarved women is not limited to Turkey. Women applying for jobs in Germany have been found to be more likely to be invited for an interview if they are Turkish immigrants. The level of discrimination increases significantly if the applicant wears a headscarf. Women with headscarves are subjected to discrimination based on stigmatisation because of their ethnic origin and religious beliefs (Weichselbaumer, 2020). As a result, headscarved women are excluded from the

labor market and their socioeconomic status remains low.

Moreover, data collected in 2007 on 1206 women revealed that women are negatively affected by the headscarf ban in Turkey. Women with headscarves have significantly lower levels of education and are more likely to be unemployed than women without headscarves. Women wearing headscarves face serious difficulties in the labor market (Guveli, 2011). Additionally, since the ban is women-focused, it reproduces gender inequality. People invest in academic and vocational training in order to maximize individual benefits. This will increase their wages and productivity (Hurst, 1997). However, practices that exclude people from education, such as the headscarf ban, prevent people from investing in human capital.

## Method

Since the 1990s, women's net schooling rate in higher education began to increase in Türkiye. While between 1983 and 1992, the number of female students in higher education (e.g., associate, undergraduate, master's degrees and PhD) was nearly half the number of male students, in the 1990s this difference declined. However, there is no data on how many students dropped out of school due to the headscarf ban that began in 1997 and continued until 2013. This lack of data is one of the reasons why this study was conducted using a qualitative method.

This study uses the qualitative research method that employs a process addressing social or human problems with a survey carried out in the natural settings of the participants, containing detailed opinions of participants (Creswell, 2015). The qualitative research method, which allows us to study events in context, is applied in interpretation and making sense of the network of relationships that dominate the situation in question. To understand how events, experiences, situations and behaviors are interpreted by the participants within the scope of the research, the qualitative research method adopts phenomenological research design. A phenomenological study

attempts to reveal the experiences, perceptions and the meaning attributed to the phenomena, and explains the shared opinions and thoughts of the participants regarding the phenomena in question. The aim of this study is to understand how women, who had to give up their education and working life due to the headscarf ban, evaluate the reflection of the ban on their human capital. And as such, the purpose of this study is to understand how the women who had to forfeit their education and work life due to headscarf ban view the impact of the ban on human capital in Türkiye's economy.

The preferred sampling method in this study is snowball sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods in defining participants. Using this method, the women who have directly experienced the problematic of this research have been reached. The purposeful sampling allowed describing the perceptions of the women who have been withdrawn from education and work life due to headscarf ban regarding the human capital of Türkiye. Snowball sampling is achieved by reaching the other persons to be included through the existing participant, and thereby, growing the sample size like a snowball as the study progresses (Kümbetoğlu, 2005).

In this study, the data-gathering device was semi-structured one-on-one interviews. The data received by in-depth interviews were analyzed by content analysis method. The content analysis is the analysis that reveals patterns, themes and categories from the data obtained.

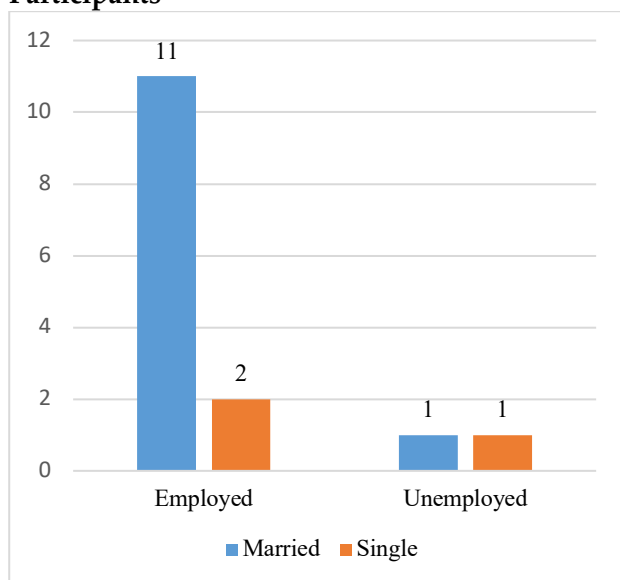
## Research Findings

15 women were interviewed within the scope of the research. Since this is a study to understand how human capital of the women who have experienced the ban and who have left the school or work due to the ban have changed, the women who have been included into to the research sample are those who not just know the ban, but those who have experienced it first-hand. For this reason, the age range of the women interviewed is between 35 and 45. All 15 participants have completed their undergraduate degree, 2 have finished their schools abiding the headscarf ban,



and the other 13 suspended their education and work life. Whereas 3 of the participants are single, 12 are married; participants point out that the headscarf ban was a factor in their getting married earlier than planned. Graph 4 shows the marital status and employment status of the participants.

**Graph 4. Marital Status and Employment of the Participants**



The interview notes with the 15 respondents of the study were converted into 6 themes. These themes regarding headscarf ban are: its reflection on socioeconomic status, its reflection on the individualization process, headscarf ban as a threshold to building future, its impact on the position of women within the community and the family, its impact on the work life, and the loss of human capital.

#### i) Reflection on Socioeconomic Status

During the interviews, participants were asked to assess their current economic status. The shared opinion of the participants was that the barriers raised against participation to education during February 28<sup>th</sup> period that instigated the headscarf ban, and the barriers against the economic life in its aftermath, had a negative impact on income level. Participants state that the education they have received should have corresponded to a better income and that their socioeconomic statuses have been negatively affected by the conditions of the period in question. A participant, who said she turned down job offers during the ban,

emphasized that the ban directly affected her economic situation.

*“My husband and I are civil servants. We live by normal standards. My husband is an imam hatip [religious vocational high school] graduate, he is an imam. I, too, am an imam hatip graduate. With our education in the imam hatip school, we could have been at better places and our economic situation could have been much better. Sure, we say alhamdulillah [thank Allah], but we’re in this situation because of what they did to us during February 28<sup>th</sup> period. We tried to do the best we could, and that’s what happened.” (A1, employed, married, 36 years)*

In addition to the economic losses, 7 of the participants mentioned the loss of their professional status. Despite their professional skills, their late entry into the work life due to the ban has caused them not just loss of income, but also caused them to fall behind. One participant expressed this situation as such:

*“I started as a civil servant when I was 29. Yet, I have graduated from the university when I was 21. I’ve lost eight years of work, rank and degree. I missed out on the opportunities I could have got in that period. I’m starting all over, from zero, right now. I’ve been working at the Ministry for seven and a half years, and I’m still working as a computer operator. We didn’t have much the notion of a specialist back then. There’s a difference between my time and the present. What I was aiming for was very different. Like I said, back then, we weren’t preparing for a specialty exam, since there was none. If I had entered then, I could have been at different places, in terms of self-education.” (A4, employed, single, 37 years)*

In the socioeconomic status assessment, the peer comparison of participants came forth. While they compared their positions with those of the same age in education or work life, they stated that despite having the same world-view, their male friends were ahead of them in their career process. Defining headscarf ban as a sexist practice is justified with the argument that men of same status and position did not experience a problem with respect to women.

*“Not the people with opposing view, but our own friends, our male friends, they finished their schools and started working in the government. Think about it. My friends are now governors, and I’m barely an officer. This ban was supposedly against an ideology, but the*

*ideology also had gender. It's okay if you're a man, but if you're a woman, you're out."*(A3, employed, married, 41 years)

A participant who faced the ban during her work life expressed a differing view from other participants that being devoid of income and social security was much harder. The end of a regular income leads to a severe economic deprivation and loss of social status.

*"We were forced to resign from the institution following an inspection conducted by the inspectors. Suddenly everything was taken away from us while we were working. Of course, this caused both psychological and economic problems. You felt the economic difficulties this way: you have a steady income, and suddenly, they take away it from your hands. Your social security is in trouble."*(A7, employed, married, 42 years)

3 participants who could not start their work life due to the ban stated that despite their economic status is fine; they could not achieve their aimed social status. Saying that it is very special for them to start a family and to become a mother, but bearing only the "mother" identity was inadequate for them during their children's growth.

*"I entered the university with a country-wide achievement degree, and if things went as they were, it was possible for me to attain a good place in the bureaucracy. However, suddenly you become someone who cannot express herself, or more precisely, someone who cannot realize what one can actually achieve. I've shut myself down. For so long, I only did handwork."*(A9, unemployed, married, 39 years)

#### **ii) Reflection on Individualization Process**

While occupational skills are important when one enters work life, self-confidence, and the sense of competence are also decisive factors. Participants believe that in their current work life they are in a left-behind position when compared to their previous expectations. It can also be seen that the impact of the marginalization that they have experienced in the past still lingers. Despite the fact that the ban has been lifted, the justification of the headscarf ban –the opinion that "someone with headscarf cannot perform state business"– still has its reflections on the work life of women.

When the participants are asked about the reflection of the headscarf ban on their individualization process, they expressed a lack of self-confidence.

*"It's still going on, like since I wear headscarf, no one says do it like this or that. I'm still in the background. I always think if there's someone with a headscarf, she should be in the foreground. It's not something I feel spontaneously, it's rather something imposed on me. If anyone was going to represent us, it shouldn't become me. Yes, it was such a lack of self-esteem."* (A7, employed, married, 42 years)

They also underline that this lack of self-confidence is due not just to the headscarf ban that de facto began in 1998 and was lifted in 2013 gradually, but also to the psychological violence and pressure exerted by those in possession of state power.

*"We were already secondary class citizens... No, saying 'secondary class citizens' is not enough. We were worse off than how black people were treated in the USA. I was ashamed to say that I have graduated from imam hatip [high school]. We've always been rendered outcasts and losers."*(A4, unemployed, married, 39 years)

While amongst the women interviewed within the scope of the research who are in active work life feel the impact of economic loss more, women who have either cut short their education or have graduated but have not been able to participate in the work life gave more importance to the negative influence of ban on their social status. This situation, not being able to achieve self-realization, is described by these women as not being allowed to use their own potential and deprecation of their academic achievements.

*"I've had a very successful student life, and later, I have graduated from one of Türkiye's best schools in those days. You have serious goals, you've entered university with a degree, and suddenly, they wanted you to go and stay at home. It's like your many talents in your core are left to rot. That's why, at that point, not being able to realize myself was the thing that hurt me the most."* (A6, employed, married, 37 years)

Since being unable to work because of the headscarf ban caused economic dependency, the women who started to work after the ban

attempted to define their individualization process with their salaries.

*"Having economic freedom, or being able to do good things for one's children with one's own means or when the time comes, being able to support your spouse are important, since they provide gratification. But you haven't had the confidence of having earned your own financial freedom. And maybe we didn't think about it, since it hurts, but we're left dependent. You realize it later: you take allowances from your partner, since you have to. But if you thought about how much it hurts you each and every time, it would be unbearable. That's why you went through with it without thinking, but then, like I said, after you start working, you realize that it was a really important obstacle."*(A8, employed, married, 40 years)

In addition to the loss of labor, women who have been cut off from education and work life due to the headscarf ban seem to be basing their psychological disorders on the ban. Women who adhered to the ban at the time stated that neither they felt happy in their work life, nor felt their qualities were reflected in their work efficiency.

*"I know that many of my friends also attribute their subsequent psychosomatic disorders to the pressures of that period. It was an economic challenge, of course. Society lost its workforce, too. Our seats were not left open, but our friends who opened their heads and worked were more depressed than we were. I don't think it's right to expect something good out of job done under oppression, unhappily."*(A11, employed, married, 42 years)

The participants drew attention to the human capital loss, to the loss of motivation and desire to gain any skills or achievement in sciences, arts, sports and etc. since they lost time fighting against the headscarf ban. The ban happened during these women's most active time of their lives. In addition to being suspended from the education and work life, the women with headscarves were also forbidden to gain competencies, production skills and value because of this ban.

*"At the age of 17-18, we were overwhelmed by great psychological pressures. We just fought with the headscarf ban, we didn't say whether we could be a scientist or we could produce anything. We couldn't. We didn't have to chance to think about these. My only ideal was that, since I've opened my head, I had to finish this school in 4 years. That's it. How sad. How sad for a*

*young woman in university."*(A2, unemployed, married, 43 years)

All the women interviewed recounted their personal experiences during the headscarf ban as being shrugged away, ignored, and many times, being greeted with insults, humiliation and discrimination. Their examples, from many places and events, render concrete the discrimination, such as when they attempted to participate in university conferences, despite being unable to work at a university with a headscarf; or when they went shopping at a store; when they socialized with their families or when they were witnesses at a court of law. It has been observed that the process caused serious damage to women's individualization, self-esteem, and their ability to develop socioeconomic characteristics.

### *iii) As a Threshold to Building Future*

When asked how the headscarf ban changed their plans for the future, it was observed that rather than the economic pressure, emotional pressure and violence had more impact on their plans. The ban as a threshold influencing their future lives was rendered concrete, when each recounted a specific experience regarding the event. The women who are exposed to the headscarf ban in education are between the ages of 18-25. This age range is a very important period in future planning. For women who were exposed to the ban during this period, the ban became a breaking point in building their future. In response to this question, the participants got emotional; pointing out that each personal experience of headscarf ban also set the threshold that determined the Türkiye's human capital.

*"I mean, we wouldn't be seen as individuals, as employees, it was always a threat, always a pressure. Let's say we finished university, I would not be able to find a job with my headscarf. So getting the diploma was the only goal, I wasn't thinking about working."* (A2, unemployed, married, 43 years)

The participants stated that their future planning has changed direction with the headscarf ban, and during the process the institution of marriage became one of the first choices to build a new life. Women's education level in Turkey is one of the most effective variables that impacts their entry to work life. Women having a higher

education degree is a sine qua non for them to be employed in white-collar jobs. According to the calculations of the Gender Inequality Index of the United Nations Development Programme in 2010, whereas the ratio of women with at least secondary education in Turkey is 50.2%, it is 72.2% in men. The high difference between men and women, even in the secondary school level, clearly shows that Turkey has certain issues in the process of schooling of women. In 2020, the labor force participation rate was 72.6 percent among men, while it was only 34 percent among women. Despite there is a need for education, employment and social policies to increase women's participation in education and work life, the removal of the women with headscarves from the system has led women to make different plans for future. The labor force participation rate of women is already quite low. With the ban, educated and qualified women were excluded from education. Therefore, it is considered rational for the labor force participation rate to remain low for a long time as the potential female labor force is not used.

*"There is also this condition with the girls with headscarves: they would refrain from some social activities more than others to experience their religious values and their religious feelings. They were more focused on their personal achievements and their potential. And what happened when this was off the table? They withdrew to their homes. What's positive about it? We got married and had children. Perhaps, I wouldn't have got married or perhaps would have had at a much later age. Perhaps, I wouldn't have had kids or perhaps would have had them at a much later age."*(A11, employed, married, 42 years)

The participants stated that their goals and their conditions at the time did not match with their future planning, and that oppression and ban prevented one from dreaming about future. With the acceptance that this environment will prevail as it is and so will the ban, it became obligatory to focus on the jobs that can be done with the headscarf.

*"They told me you couldn't finish physics. It's very hard. So, I thought I'd graduate and stay at academy and achieve success. While I was dealing with these headscarf issues, I forgot my goals. Nothing left to aim*

*for. I lost the will to stay in the academy. I only learned I graduated with degree when I completed my undergraduate studies. My purpose was just to pass the courses and finish the school. But especially after these events, I told myself that you can't extend school after all this. You can't endure this torture anymore. Were we intimidated? Yes. There was nothing we could do. You know, when we're running away from those cops, when they were holding our friends and dragging them down..."*(A4, unemployed, married, 33 years)

#### **iv) Position in Society and Family**

When asked about their views on how their position in society and family was affected, the participants stated that their roles were limited to motherhood and that this situation was scorned by society. Given the fact that they had a conservative family structure, it is observed that even in their environment, the concepts of "marriage" and "motherhood" do not hold any value socioeconomic status-wise. One of the participants' relative's comments about her suggest that the society considered them dysfunctional.

*"I was a role model around here. Then the children came, and I gave up work life. Everyone was saying stuff like, "See, she was once riding a high horse, and now, she's but a mom.""* (A2, unemployed, married, 43 years)

The women who were interviewed were constantly exposed to comments by their relatives, acquaintances, and neighbors regarding whether she should abide by the headscarf ban or not, and they stated that the only subject related to them was seen within the framework of the headscarf and the ban. While these women who were just in the prime of their youth have been physically exposed to the headscarf ban, as they were physically subjected to the headscarf ban, they were constantly lectured, talked about and objectified.

*"People around you would give you ideas about that, as they did about many things. Actually, for a woman in her 20s, it's not exactly bearable psychologically for someone to interfere with her life. I can tell you that I really struggled with all of this. When I say struggle, of course, I've never openly clashed with the people in front*



*of me. Actually, it wasn't easy when I look back.*" (A11, employed, married, 42 years)

The women's attitudes towards the headscarf ban are different from that of their families. While some of the women's families supported their children who left school or work due to the ban, some took a stand against them so that they continue school or work. There were also some respondents who stated that their families did not interfere and allowed them to make their own choices regarding the headscarf ban. Despite the lack of a common attitude towards the ban amongst families, how the women were affected by the reaction from their environment varied according to their families' reactions. When their relatives or neighbors gave them advice to adhere the headscarf ban, the support of the family has either strengthened or weakened the women's positions in the community. And when their parents gave advice to these women to obey the headscarf ban, this has caused serious problems between parents and children.

*"We two sisters were expelled from college, we went there until the last moment, each time knowing that we would be expelled any day. And then the envelopes came in from school, and my dad took them home and said, 'My girls have a degree, and I'm proud of you.' I felt so strong."* (A4, employed, single, 37 years)

*"My family was against me dropping out of school, they said, 'You will uncover your head, nothing will happen.' I was against it, my father didn't talk to me for a year, he said 'let her get married, if she won't study'. My mother tried to convince me, she said, 'Are you going to be dependent on the money your husband gives you at home like me?' In the meantime, my husband wanted to marry me, and to be honest, getting married was a solution for both my family and me."* (A2, unemployed, married, 43 years)

Women not being able to participate into education, and indirectly, to participate in work life led them to become financially dependent on their fathers or husbands. Given that women's participation in the labor force in Türkiye was 32.8 percent in 2021, whereas men's participation was 70.3% (TUIK, 2021), so women's representation ratio in economic and social life is lower than men. Social policies for women must be designed to equalize the socioeconomic indicators of men and women. The headscarf ban in Türkiye, while

making women's representation equal to men in social and economic life even more difficult, also had an impact that forced women to get married, start a family and become mothers.

*"I'm 40 years old, and I've only been working for 10 years. So, there's a ten-year loss. This 10 years of loss is also something that made me a consumer. It was a period in which I've been living off my spouse and family. So, of course, if I'd earned my own money, I'd perhaps have made my own enterprises more comfortably. Since I'm a bit of a free-spirited person, it's really uncomfortable for me to be dependent on someone."* (A8, employed, married, 40 years)

Among the participants' response to how their position in the family has changed, their remark on how their children's perception changed and their commentaries are of significance. They state that when they warn their children or give any advice to them as a mother, their children's reactions are shaped according their mother's educational output. These children who are especially given advice on how to study their lessons, to read a book and similar activities, children, not desiring to participate in such activities, tend to hold their mother as an example –unemployed, despite being educated– and deprecate the worth of education. This proves that the ban affects not only women who have fallen behind in economic and social life, but also their children. This reaction, described as a devalued education, carries the risk of negatively impacting children's participation in the education process. The assumption that headscarf ban had an impact on just the women whose education and work lives were interrupted is incomplete. The impact of headscarf ban is imparted from one generation to the other, and emerges as a devaluation of education. The participants state that their children consider their mother being unemployed as a disadvantage and add that their children are happier when they work.

*"Later I saw my children got happier. They considered saying 'My mother doesn't work, she's a housewife' as something to be ashamed. To the question, 'What is your mother's occupation?', they would respond 'A teacher, but she is a housewife now, she doesn't work.' It is as if being a housewife is not a nice occupation, so my children were pleased with me during the time I worked."* (A9, unemployed, married, 39 years)

Due to the headscarf ban, the idea of marriage became a priority for women who were unable to participate in education/work life. However, 4 of the participants in the interviews declared that the ban affected not only themselves, but also their spouses. One participant underlined that her husband did not prefer a public office because she wore a headscarf, while the other 3 participants pointed out that their spouses faced discrimination in the public office because of them. The women who were unable to embody their individual competencies by being left out of education and work life also feel responsible for the problems that their spouses face. This could be interpreted as headscarf ban's negative impact on women's human capital extending to create a psychological and emotional burden.

*"If it weren't for the ban at university, neither would I have married early, nor would I have even thought of it. Since I couldn't go to school, I began to think of marriage as an option."* (A2, unemployed, married, 43 years)

One of the main issues that emerged from the interviews was changing perception in their community and in their family regarding the roles of the women who began to work. They stated that when they were unemployed, they were not valued as housewives and that they knew that this was not on purpose, yet their value in the family and society was reduced as long as there was no "employed person" identity.

*"When I was employed, I realized that my husband's perception of me had changed, and so did the people's perception around me. I've always made that meal, but while employed, I've received more respect for the meal that I prepared, and I was seeing that how I was being perceived by the community was also changing. Neither my husband nor the society was doing it knowingly, the respect was involuntary. The primary school teacher kept saying, 'Because you're at home' or a housewife friend of mine built sentences like 'Because we're not working.'"* (A1, employed, married, 36 years)

#### v) **Work Life**

The common opinion of the participants regarding the question on how the headscarf ban

affected the entry to work life could be grouped as such: they had low expectations and accepted this will entail a hard process due to the ban, and also, they accepted they will be in a position that requires lower qualifications, despite the level of quality they possess. This condition means that in addition to the fact that their existing potential would be unusable, they would be lacking self-improvement, promotion, etc., along with motivation.

*"We took the KPSS test [public personnel selection examination] again, and we passed it, and then we were assigned to an institution. I was assigned in 2008. In 2008, of course, persecution continued. It was there in the workplace as well. At the entrance, they were checking our hair. You couldn't sit at your desk that way. No way. I mean, we couldn't with a headscarf."* (A1, employed, married, 36 years)

One of the top priority problems for women who have been unable to participate in work life for a long time due to the ban was that they couldn't even enter the central university examination with a headscarf. The participants stated that alternatives have been developed based on the state of the area from which one has graduated. Yet, especially for those who have graduated from political sciences and law, it would have been impossible to work in the public sector. They have emphasized that the demand for jobs in the private sector had increased. Due to the fact that in Türkiye private sector had significant share in education services, women with headscarves swayed towards the teaching profession, regardless of their field of graduation. While this has increased the number of people who had a teaching profession in Turkey, it also increased the demand for teacher training.

*"After finishing school, I couldn't enter any job exam. One of my goals was to be an academic, but you couldn't enter either YDS [foreign language exam] or ALES [academic personnel and postgraduate education entrance exam]. So, in the period before that... When February 28<sup>th</sup> came, and I came to realize that it would be very hard for me to become a district governor or an inspector, etc. So, I thought I could be a teacher then. I received pedagogic formation at the time, for about a year. I also got my certificates, but teaching wasn't*

*possible, so I never got into work life.” (A2, unemployed, married, 43 years)*

When the interviewed women were asked to assess their current situation in work life, the dominant view amongst them was that they were not exactly able to realize what they want in their work life. While stressing the importance of their struggle during the headscarf ban that gave them the ability to face challenges, to create solutions, and to become people with strong wills, they also felt left behind. As they could realize their own potential, the development of this potential into gains and their transformation into skills was also inhibited. They defined themselves between the age ranges of 18 to 25 as successful; they were willing people with goals. However, their perceptions of their current state indicate that they have accepted their current socioeconomic status. While their late start to work life poses a disadvantage, the requirements and expectations of work life are also challenging for them. These women who have dropped out of their universities following the headscarf ban could only complete their formal training only by taking exams from outside, and thus, they could not experience the education and training environment at school. In addition, they mentioned the negative impact of this situation in their work life.

*“I couldn’t fulfill my goals at that time, and now I can’t fulfill my potential. My current situation is that of acceptance.” (A3, employed, married, 41 years)*

Similar to the theme of reflections on socioeconomic status, the participants assessed the work life through peer comparison. While their entry age into labor market was higher due to the ban, while they could only start working recently, their peers had advanced through many stages in their work life. This deepened the difference between them and their peers. The belief that the gap between them will not be closed resulted with the acceptance of the current situation. The competition in work life that eliminates monotony and creates dynamics to increase the gains cannot be the driving force for women who have earned the right to work only after the ban has been lifted.

*“Right now, my friends whom I started university with are about to become associates and even professors. They have completed 18 to 19 years in their work life,*

*but I am just in my 7<sup>th</sup> year in my work life.” (A7, employed, married, 42 years)*

It was observed that the women with headscarves tended to accept the situation and that they felt they are late to build a career. In addition, the women who completed their university education following the lifting of the ban were reluctant to work. They stated that the source of this reluctance was the lag they felt in their career stages, their responsibilities to their family and children, and the difficulty in adapting to a new order.

*“Of course, I couldn’t do what I wanted in life when I finished the department, because first of all, they accepted few [teachers]. Second of all, I couldn’t work seriously for KPSS [necessary to become a teacher in a public school]. I don’t have the luxury of working in another city. I have two kids and I have a family life. I can’t disrupt it and start an adventure again. That’s why I couldn’t start teaching.”(A2, unemployed, married, 43 years)*

The private sector has been seen as an area where they could work with their headscarves during the ban. Yet, the participants state that the ban was instrumentalized by the employees to employ workers illegally in jobs incompatible with human dignity by paying low wages, by forcing them to perform jobs that did not fit their qualifications and by employing them without social security and etc.:

*“Unfortunately, from 1998 to 2002, I worked with no social security. I couldn’t earn much from that job either. But I earned enough for myself. So, we were able to work under whatever circumstances they offered, but it was not possible for us to make demands. And when we did, they would respond, ‘We’re already employing you with your headscarf.’” (A8, employed, married, 40 years)*

#### **vi) Human Capital Loss**

As part of the study, participants were asked to assess the ban from the aspect of social and economic losses on their behalf as well as the country. This process can be described as voluntarily forfeiting a qualified labor force, by excluding a group out of education and work life. The participants render this process concrete by giving examples from their successful friends.

They mention the careers and achievements of women with headscarves living abroad and underline that this human capital flight is a serious loss for Türkiye.

*“A serious loss to the country. Many students with headscarves went abroad at that time. When I say ‘abroad’, I mean countries from USA, Austria to Australia. Most of them are in Austria. Many of my friends have had to complete their education abroad. I believe they would have been the cornerstone of this country if they have stayed in Türkiye.” (A8, employed, married, 40 years)*

One participant has expressed the common view among participants that due to headscarf ban Türkiye’s labor force was wounded by “a slaughter of youth”. Expelling a group from the educational center, who already has the potential and the will to participate into the workforce, one of the most important inputs in economic production, can be described as giving up on the workforce that will produce the added value needed for the country’s economy:

*“The really bright brains disappeared during that period. Some of them were able to complete their studies. Likewise, I have friends who absolutely refused to go abroad and refused to open their head in Türkiye. They were in law school. A lot of people whom I believe would have been very successful, had been seriously injured by the process at that time.” (A9, unemployed, married, 39 years)*

There were not just women who have quit education or who have never been able to attend higher education, but there were also women who withdrew from work life due to the ban. There were not just women who have quit education or who have never been able to attend higher education, but there were also women who withdrew from work life due to the ban.

Therefore, qualified human resource could not be used in economic production. Preventing women with headscarf from being employed in the fields of medicine, law and education has led to the exclusion of a group from these three areas that form the trivet of central government in Türkiye. Personal and public expenditures for individuals who would have been employed in health, law and educational disciplines have also remained a cost

item due to the headscarf ban. Labor force potential in two basic areas of human capital that define the welfare state, the health and education, has been left inert. In addition, given that education is provided by public, it can be said that education expenditures for women with headscarves did not provide any benefit in the form of entry into work life.

*“But the fact that people with a certain amount of accumulation and potential have withdrawn from the workplace and that people who could climb up the ladder with their education are right now inactive since they have dropped out of school, of course, has caused great losses. But it’s hard for me to tell you clearly what kind of losses they are.” (A7, employed, married, 42 years)*

In order to explain that women with headscarves have created a strong human capital, the participants gave examples of their friends and acquaintances who continued their education to get an undergraduate degree and who then entered the work life after the headscarf ban was lifted. However, they also noted that the time lost because of the ban has caused a serious loss of labor both for the individuals and for the country.

*“I have such a neighbor. I really admire her. She’s a grandmother now. 48 years old. She had to quit Ankara University’s Faculty of Dentistry just in the middle of her education. When the ban is lifted, she goes back to dentistry. She finished it, and now she’s a beautiful dentist. She’s now a grandma, and her kids study at great places. She also has her own dental clinic. But how old is she? 48-50 years old. She couldn’t make it in time; she just opened up her place this year and began putting back her economy in order. A lifetime. It’s not coming back, no way to make amends for it.” (A3, employed, married, 41 years)*

## Conclusion

The headscarf ban in Türkiye that lasted nearly 16 years has negatively affected the participation of the women with headscarves in education and work life. There is no data on the number of women who had to quit their university education or leave work life during the ban. However, the headscarf, which has been on the agenda of Türkiye’s politics for a long time and still discussed



long after the ban has been lifted, is one of the priorities of politics in Türkiye. This study attempts to understand the headscarf ban, not from its political context, but from the aspect of how the women who first faced the ban reflect upon their participation into the labor force, being an input for Türkiye's economy, and from the aspect of the meaning they attribute to the relation of the ban and Türkiye's human capital. Within this scope, 6 themes have been identified from the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with 15 participants.

In the theme headscarf ban's reflections on women's socioeconomic status, the participants have explained that the ban is reflected negatively both on their economic and social status, and that they are deprived of better social and economic life due to the education and employment ban. Although the ban had been based on political grounds, women had to be involved in social and economic life as low-profile individuals because of their clothing. After the ban has been lifted, these women had turned away from their former socioeconomic status goals, since they re-started their university education at their 30s, since they were estranged from their professional skills due to the pause in their work lives, and because of their hopelessness, reluctance and purposelessness due to their perception that their right to education or work with headscarf would not be possible. Participants have encoded the effect of the ban on their individualization as a woman as a loss of self-esteem. Another significant finding is that although the participants are now involved in work life and the ban has been lifted, they try to remain invisible when the situation demands the representation of the institution that they are employed. This could be due to the humiliation that they have faced due to the headscarf ban and the feeling of helplessness against security personnel, academics and the directors of the institutions that they have worked, often expressed during the interviews. And this can be interpreted as being a woman with headscarf is accepted to be a disadvantage.

Decisions or experiences of the women with headscarves that had an impact of their future plans during their encounter with the ban indicate that the ban caused traumatic experiences. The

constant pursuit of law enforcement, hair shaving, wearing wigs, pressures in school and work environment led the women with headscarves to seek different alternatives. Foremost among them are the tendency to seek jobs they can work with a headscarf and marriage. Being a teacher in the private sector has been prominent among the jobs that can be worked with the headscarf. Their demand for professions were not according to their own qualifications and skills, but increasingly for professions where they could work with their headscarves. On the other hand, many participants declared that despite not being in their former plans, they began considering getting married due to the ban. Women with headscarves were left out of the women's struggle for economic independence and employment –the struggle to avoid being economically dependent to a man, whether he is a partner, father or brother. Along with the political dimensions of the headscarf ban, this also shows its sexist structure. While women couldn't participate in education and work life due to the headscarf ban, men who shared the same worldview, men who were their partners, fathers and brothers etc. did not face any sort of ban. From the aspect of gender equality, it can be said that the headscarf ban increased inequality.

According to the participants, the woman's position in the community and family has been affected by the headscarf ban in two different ways: First, the pressures on these women by the society to abide by the rules of the ban became more overwhelming in the cases where their families did not show support. And second, despite being successful university students, they were despised by their relatives and neighbors, since, as expressed in the commonly quoted expression, they "sat at home" following the headscarf ban. The women who worked for a while have emphasized that when they were employed, the perspective of their spouses and children changed and their role in the family has been more valued; and yet, when they did not, that value was reduced. Thus, the attitudes of the closest people to these women who support their stance against the headscarf ban and their "unemployed" status affected their roles within the family. Their views on their work life were based on the framework formed by feelings and

observations of falling behind on their peers, their acceptance of the current situation and the unjust practices against the employees with headscarves by the employers who took advantage of the ban. By providing examples from their friends' current careers, they mentioned the negative consequences of being late to start the work life on both individual competence and work efficiency. They have highlighted that even if the ban has been lifted, because of the ban, investment on human capital has brought returns at a delayed time, not when it was due.

Participants stated that the ban had a negative impact on their economic and social status. However, this is remarkable that they also consider the difficulties experienced by their other friends as "a great loss of human capital". Leaving aside their own experiences, their own careers, their own goals and their own plans, their attempts to describe the status of their successful friends may be interpreted as they still do not see themselves as qualified labor force that is an input of the country's economic production process. In addition, the women who have a successful career abroad are considered a loss of human capital for the country. They also underlined that the high added value to Türkiye's economy that the women who have dropped out of school or work would have provided is totally ignored. However, the fact that all participants consider their friends as a loss to the country rather than thinking about their own quality, skill, and competence can be interpreted as even if the ban has been lifted, they do not consider themselves sufficient. This suggests that even if they were involved in education and work life after the headscarf ban, the feeling of deprivation prevails.

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# Examining Women's Intention to Use E-Scooters with Technology Acceptance Model: Istanbul Case

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## Abstract

The means of meeting people's needs are changing day by day. For example, the need for transportation has been provided by various vehicles until today and user satisfaction has always been taken into account. However, with the development of technology and the change in the way of meeting human needs, the level of acceptance and use of products by consumers has also changed. Scooters developed to provide ease of transportation can also be seen as a part of this change. Within the scope of the study, it was investigated at what level female participants used e-scooter technology to meet their transportation needs and at what level they accepted this technology. The factors affecting women's adoption of e-scooters are discussed in the context of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The relationship between the perceived security factor within the scope of the study and the behavioral intention to use the e-scooter could not be measured. However, there are direct and indirect relationships between social impact, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and environmental sensitivity, and behavioral intention. As a result, inferences were made regarding the factors affecting the use of e-scooter by women.

**Keywords:** Micromobility, e-Scooter, Technology Acceptance Model, Behavioral Intent.

## Öz

İnsanların ihtiyaçlarını karşılama araçları gün geçtikçe değişmektedir. Örneğin ulaşım ihtiyacı günümüze kadar çeşitli taşıtlarla sağlanmış ve her zaman kullanıcı memnuniyeti göz önünde bulundurulmuştur. Fakat teknolojinin gelişmesi ve insan ihtiyaçlarının karşılanma biçiminin değişmesiyle birlikte üretilen ürünlerin tüketiciler tarafından kabul edilme ve kullanılma düzeyleri de değişim göstermiştir. Ulaşımın kolaylığını sağlamak için geliştirilen skuterler de bu değişimin bir parçası olarak görülebilir. Çalışma kapsamında kadın katılımcıların e-skuter teknolojisini ulaşım ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak için hangi düzeyde kullandıkları ve bu teknolojiyi hangi seviyede kabul ettikleri araştırılmıştır. Kadınların e-skuterleri benimsemesini etkileyen faktörler Teknoloji Kabul Modeli (TAM) bağlamında ele alınmıştır. Çalışma kapsamında algılanan güvenlik faktörünün e-skuter kullanımına dönük davranışsal niyet faktörüyle ilişkisi ölçülememiştir. Fakat sosyal etki, algılanan kullanım kolaylığı, algılanan fayda ve çevresel duyarlılık faktörleri ile davranışsal niyet arasında doğrudan ve dolaylı ilişkiler bulunmuştur. Çalışma sonucunda kadınların e-skuteri kullanmasında etki olan faktörler hakkında çıkarımlar yapılarak konuyla ilgili gelecek çalışmalara ve düzenlemelere dönük çeşitli önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mikromobilite, e-Skuter, Teknoloji Kabul Modeli, Davranışsal Niyet.

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## Introduction

Large-city sustainability problems can be articulated as traffic planning, new ways of thinking, and increased demands on the urban environment. Smart city solutions can contribute to solving many of these urban problems. One of the ways to solve these problems is the development of micromobility and sharing services (Popova & Zagulova, 2022). Micromobility is considered to be a relatively new and innovative mode of transportation that can reduce the number of private vehicle journeys (especially first and last mile journeys). Among the benefits of micromobility are the improvement of urban ecology, the promotion of a healthier lifestyle due to lower emissions from private vehicles, and the enhancement of quality of life through the provision of more mobile, flexible, cost-effective, and easily accessible modes of transportation (Abduljabbar et al. 2021; Shaheen et al., 2020). Among the vehicles that can provide these advantages, e-scooters are the first that come to mind. Shared vehicles, such as e-scooters, have replaced automobile travel and begun to provide more mobility alternatives. Therefore, it has the potential to boost the sustainability of urban transportation by enhancing public transportation accessibility. The majority of published research on e-scooter travel focuses on urban cities and collects data exclusively at specific times (Buehler et al., 2021). In this paper, the province of Istanbul is examined in terms of e-scooter usage.

This paper examines the acceptance level of e-scooters among women using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) created by Davis in 1989 (Davis, 1989). The TAM, which consists of the main factors of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude and intention to use, demonstrates that these factors are effective in using a new technology. The leading factor that determines the use of the technology is the intention to use it. In the model presented in the research, certain components from literature and other models were added to the model and the model was expanded in addition to the factors of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and behavioral intention. These factors added to the model are perceived

security, social impact and environmental sensitivity. These variables were used to analyze women's intentions to use e-scooters. Numerous studies in the literature have claimed that factors are effective for e-scooter and technology acceptance (Buehler et al., 2021; Ho & Wu, 2021; Dias, Arsenio & Ribeiro, 2021; Javadinasr, 2022; Kopplin et al., 2021).

## Conceptual Framework

### Technology Acceptance Model

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was used in the research to discover the factors that led to participants adopting the use of e-scooters. TAM is based on Ajzen's (1985) Theory of Reasoned Action to predict acceptance for individuals using new technology (Ajzen, 1985; Davis, 1989). TAM relies on certain factors to understand user perceptions. Perceived ease of use (PEU), perceived usefulness (PU), attitude (A) and behavioral intention (BI) are key TAM factors that explain the use of new technology. To better explain and understand the TAM, some variables have been added to the model and TAM 2 and TAM 3 models have been revealed through research done over time (Surendran, 2012). In TAM 2, social impact, cognitive processes and experience factors were added to the model (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). In TAM 3, on the other hand, variables affecting only perceived usefulness were deemed insufficient, and TAM 3 was developed by adding variables affecting perceived ease of use to the model (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008). Figure 1 displays the TAM's original model.

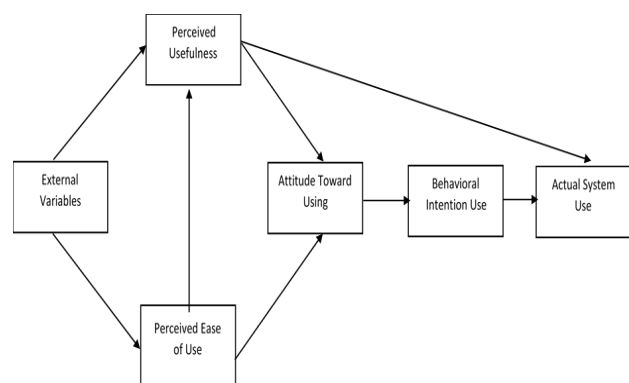


Figure 1. Technology Acceptance Model (Davis et al., 1989).

Davis (1989) proposed TAM to predict consumer behaviour while adopting technology. The two main factors that determine attitude in the model have perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness is defined as the extent to which users who embrace the technology in question benefit, whereas perceived ease of use is defined as the extent to which people believe it will be easy to adopt a specific technology (Chang & Chen, 2021). The TAM is acknowledged as one of the most widely used models (Sun et al., 2020). One of the most useful aspects of TAM is its capacity to successfully extend the model structure by adding additional external variables that may be relevant in different contexts (Ghazizadeh et al., 2012).

### **E-scooter**

Micromobility and a sustainable mode of transportation are required to tackle the problems arising from urban transportation, such as air and noise pollution, lack of urban space and parking costs (Huang, 2021). These problems create negative consequences in terms of air quality, sustainability and liveability of cities (Bivina et al., 2016). Micro-mobility can be accomplished using a variety of modes of transportation, including bicycles, electric bicycles (e-bikes), scooters, and electric scooters (e-scooters). Shared micromobility systems, such as bike and e-scooter sharing, are rapidly becoming important components of urban transportation infrastructure (for example car2go, Zipcar, emmy, CityScoot, Spin, Martı etc.). Shared micromobility has advantages such as health, the climate, less automobile use, and fewer greenhouse gas emissions (Shaheen and Cohen, 2019; Shaheen et al., 2020). Additionally, shared micro-mobility eliminates the costs and burdens of private car ownership, such as maintenance fees, refuelling expenses, and insurance payments (Mitchell et al., 2010).

E-scooter sharing systems were first introduced in the United States in 2017 (Dias et al., 2021). In many countries, e-scooters have started to be used and become widespread. Indians, for instance,

favour scooters because of their small design, ease of maintenance, affordability, and easy loan repayment. Motor scooters are seen by the public as a status symbol. The e-scooter market's objective is to maintain market share by satisfying consumer needs and expectations. Only a few scooter types were formerly offered in the country, but today India is the second-largest scooter manufacturer in the world. In terms of sales and production of scooters, it is third behind China and Japan (Natarajan, 2020). Scooters are viewed as a popular form of personal transportation, in part due to their low cost of acquisition, simplicity of operation, and ease of parking and storage (Dheenadhayalan & Shanmuga Priya, 2021).

### **Literature Review**

Scooters have been addressed in numerous research in the literature. For instance, it looked into several factors related to e-scooter adoption in Tiruchirappalli, India, to expand the use of electric vehicles. This study discovered that the high cost of using e-scooters is primarily responsible for the non-adoption of e-scooters. It was suggested in the study that e-scooter incentive benefits marketing could boost demand for purchases (Singh et al., 2021). In research to evaluate the adoption, use, and perceptions of new mobility services, including shared electric scooters, it was discovered that most people in major metropolitan areas have primarily positive perceptions of shared electric scooters. According to research, women and people with low incomes are more likely to benefit from the provision of these services. Women and men use shared electric scooters equally when compared to bike-sharing services, according to research (Clewlow, 2019).

In his study of 100 female participants who acquired e-scooters, Natarajan (2020) discovered substantial disparities in scooter use according to age, education level, monthly income, and occupation. The price, power, maintenance, resale value, after-sales service, brake durability, wheel size, length, weight, and comfortable driving characteristics of the scooters were shown to be effective on the participants' satisfaction levels in

the study. Aside from these features, there were no satisfaction variations in scooter design, mileage, spare parts availability, e-start, storage capacity, seating comfort, and lamp design. Data were obtained from 100 female scooter purchasers in a study studying the elements influencing women's e-scooter purchasing decisions. The study concluded that current items and trends influence purchasing decisions, as does the originality of the product to be purchased. However, suggestions for scooter companies to improve their advertising activities were provided (Dheenadhayalan & Shanmuga Priya, 2021).

A survey of 1,256 university employees was conducted to determine the pros and cons of using e-scooters. It was discovered that 36% of participants use e-scooters, and 40% intend to do so outside of campus in the future. E-scooters are often regarded as a more convenient mode of transportation, particularly in hot weather and when compared to walking. However, concerns regarding road safety and hurdles to getting appropriate working equipment were discovered, particularly among women (Sanders et al., 2020). Bielinski and Wazna (2020) tried to distinguish between e-bike and e-scooter sharing system users and the characteristics of their travel behaviours. It was discovered that e-bikes are primarily used for first and last-mile transportation, as well as direct commuting to various attractions, whereas e-scooters are primarily used for pleasure outings. According to research, e-scooter users were on average younger than e-bike users. It was discovered that the participants had the biggest issues in terms of cost and safety. It has been noticed that women use scooters and bicycles at a lower rate than men.

In Indonesia, a study was conducted to investigate the visual perception of female scooter users for scooter designs. It has been discovered that scooter designs are considered as good quality, comfortable to drive, usable by family members, fun to drive, relaxing, and promoting self-confidence while riding (Lukita et al., 2020). Before and after the launch of the e-scooter campus, attitudes and preferences of e-scooter users and non-users were compared in a study. E-scooter use on campus has been observed to be

more prevalent among younger drivers, particularly undergraduate students. According to research, the driving intention claimed before the system's launch is more than the actual number of users. The major reasons for utilizing e-scooters on campus, similar to city research, were determined to be travel speed and driving enjoyment. Approximately 30% of respondents said they use e-scooters to get to parking lots or access public transportation. Perceptions of e-scooter system suitability, cost, safety, parking, driver behaviour, and usage were positive among individuals who did not use e-scooters after the system started (Buehler et al., 2021).

According to Dias, Arsenio, and Ribeiro (2021), the e-scooter sharing system can assist cities in addressing environmental issues such as reducing air pollution, reducing inequality in access to transportation, promoting cost savings, and enhancing mobility resilience. Popova and Zagulova (2022) determined the most influential aspects of consumer behavior regarding the utilization of e-scooter-sharing services. In addition to "intention to use", "anxiety", "attitude to use", "effort expectation" and "social impact", new variables including "uncertainty", "e-scooter design", "experience", "perceived security", "infrastructure quality" and "physical activity incentive" are examined in the research. The main finding of the study is that the variables of attitude toward sharing, anxiety, and internal ambiguity have direct or indirect effects on the intention to use an e-scooter.

## Methodology

### Research Model and Hypotheses

A structural model was presented as part of this study to gauge women's intention to use e-scooters. The study model includes the behavioral intention, perceived ease of use, and perceived usefulness components that are also part of the technology acceptance model. Perceived Security, Social Impact, and Environmental Sensitivity components, which are believed to have

substantial effects in the literature, were also added to the model to boost its predictive potential, making the study model in question six factors in total. Figure 2 provides the research model.

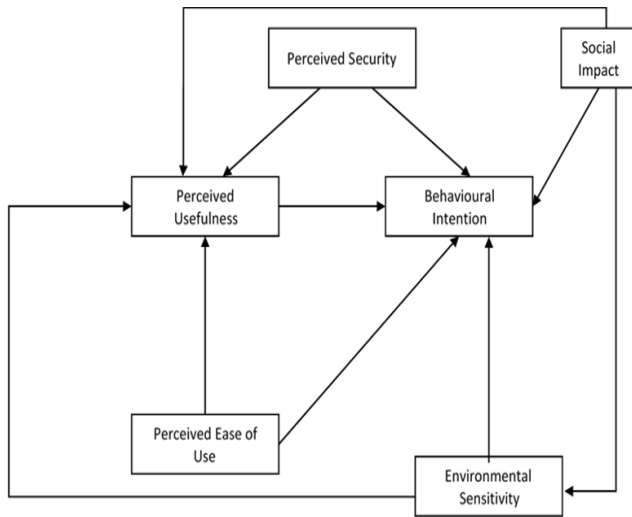


Figure 2. Research Model

The following are the factor definitions and hypothesis in the research model shown in Figure 2.

**Behavioral Intention (BI):** BI is defined as the level of an individual’s intention to exhibit any behavior. According to TAM, BI is directly related to PU and PEU factors (Davis, 1986; Davis et al., 1983; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). It is seen as the main determinant of the behavior that will occur in TAM and the Theory of Reasoned Behaviors. In the behavioral intention factor in the study, it is the intention of women to use/adopt e-scooter technology. Five items were included in the BI factor (Davis, 1989; Kopplin et al., 2021).

**Perceived Security (PS):** It is the level at which one thinks it is safe to use existing technology. In order to measure the PS factor, six items were created within the scope of the research model (Kopplin et al., 2021; Osswald et al., 2012). Two hypotheses have been proposed regarding the PS factor (h1 and h2). In this study, participants' levels of finding their e-scooter vehicles safe were discussed.

h1: Perceived security affects behavioral intention positively.

h2: Perceived security positively affects perceived usefulness.

**Perceived Usefulness (PU):** It is the level of thinking that an individual will benefit from using the technology in question (Davis, 1989). Perceived usefulness is one of the main determinants of behavioral intention in the context of TAM. According to the model, if people believe that technology is useful, they will use that technology. The h3 hypothesis was proposed because it was believed that PU would influence behavioral intention within the parameters of this research. In the research model, four items were included in the PU factor (Bozkurt et al., 2021; Davis, 1989; Kopplin et al., 2021). The level of participant belief that using an e-scooter would be useful was discussed in this study.

h3: Perceived usefulness positively affects behavioral intention.

**Perceived Ease of Use (PEU):** It is the level of belief that the person will be able to use the technology in question easily or that he or she will be able to learn to use it without spending too much effort. In short, it is the level of thinking that an individual will use technology without difficulty (Davis, 1989; Gao et al., 2008; Vankatesh & Davis, 1996). Two PEU factor-related hypotheses were presented within the context of the study. The h4 hypothesis was one of these assumptions that was drawn straight from TAM. On the other hand, it was proposed that PEU directly influences behavioral intention in the h5 hypothesis. Within the parameters of the research model, the PEU factor contained eight components. The PEU factor’s elements were developed using pertinent studies and models (Kopplin et al., 2021; Ratan et al., 2021). Within the scope of the study, the level of thinking of the participants that they can use the e-scooter easily without difficulty was discussed.

h4: Perceived ease of use positively affects perceived usefulness.

h5: Perceived ease of use positively affects behavioral intention.

**Social Impact (SI):** It is the level of thinking that a person should use a certain technology by being influenced by the people and events that he or she considers important to him (Venkatesh et al., 2003).



Within the scope of the research, four items were included in the SI factor (Kopplin et al., 2021). Hypotheses have been proposed that SI affects behavioral intention both directly and indirectly (h6, h7 and h8). In the study, this factor was considered as the level of being affected by the people or events around the participants in their behavior of using e-scooter.

h6: Social impact positively affects perceived usefulness.

h7: Social impact positively affects behavioral intention

h8: Social impact positively affects environmental sensitivity.

**Environmental Sensitivity (ES):** It is the level of thinking that an individual should not harm the environment by using a certain technology. In other words, it is the perception of contributing to reducing the damage done to the environment by using the technology in question. Models and studies in the literature have found that ES has a direct effect on behavioral intention (Dunlap et al., 2002; Lee, 2008). Based on these studies in the research model, four items were included for the ES factor. Two hypotheses were developed for the ES factor (h9 and h10). The participants' level of belief that utilising an e-scooter does not hurt the environment or helps to mitigate damage is explored in this study.

h9: Environmental sensitivity positively affects the perceived usefulness.

h10: Environmental sensitivity positively affects behavioral intention.

## Research Process

A questionnaire was designed to validate the research model presented in Figure 2 and to test the hypotheses created for the mentioned factors. Afterwards, the necessary ethics committee approval was obtained for the research to be carried out. After approval, reliability analysis was conducted with a pilot study. The main data were collected with a questionnaire containing the

updated items. The collected data were analyzed with the structural equation modelling approach.

## Data Collection Tools

To validate the research model put forth within the parameters of the study, a questionnaire was created. In the questionnaire form, there are both 5-point Likert-type items created to measure the variables and demographic questions. Three faculty members with expertise in the TAM and information systems, together with two faculty members with sociological backgrounds, were consulted in the creation of the aforementioned questionnaire. First of all, the questionnaire including 31 items was applied to female participants consisting of 31 people (PS: 6, BI: 5, SI: 4, ES: 4, PEU:8, PU: 4). Following the reliability analyses conducted following the pilot research, the PS factor was eliminated from the model. Two elements from the PEU factor and one from the BI factor were eliminated to achieve reliability. There were 22 total items used in the main study. The reliability findings obtained within the scope of the pilot study are given in Table 1 The Cronbach alpha value was used to do reliability analyses on the research variables ( $\alpha > 0,7$ ).

**Table 1. Pilot Study Reliability Findings**

Factor	Cronbach alfa	Number of Items
PEU	0.763	6
PU	0,593	4
ES	0.780	4
SI	0.794	4
BI	0.918	4
All items	0.919	22

The PU factor was included in the main study even though it did not produce a value of  $> 0.7$  in the Cronbach's alpha values in Table 1 because the reliability value was not very low and the reliability value of all items was high.

## Population and Sample

Women residing in Istanbul who are older than 16 make up the study's population. The simple random sampling approach, one of the random sampling methods, was used to select the sample group from which the data were obtained. Each sample unit has an equal chance of being chosen

when using the simple random sampling approach (Büyüköztürk et al., 2021). 379 female participants from different districts of Istanbul comprise the study's sample.

### Ethics Approval

Permission was obtained from the Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University Ethics Committee for the implementation of the developed questionnaire (document no. 149101 dated 16.12.2022). In addition, the pilot and main study data in the study were collected within the scope of the research with the Tender Registration Number 2022-590647, titled "The Future of Micro Electric Vehicles", which was completed with the cooperation of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change and Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University.

### Data Analysis and Findings

A total of 379 women participated in the study. Before starting the analysis process, the outlier process was carried out. Normality procedures were provided by removing 17 participants who gave the same answer to more than 20 items in the questionnaire responses. On the other hand, the blank data of six participants were filled by providing the relevant item mean. Descriptive statistics, reliability analyses, and exploratory factor analyses performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 software. Structural model evaluation was done in the SmartPLS 4 program.

### Demographic Data

The data from a total of 362 female participants were included in the analytical process. The participant's demographic data is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Participants' Demographic Data**

	Participants	N	%
Participant characteristic	Pedestrian	270	74,6
	Small business	27	7,5
	Taxi driver	1	0,3

	Minibus driver	1	0,3	
	Private vehicle user	26	7,2	
	Security guard	4	1,1	
	Scooter user	33	9,1	
Education level	Primary education	60	16,6	
	High school	161	44,5	
	Bachelor	126	34,8	
	Postgraduate	15	4,1	
Profession	Employee	77	21,3	
	Public	33	9,1	
	Retired	8	2,2	
	Housewife	45	12,4	
	Small business	22	6,1	
	Businesswoman	3	0,8	
	Freelancer	16	4,4	
	Student	136	37,6	
	Unemployed	16	4,4	
	Driver	1	0,3	
	Other	5	1,4	
Monthly income	Under 5550 TL	139	38,4	
	5550 – 7500 TL	63	17,4	
	7500 – 10000 TL	58	16,0	
	15000 – 20000 TL	52	14,4	
	20000 – 25000 TL	11	3,0	
	Over 25000 TL	5	1,4	
Age	Min.		Max.	Average
	16		80	29,86

According to the participants' demographic data, 74% of them go about their everyday lives on foot, whereas there is only one individual employed as a minibus and taxi driver, respectively. This is a result of the participants being all female. 9.1% of participants report using scooters on a regular basis. In terms of education, the majority of participants (N=161) had completed high school. The postgraduate level has the fewest participants (N=15). 37.6% of participants are students, according to the distribution of occupations however, there is only one participant who works as a driver. According to the monthly income distribution, the majority of participants (N=139) earn less than 5550 TL per month, whereas 1.4% of participants earn more than 25000 TL per month. The participants exhibit a distribution of ages between 16 and 80, with the youngest being in this range. Figure 3 displays the participant district distributions.



**Research Model**

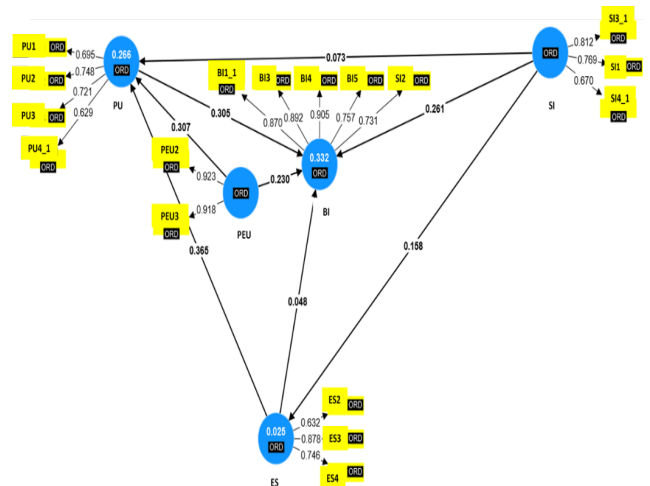
Outliers that would disrupt the structure of the data set were removed, and the missing values were averaged and repopulated. It was observed that the data did not provide a normal distribution by checking whether they were normally distributed. Since the data structure does not show a normal distribution, the presented research model was evaluated with component-based structural equation modelling, which is the partial least squares method (Alkış & Fındık Coşkunçay, 2021; Chin, 1998). The assessments of the measurement model and structural model were used to try and validate the research model. First, a measurement model evaluation was made. Confirmatory factor analysis was used for the measurement model. Accordingly, convergent validity and discriminant validity were examined. The convergent validity of the model is given in Table 5.

**Table 5. Convergent Validity**

Factor	Item code	Factor loading	Composite Reliability	Average of Communality Values (AVE)
Perceived Usefulness	PU1	.695	.793	%50
	PU2	.748		
	PU3	.721		
	PU4	.629		
Perceived Ease of Use	PEU2	.923	.918	%85
	PEU3	.918		
	PEU1	.918		
Behavioral Intention	BI1	.870	.919	%70
	BI3	.892		
	BI4	.905		
	BI5	.757		
	BI6	.769		
	BI2	.882		
Social Impact	SI1	.731	.796	%57
	SI3	.812		
	SI4	.670		
Environmental Sensitivity	ES2	.632	.800	%58
	ES3	.878		
	ES4	.746		
	ES1	.878		

Convergent validity was evaluated based on the factor loadings, combined reliability values and AVE values. Factor loading values are expected to be 0.7 and above. As can be seen in Table 5, all factor loads have sufficient load values except PU1, PU4, SI4, and ES2. These variables are included in the measurement model since their values are not significantly smaller than the expected value. Values for the AVE must be higher

than 0.5. As seen in Table 5, the variables have sufficient AVE values. In addition, the combined reliability values of the variables must be 0.7 and above. All of the composite reliability of the variables in the research model has a value above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2006). These results demonstrate that the measuring model has convergent validity. Figure 4 presents the measuring model.



**Figure 4. Measurement Model**

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the square root of the AVE values of the variables is required to ensure the discriminant validity, which is bigger than the correlation value of all other structures. Discriminant validity is demonstrated in Table 6. When the matrix is examined, it is seen that the diagonal values are larger than the other relationship values.

**Table 6. Discriminant Validity**

	PU	PEU	BI	SI	ES
PU	0.700				
PEU	0.348	0.921			
BI	0.452	0.385	0.834		
SI	0.184	0.174	0.364	0.753	
ES	0.400	0.076	0.229	0.158	0.759

After the measurement model was revealed, the structural model was evaluated. While evaluating the structural model, the trace coefficient and the validity of the proposed hypotheses were tested. The bootstrapping method was used to evaluate the 362 sample data set (Alkış & Fındık Coşkunçay, 2021). The path coefficients between the structures are presented in the structural model in Figure 5.



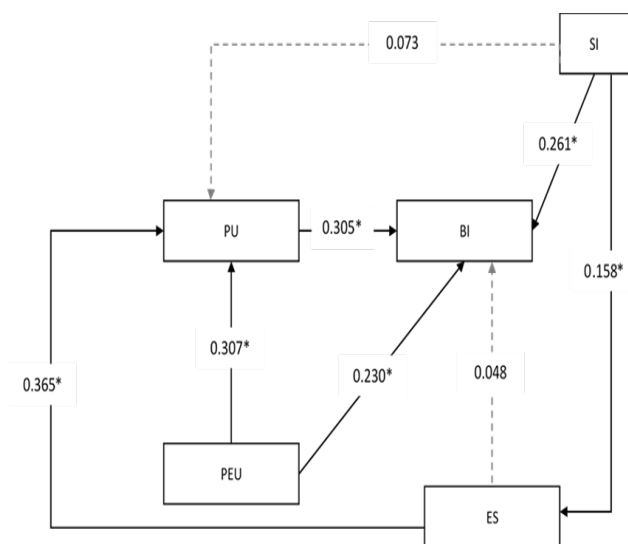


Figure 5. Structural Model (\*p<0.05)

The evaluation outcomes of the initial study hypotheses are shown in Table 7 as a consequence of the structural model evaluation.

Table 7. Results of the Research Model Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Relations	T-value	β	Final Result
h1	PS → BI	-	-	could not be measured
h2	PS → PU	-	-	could not be measured
h3	PU → BI	4.685	0,305*	Accepted
h4	PEU → PU	5.821	0,307*	Accepted
h5	PEU → BI	3.694	0,230*	Accepted
h6	SI → PU	1.326	0,073	Rejected
h7	SI → BI	5.096	0,261*	Accepted
h8	SI → ES	2.360	0,158*	Accepted
h9	ES → PU	6.445	0,365*	Accepted
h10	ES → BI	0.796	0,048	Rejected

As according to Table 7, the relationship between PS and BI and PU could not be measured as a result of the structural model evaluation. For this reason, no conclusion was drawn about the effect of the PS factor put forward in h1 and h2. On the other hand, no significant relationship was found between SI and PU. Therefore, h6 is rejected. Similarly, h10 was rejected because there was no significant relationship between ES and BI. The relationships suggested in the h3,h4, h5, h7, h8 and h9 hypotheses were found to be significant at the p<0.05 level and these hypotheses were accepted.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Within the scope of this study, it was tried to reveal the factors affecting the behavioral intentions of women towards e-scooter technology. Perceived

usefulness, perceived ease of use, and behavioral intention factors in the validated model were directly adapted from the original TAM. The research model was extended by adding the factors of perceived security, social impact and environmental sensitivity. However, the hypotheses put forward within the scope of the perceived security factor in line with the studies could not be evaluated because the perceived security factor could not be measured. That is, hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 could not be measured. Other hypotheses were tested using the structural equation model.

The effect of the perceived usefulness on the behavioral intentions of the participants in the use of e-scooter was evaluated within the scope of hypothesis 3. A significant and positive relationship emerged between perceived usefulness and behavioral intention. Accordingly, hypothesis 3 was accepted. This result is consistent with the original TAM (Davis et al., 1989). Perceived usefulness levels of women towards e-scooter positively affect their behavioral intentions towards e-scooter use. In addition, while this result is similar to the results of studies such as the acceptance of e-scooters (Javadinasr, 2022; Singh et al., 2021), acceptance of e-commerce sites (Doshi, 2018), acceptance of mobile banking services (Raza et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2018) and mobile application (Alkış & Fındık Coşkunçay, 2021) it differs with some studies (Çelik & Taş; 2021; Özer et al., 2019).

In this research, in the case of using/adopting e-scooter technology, women's perceptions of perceived ease of use are seen as an important effect of their thoughts that the use of e-scooter will be beneficial. Therefore, there is a direct and positive relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was accepted. In addition, it was observed that the participants' perceptions of ease of use had an impact on their behavioral intentions when using the e-scooter, which was put forward in hypothesis 5. In other words, hypothesis 5 was accepted because perceived ease of use and behavioral intention were found to be significantly correlated. These results are similar to the results of the mobile payment technology acceptance

research by Bozpolat and Seyhan (2020). Additionally, it demonstrates parallelism with the findings of other research on technological acceptability in the literature (Cho & Sagynov, 2015; Doshi, 2018). These results are also similar to the studies in the literature that measure e-scooter usage intention (Buehler et al., 2021; Ho & Wu, 2021; Javadinasr, 2022).

Regarding the social impact hypotheses, hypothesis 6 showed no evidence of a significant correlation between the participant's level of social environment influence and the perceived value of using e-scooters. In other words, there is no meaningful correlation between perceived usefulness and social impact. As a result, hypothesis number six was rejected. But research has shown that social impact significantly and positively affects behavioral intention and environmental sensitivity. In this instance, both hypotheses 7 and 8 were accepted. In other words, by being impacted by their social context, participants may exhibit a behavioral intention to use the e-scooter (hypothesis 7). On the other hand, it is important for the participants to be affected by their social environment in thinking that they will not harm the environment if they use e-scooters (hypothesis 8). This outcome is consistent with some research on the adoption of technology (Çelik & Taş, 2021; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). It is also similar to the results of studies on e-scooter technology (Huang, 2021; Javadinasr, 2022; Öztaş et al., 2022; Popova & Zagulova, 2022).

Finally, it has been discovered that there is a strong and positive relation between environmental sensitivity and perceived usefulness when the theories raised concerning the environmental sensitivity component are explored. So, hypothesis 9 was approved. In other words, the participants' perception of the usefulness of using an e-scooter is strongly tied to their level of concern about not harming the environment when using one. The results show that there is no meaningful connection between the behavioral intention factor and environmental sensitivity. It is evident that participants' environmental sensitivity levels have a beneficial

impact on their perception of usefulness, which in turn influences their behavioral intention. Though the behavioral intention is indirectly influenced by environmental sensitivity, hypothesis 10 was disregarded because there was no direct and substantial correlation. This finding contrasts with the literature, which suggests that environmental awareness is one of the variables influencing the adoption of e-scooters (Dias et al., 2021; Kopplin et al., 2021). On the other hand, similar to this result, Öztaş et al. (2022) also concluded that environmental sensitivity does not affect the intention to use e-scooters in their research.

As a result, in this study, a total of four factors were discovered, three of which (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and social impact) directly influence behavioral intention towards the usage of an e-scooter, and one element indirectly (environmental sensitivity). The use and acceptance of e-scooters is viewed as essential for individuals when taking into account the price and speed of transportation as well as their contribution to the battle against climate change. Future research is expected to take a different approach in light of the study's findings. The study's findings are anticipated to be helpful in developing the laws, rules, and regulations that will govern the use of e-scooters. On the one hand, the research is unique because it was done with female participants and within the framework of the TAM, but on the other hand, this can also be seen as a restriction. By taking into account these factors and broadening the sample group, future studies will be able to expand on the current one. Additionally, since just the quantitative research method was used for this study, future studies can be improved by incorporating both the mixed method and qualitative questions to better prepare for the factors. This research's exclusive focus on Istanbul is regarded as another shortcoming. By incorporating other demographic factors, the study can be replicated in many cities and areas.

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# Do You Feel Hopeless? The Mediation Role Of Self-efficacy Between Resilience and Hopelessness in Adults

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## Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships between psychological resilience, perception of self-efficacy and hopelessness. In this context, it is aimed to examine the mediating role of self-efficacy between resilience and hopelessness. For this purpose, the data were collected online from 362 volunteer participants (217 female, 145 male) by using snowball sampling method. In accordance with the scope of the study, a questionnaire consisting of 'Demographic Information Form', 'Beck Hopelessness Scale', 'Short Psychological Resilience Scale' and 'General Self-Efficacy Scale' were applied to the participants. Firstly, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity were tested for the analyzes to be carried out on the obtained data. In order to test the statistical significance of the proposed mediation model, the Bootstrapping Method was used through the software developed by Hayes. Obtained results showed that psychological resilience was significantly and negatively related to hopelessness; but positively related to self-efficacy. In fact, self-efficacy perception was found to be negatively related to hopelessness. Lastly, according to the analyzes carried out within the framework of mediation models, it was found that self-efficacy had a mediation role in the relationship between psychological resilience and hopelessness. All findings were discussed within the framework of the related literature.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Hopelessness, Self-Efficacy.

## Öz

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı; psikolojik sağlamlık, öz-yeterlik ve umutsuzluk arasındaki ilişkileri incelemektir. Bu bağlamda, öz-yeterliğin psikolojik sağlamlık ve umutsuzluk arasındaki aracı rolünün incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda veriler, 362 gönüllü katılımcıdan (217 kadın, 145 erkek) kartopu örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak çevrimiçi ortamda toplanmıştır. Araştırma kapsamında katılımcılara 'Demografik Bilgi Formu', 'Beck Umutsuzluk Ölçeği', 'Kısa Psikolojik Dayanıklılık Ölçeği' ve 'Genel Öz-Yeterlik Ölçeği' uygulanmıştır. Elde edilen veriler üzerinde yapılan analizler öncesinde normallik ve homojenlik varsayımları test edilmiştir. Önerilen aracılık modelinin istatistiksel anlamlılığını test etmek için ise Hayes tarafından geliştirilen yazılım aracılığıyla Bootstrapping Yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen bulgular, psikolojik sağlamlığın umutsuzluk ile anlamlı ve negatif, psikolojik sağlamlık ile öz-yeterlik arasında ise pozitif yönde bir ilişki olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Dahası, öz-yeterlik algısının umutsuzluk ile negatif ilişkili olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Son olarak, aracılık modelleri çerçevesinde yapılan analizler, öz-yeterliğin psikolojik sağlamlık ile umutsuzluk arasındaki ilişkide aracı rolünün olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Elde edilen tüm bulgular ilgili literatür çerçevesinde tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Psikolojik Sağlamlık, Umutsuzluk, Öz-Yeterlik.

## Introduction

Hope emerges as an important concept that helps individuals cope with many different situations, provides motivation for the future, and contributes to mental and physical resilience in the face of difficulties. Hope is a mechanism that paves the way for individuals to have confidence that they will have a good future and thus have positive expectations about themselves and their future (Hernandez & Overholser, 2021; Özmen et al., 2008). Hopelessness is defined as a cognitive experience that expresses the negative and fatalistic perspectives of individuals that their current situation will not change in the future (Beck, 1986). According to Beck, the concept of hopelessness includes negative emotions, negative expectations about the future and loss of motivation. According to this conceptualization, an individual's negative emotions, negative future expectations and low motivation for any kind of engagement, indicate a high level of hopelessness (Weishaar and Beck, 1992). The level of hopelessness is closely related to individuals' reactions to various life events, psychopathological disorders, and perception of life satisfaction. Within the studies, hopelessness and depression (e.g., Padmanabhanunni & Pretorius, 2021), anxiety (e.g., Eker, 2019), suicide (e.g., Lew et al., 2019), life satisfaction (e.g., Dang, Zhang & Nunez, 2021; Kim et al., 2021) has been found to be associated with many psychological concepts. In the current study, despair was examined within the framework of its relationship with the concepts of psychological resilience and self-efficacy, two important components of psychological health.

Psychological resilience is an ability to maintain or regain mental health despite difficulties experienced which are defined as a positive psychological adaptation (Hermann et al., 2011). In other words, psychological resilience refers to the ability of individuals to recover after stressful events they encounter in life, return to their previous situations, and cope with stress (Hoşoğlu et al., 2018; Ramirez, 2007; Brooks & Goldstein, 2003). Although resilience was initially considered as a personality trait as a concept, it was later stated

that this concept is a dynamic feature and can be changed and developed (Hernandez et al., 2011). In short, resilience is a kind of dynamic mechanism that contributes to self-renewal and coping with negative life events. It is also clearly known that this term was related to many variables such as depression (e.g., Mcdermott et al., 2020; Erarslan, 2014;), anxiety (E.g., Hjemdal et al., 2011), well-being E.g., Bajaj & Pande, 2016) when examined the relevant literature.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that many studies find a negative relationship between psychological resilience and hopelessness. In this context, Collazzoni and his colleagues (2020) reported that there were significant negative relationships between resilience and hopelessness and that resilience significantly predicted the level of hopelessness. Similarly, Hjemdal, Friborg, and Stiles (2012) showed resilience was an important predictor of hopelessness in the current sample, even after controlling for other variables (stressful life events, personality). The results of a study by Hofer and his colleagues (2016), in which the resilience and hopelessness levels of individuals diagnosed with psychopathology in two different samples were examined, emphasize that there are significant negative relationships between hopelessness and resilience in both samples. Besides, each sub-dimension of psychological resilience (emotional coping, situational coping, social support, and positive self), it was found that there were significant negative relationships between the level of hopelessness and the level of hopelessness (Johnson et al., 2010) There are also studies in the Turkish literature on the relationship between psychological resilience and self-efficacy. To illustrate, Gökçe and Dilmaç (2020) exploring the relationships among the values, resilience, and hopelessness levels of individuals reported that resilience significantly predicted the level of hopelessness and values of individuals (such as responsibility, tolerance). Another study examined the relationships between resilience and hopelessness in teacher candidates indicated psychological resilience and hopelessness were significant predictors of prospective teachers' life satisfaction (Çelik, Sanberk, & Deveci, 2017).



Öztürk and Maçkalı (2022) found a mediating role of problem-focused coping strategies between hopelessness and resilience and hopelessness and resilience is negatively significant with each other. Akşit-Aşık (2018) also conducted research within this framework and tested the predictive power of hopelessness and psychological resilience levels of hotel employees on life satisfaction. The researcher reported a negatively significant relationship among psychological resilience, hopelessness, and resilience and, in fact; hopelessness explained 29% of the variance in life satisfaction of hotel employees.

In addition to psychological resilience, self-efficacy is another concept regarding individuals' level of hopelessness. Self-efficacy is a factor explained by Bandura within the framework of "Social Learning Theory." It expresses the belief that the individual can successfully perform the tasks that he/she needs to perform (Bandura, 1997). In other words, self-efficacy is conceptualized as the belief that an individual can achieve and do (Bandura, 2006). There are number of research that showed the concept of self-efficacy was positively correlated with resilience and negatively related with hopelessness. For instance, Yang and his colleagues (2019) examined the power of self-control to predict self-efficacy perception through resilience. Within the framework of the Structural Equation Model, it was found that resilience predicted the level of self-efficacy positively. Similarly, Keye and Pidgeon (2013) reported a significant positive relationship between the level of self-efficacy and the level resilience of participants. Ulaş and Yıldırım (2019) also conducted research with university students studying in different departments and dealing with the relationship between self-efficacy perception and hopelessness. Researchers reported that the level of self-efficacy was negatively related to hopelessness. In a similar outline, other study examining university students' perceptions of intolerance to uncertainty, hopelessness, self-efficacy, and future job finding. It was revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between the hopelessness level of the participants and their self-efficacy perceptions (Bozkur, Kıran, & Cengiz, 2020).

Consequently, although these concepts are handled separately in different studies, no research has been found that examines these three variables within the framework of a mediation model. In the current research it was expected the power of psychological resilience predicted hopelessness through self-efficacy was tested. Considering that nearly all individuals are exposed to many stimuli and stressful life events in their daily lives so it is thought that it would be very useful to examine the relationships between their psychological resilience, self-efficacy perceptions and hopelessness levels. As a matter of fact, the findings to be obtained have the potential to be used in applications to be developed in order to reduce the hopelessness levels of individuals and to increase their psychological resilience and self-efficacy perceptions. For this reason, it is thought that this study will contribute to the field both theoretically and practically.

### **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between the psychological resilience, self-efficacy, and hopelessness levels of the participants within the scope of the current sample. In other words, it was aimed to test the mediator role of self-efficacy between resilience and hopelessness sub-dimensions (feelings about the future, loss of motivation, future expectations).

Considering that individuals live in a period when they are exposed to many stimuli and stressful life events, it is thought that it will be very essential and practical to examine the relationships between psychological resilience, self-efficacy perception and hopelessness level. As a matter of fact, it is predicted that the findings will be very useful in the creation of applications and intervention programs to be developed to reduce the hopelessness levels of individuals and to increase their perceptions of psychological resilience and efficacy. For this reason, it is thought that the present study will contribute to the field at both theoretical and practical levels.

The present study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. How do resilience and self-efficacy affect the level of hopelessness in adults?

2. How is the relationship between self-efficacy and resilience in adults?
3. Does self-efficacy have a mediating role in the relationship between resilience and the level of hopelessness?

## Method

In the method part, information about the research design, study group, data collection tools and data analysis are presented.

## Research Design

The research design of the current study was a correlational research design.

## Research Sample

The study group of the research consisted of 362 adults, 217 (59.9%) females and 145 (40.1%) males, between the ages of 18 and 81 ( $M=33.8$ ;  $S=13.50$ ). The data of the current study were determined using the snowball sampling method. Since the data of the study was collected online, it was decided to use snowball sampling method in order to reach more participants.

## Data Collection Process

The current data were collected online by using Google Survey from 362 volunteer participants (217 female, 145 male). Before analyzing the data, four participants who were under the age of 18 were excluded from the data due to the age pre-condition. All participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the research with the "Informed Consent Form" determined by the Mersin University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

## Data Collection Materials

**The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS):** The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) was developed by Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, and Jennifer Bernard (2008) to assess the level of an individual's

resilience and was adapted into Turkish language by Doğan (2015). The scale consists of 6 items and is evaluated with a 5-point Likert-type scale. Scale items; (1) totally disagree to (5) totally agree. Scores obtained from the scale is between 6 and 30. High scores obtained from the scale indicate high level of resilience. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient obtained from the adaptation study was reported as .81 (Doğan, 2015). For this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is .89.

**Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS):** Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS) was developed by Beck, Weissman, Lester, and Trexler (1974), and Turkish version validity and reliability studies were carried out by Durak and Palabıyıkoglu, (1994). BHS composes of a 20-item measurement tool that evaluates the level of hopelessness of an individual for the future. The scale includes three sub-dimensions which are feelings about the future (1, 6, 13, 15, 19. items), loss of motivation (2, 3, 9, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20. items) and future expectations (4, 7, 8, 14, 18. items). The items are evaluated with "Yes" and "No" options. For some items, yes is evaluated as 1 point and not as 0 points and for the others, no is evaluated as 1 point and yes as 0 points. Scores obtained from the scale vary between 0 and 20. In the original study, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients of the scale; .78 for feelings about the future, .72 for loss of motivation, and .72 for future expectations. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients were .82 for feelings about the future, .78 for loss of motivation, and .74 for future expectations.

**General Self-Efficacy Scale:** The General Self-Efficacy Scale is an instrument developed by Sherer, Maddux, Mercandante, Prentice-Dunn, Jacobs, and Rogers (1982) and adapted into Turkish by Yıldırım and İlhan (2010). The scale consists of 17 items and is evaluated with a 5-point Likert-type rating (1) none - (5) very good. Items 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16 and 17 in the scale are scored reverse. Scores obtained from the scale vary between 17 and 85. High scores obtained from the scale indicate high self-efficacy belief. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale

was reported as .80 (Yıldırım & İlhan, 2010). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was determined as .91.

**Demographic Information Form:** Such information about the participants as gender, age, and socio-economic status were obtained through the Demographic Information Form prepared by the researchers.

## Data Analysis

For the data analyses, it is recommended to test assumptions such as sample size and missing data, missing data, normality, linearity, multicollinearity and singularity, and the absence of outliers in order to test the data for the structural equation modeling (Cokluk, Şekercioglu & Büyüköztürk, 2012).

Within the scope of the research, the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between resilience and hopelessness in adults over the age of 18 was tested. The data of the research were analyzed using the SPSS21 program. To test the statistical significance of the mediation models, the Bootstrapping Method was used through the software developed by Hayes (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). In this current research, three different mediation models were tested. While testing indirect effects in each mediator model, the 95% confidence interval and 5000 resampling methods were used.

The Mahalanobis Distance Analysis was performed to determine the extreme values of the data. It was founded that eight participants were extreme values and excluded from the data. In addition, skewness-kurtosis values were performed to determine whether the data exhibited a normal distribution. It was found that the kurtosis skewness scores of all the variables are in the range of -1.5 to +1.5 values, except for the loss of motivation variable. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) emphasize that the values of kurtosis and skewness in the normal distribution of the data should be between -1.5 and +1.5. Therefore, the values obtained from the analysis indicated that the data exhibited a normal distribution. Normality assumptions are seen in Table 1.

To test multicollinearity problem in the data, tolerance and variance increase factor (VIF) values were examined. It was found that the tolerance values were above .20 and the VIF values were less than 5. On the other hand, Durbin-Watson value was calculated to examine the independence of errors. According to Kalaycı (2005), a Durbin-Watson value between 2 and 2.5 indicates there is no auto-correlation problem. Since the Durbin-Watson value obtained from the present study was found to be 2.13, it can be interpreted that the errors were independent.

**Table 1. Normality assumptions and descriptive statistics**

Variable	$\bar{X}$	SD	Kurtosis	Skewness
Resilience	19.66	4.86	.053	-.128
Self-efficacy	63.01	12.43	.42	-.57
Feelings about the future	1.47	1.67	-.565	.88
Loss of motivation	1.96	2.02	1.10	1.34
Future expectations	2.20	1.67	-1.11	.37

Mediation analyzes were tested with Model 4 proposed by Hayes (2018). The Bootstrapping Method was used to test the indirect effects in the model. According to Pracher and Hayes (2008), the bootstrapping method is a very powerful and convenient method while obtaining confidence limits for indirect effects in the model. In testing its indirect effects, 95% confidence interval and 5000 resampling methods were performed. In order to interpret the mediating effect as significant in the 95% confidence interval, the values should not contain zero (Hayes 2018). In this context, three different models were developed to test the mediating roles of self-efficacy in the relationships between resilience and sub-dimensions of hopelessness (feelings about the future, loss of motivation, and future expectations).

## Results

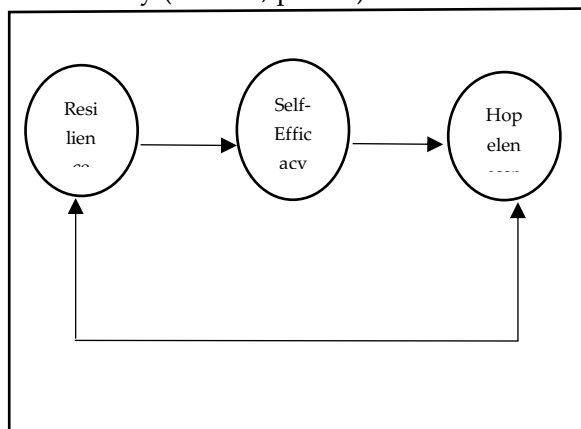
The main purpose of the current research was to examine the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between the psychological resilience and hopelessness levels of adults who were over the age of 18. In the scope of the research, the relationships between the variables were examined.

**Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficient values between variables**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1.Resilience	-				
2 Feelings about the future	-.421**	-			
3.Loss of motivation	-.472**	.696**	-		
4.Future expectations	-.488**	.741**	.701**	-	
5.Self-efficacy	.609**	-.433**	-.523**	-.416**	-

\*\* $p < .001$

The relationships between variables were examined by Pearson Correlation Analysis. Accordingly, the obtained findings indicated a negative significant relationship between resilience and feelings about the future sub-dimension ( $r = -.421, p < 0.01$ ), a negative significant relationship between resilience and the loss of motivation sub-dimension ( $r = -.472, p < 0.01$ ), and a negative significant relationship between resilience and future expectations sub-dimension ( $r = -.488, p < 0.01$ ). A positive significant relationship between resilience and self-efficacy was found ( $r = .609, p < 0.01$ ). In fact, the findings showed a negative significant relationship between feelings about the future sub-dimension and self-efficacy ( $r = -.433, p < 0.01$ ), a negative significant relationship between the loss of motivation sub-dimension and self-efficacy ( $r = -.523, p < 0.01$ ) and a negative significant relationship between future expectations sub-dimension and self-efficacy ( $r = -.416, p < 0.01$ ).



**Figure 1. Theoretical model**

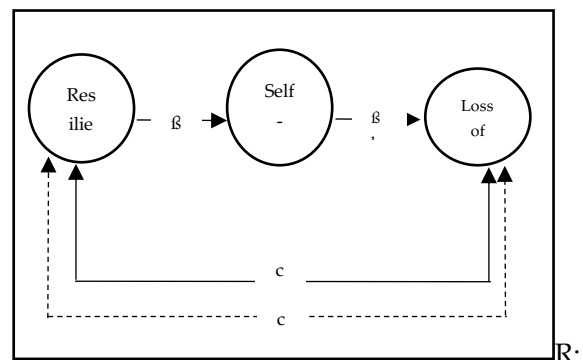
Mediation analyses were conducted using Model 4 proposed by Hayes (2018) in order to determine whether resilience predicted hopelessness (feelings about the future, loss of

motivation and future expectations) through self-efficacy. The theoretical model of the current research is presented in Figure 1.

**Table 3. Findings on the mediating effects of self-efficacy in the relationships between resilience and feelings about the future, loss of motivation and future expectations sub-dimensions**

Model	Estimate	SE	t	p	%95 Confidence Interval (CI)	
					LL	UL
<b>Paths</b>						
R	.5195	.0385	13.5038	<0.001***	.4438	.5951
SE	-.1144	.0265	-4.3096	<0.001***	-.1666	-.0622
<b>FAF</b>						
Total effect	-.1548	.0198	-7.8230	<0.001***	-.1937	-.1159
Direct effect	-.0954	.0237	-4.0184	<0.001***	-.1421	-.0487
<b>LM</b>						
Total effect	-.1333	.0146	-9.1529	<0.001***	-.1619	-.1046
Direct effect	-.0706	.0170	-4.1573	<0.001***	-.1040	-.0372
<b>FE</b>						
Total effect	-.0659	.0253	-2.6084	<0.05**	-.1155	-.0162
Direct effect	-.1412	.0226	-6.2540	<0.001***	-.1857	-.0968
<b>UL</b>						
R	-.0594	.0152			-.0899	-.0302
<b>FAF</b>						
R	-.0627	.0124			-.0874	-.0395
<b>LM</b>						
R	-.0342	.0133			-.0605	-.0077

N=362; CI, confidence interval; LL, lower limit; UL, upper limit.



**Figure 2. Indirect effects of self-efficacy with unstandardized coefficients on the effects of resilience on feelings about the future**



Resilience; SE: Self-efficacy; FAF: Feelings about the future; LM: Loss of motivation; FE: Future expectations

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; Bootstrap sample size = 5000.

As seen in Figures 2, 3 and 4, the mediating roles of self-efficacy in the relationship between resilience and sub-dimensions of hopelessness (feelings about the future, loss of motivation, and future expectations) were examined. Socio-economic level variable was also included in the analysis as covariate in mediator models.

Mediation analyses findings indicated that the direct path from resilience to self-efficacy was significant and positive ( $\beta = 0.51$ ,  $t(358) = 13.503$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The direct path from self-efficacy to feelings about the future was also significant and negative ( $\beta = -0.11$ ,  $t(357) = -4.309$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It was seen that the direct paths from self-efficacy to both loss of motivation ( $\beta = -0.12$ ,  $t(357) = -6.355$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and future expectations ( $\beta = -0.06$ ,  $t(357) = -2.608$ ,  $p < .05$ ) are also significant and negative. In addition, it is seen that the level of socio-economic status (covariate variable) have significant effects on feelings about the future ( $\beta = -0.11$ ,  $t(357) = -4.027$ ,  $p < .001$ ), loss of motivation ( $\beta = -0.07$ ,  $t(357) = -3.697$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and future expectations ( $\beta = -0.15$ ,  $t(357) = -5.930$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (see Table 3).

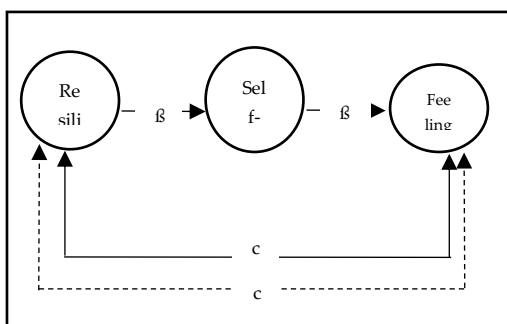


Figure 3. Indirect effects of self-efficacy with unstandardized coefficients on the effects of resilience on loss of motivation

\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

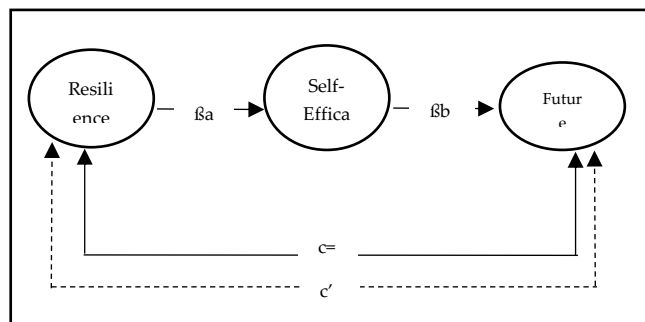


Figure 4. Indirect effects of self-efficacy with unstandardized coefficients on the effects of resilience on future expectations

\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

In the research, mediation roles of self-efficacy were tested separately in three models by examining whether the indirect effects were significant or not. Accordingly, when the indirect effect of self-efficacy between resilience and feelings about the future was examined, it was determined that self-efficacy had a mediating role in the relationship between resilience and feelings about the future (Indirect effect=  $-0.0594$ ,  $SE = 0.0237$ , %95 CI  $[-0.0899, -0.0302]$ ). Similarly, self-efficacy was found to mediate the relationship between resilience and loss of motivation (Indirect effect=  $-0.0627$ ,  $SE = 0.0124$ , %95 CI  $[-0.0874, -0.0395]$ ). Lastly, in the third model, the indirect effect of self-efficacy between psychological resilience and future expectations was examined and found self-efficacy had a mediating role between psychological resilience and future expectations (Indirect effect=  $-0.0342$ ,  $SE = 0.0133$ , %95 CI  $[-0.0457, 0.0350]$ ).

## Discussion

The main purpose of the current research was to test the relationships between resilience, self-efficacy perception and hopelessness in adults. In addition, within the scope of the research, it was examined whether psychological resilience affects the level of hopelessness through self-efficacy perception.

Firstly, within the scope of this study, the relationships between psychological resilience and sub-dimensions of hopelessness (feelings about the future, expectations about the future, and loss of motivation) were examined. The obtained results

indicated significant negative relationships between psychological resilience and all the sub-dimensions of hopelessness. Accordingly, it is appointed that this finding is consistent with the literature. Also, the relationship between resilience and hopelessness was tested in a wide age range within the framework of the current sample and obtained findings compatible with the relevant literature. Similar to our findings, a study conducted by Gambaro and his colleagues (2020) examined resilience, hopelessness, depression, and traumatic experiences of immigrants and reported moderate negative relationship between the level of psychological resilience of immigrants and their hopelessness levels. Another study also examined the relationships between resilience and hopelessness level of the participants and compared participants according to the age levels (18 to 98). It was found that the level of psychological resilience of young participants were higher than the older ones. On the contrary, the hopelessness level of young participants was lower than the older age group. In addition, it was determined that there was a negative relationship between psychological resilience and hopelessness for both age groups (Nieto et al., 2022). Similarly, in research dealing with the relationships between resilience, spirituality, and hopelessness levels of individuals during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Turkey, reported resilience predicted the level of hopelessness in a negative way, and spirituality was a mediator role on this relationship (Gümeye & Maraj, 2021). In the light of the past research, it can be clearly seen that psychological resilience is a psychological coping and adaptation mechanism (Hermann et al., 2011). Therefore, based on both our results and relevant literature, we can interpret the relationship between these two variables as follows: Psychological resilience is a protective mechanism that helps individuals cope with problems and increases one's motivation and future expectation. In other words, the increase level of psychological resilience of an individual can positively affect his/her motivation and expectations for the future by enabling him/her to cope with various difficulties encountered in life events.

In this study, the relationship between psychological resilience and self-efficacy is discussed. According to the findings, there is a significant positive relationship between resilience and self-efficacy perception. Examining the relevant literature, it is clearly seen that this finding is in parallel with the previous studies. For instance, Li, Eschenauer, and Persaud (2018) investigated the relationships between university students' perceptions of resilience, self-efficacy, stress, problem-solving skills, and social support. The researcher reported that there was a positive relationship between students' resilience and self-efficacy. In fact, self-sufficiency and resilience significantly predicted students' problem-solving skills. Sagone and his colleagues (2020) also evaluated the level of resilience, empathy, and self-efficacy perceptions for problem solving and revealed that resilience was highly correlated with self-efficacy, participants who had a high perception of empathy and a high level of self-efficacy in problem solving had a higher level of resilience compared to those with a low perception of self-efficacy. It is also reasonable for individuals who have a high level of resilience to also have a high belief in achievement in their lives (i.e., their self-efficacy). Depending on the individual's level of resilience, self-confidence and the perception of self-efficacy will become greater. Although limited studies have been conducted on this subject in the literature, the obtained findings support our study. In line with all these research findings, it can be interpreted that psychological coping skills and self-efficacy perception are structures that support each other in a direct way.

In this study, the relationship between self-efficacy and hopelessness level was examined. It was found to be statistically significant and negative correlations among perception of self-efficacy and feelings about the future, expectations about the future and loss of motivation which is consistent with past research findings. Study examining individuals' general self-efficacy perceptions, job satisfaction and hope levels reported participants' self-efficacy perceptions significantly affected their levels of hope (Duggleby, Cooper, & Penz, 2009). Similarly,

O'Sullivan (2011) indicated significant relationships between self-efficacy and level of hope in a study examining the relationships between university students' stressful situations, life satisfaction, self-efficacy perceptions and hope levels. In this direction, one of the ways of increasing individuals' hope is to increase their level of self-efficacy. It can be said that individuals' perceptions of themselves, their beliefs about success and handling with negative situations appear as factors that increase their hopes for the future. Therefore, self-efficacy can be a quite crucial concept to maintain the motivation of individuals for the future in their lives and to regulate their future behaviors.

In current study, the mediating role of self-efficacy perception between psychological resilience and hopelessness level was tested. Thus, the mediation role of self-efficacy perception was tested in three separate models. It has been determined that self-efficacy perception has a significant mediating role between each sub-dimension of psychological resilience and hopelessness. The obtained findings pointed out that self-efficacy had a mediating role between resilience and hopelessness in all mediation models. As the relevant literature examined, the past studies indicated significant relationships among resilience, self-efficacy, and hopelessness (E.g., Nieto et al., 2022; Sagone et al., 2020; Li et al., 2018). Mostly, past studies reported resilience predicted self-efficacy positively and self-efficacy predicted hopelessness in a negative way. However, no study was found in the mediator role of self-efficacy in the relationship between resilience and hopelessness variables. Reference studies conducted with this context have reported the perception of hope and self-efficacy as predictors of resilience (Wu et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020). Psychological resilience refers to the capacity of individuals to adapt and cope with the difficulties (Hoşoğlu et al., 2018; Hermann et al., 2011). At the same time, resilience emerges as an important mechanism that carries individuals' self-perceptions to a more positive level and prepares the ground for their self-confidence. On the other hand, some studies conducted on psychological resilience was negatively associated with many psychopathological conditions such as depression,

anxiety disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (E.g., Awano et al., 2020; Portnoy et al., 2018). Other than that, several studies reported hope, self-efficacy, and resilience named as psychological capital components and discussed as a whole (e.g., Di Sipio et al., 2012; Herbert, 2011). Within this framework, it is clear that the findings of the past studies on this subject vary considerably. With the findings of current research, it can be interpreted that the increase in the level of psychological resilience of the individual is very important in terms of coping with negative situations and acting as a buffer against psychopathological situations. In this case, it is quite possible that resilience affects the perception of self-efficacy and hope level.

In the current study, socio-economic status was included in a covariate variable, considering that may affect hopelessness. As a matter of fact, there were number of studies that showed the level of hopelessness varied depending on the socio-economic levels of the individuals. One of the studies that focused on the relationships between hopelessness and socioeconomic levels indicated the effects of socioeconomic status on hopelessness (Oyekcin, Sahin & Aldemir, 2017). Similarly, another study determined that the percentage of participants who hoped for the future depends on their monthly income level and that many of those in low-income groups are relatively more hopeless (Zafer, 2019). Another study found that the quality of life increased according to the family's income, and the level of hopelessness decreased as the quality of life improved (Demiray, 2019). Based on the findings of those studies, the socioeconomic levels of the participants might have a confounding effect so we thought that it should be included in the analysis as a confounding variable. According to our findings, socioeconomic level affects hopelessness in line with the literature. Accordingly, this finding can be explained as follows; individuals with higher socioeconomic status may feel less anxiety about the future and have more positive expectations and thoughts about the future. Also, socioeconomic status affects individuals' being in a socially advantageous/disadvantaged position. Individuals who are more advantageous at the social level are more likely to have more positive

expectations about the future, to experience fewer feelings of anxiety and fear about the future, and to have higher motivation for the future.

The present study has some limitations. One of the limitations of the study is the data collection method. The current data were obtained by snowball sampling method. Due to the fact that snowball sampling method may cause generalizability problem, it is recommended that future studies should use different sampling methods to solve this issue. The other limitation of the research is collection of the data. Participants may have presented themselves as they wanted to be because they thought they were being evaluated. For this reason, it may be helpful to collect data with such methods as observation and interview as well as self-report in the future studies.

## Conclusion

The present study examined the relationship between individuals' levels of resilience, self-efficacy and level of hopelessness. With the current research, it was revealed how important psychological resilience is in influencing individuals' feelings, thoughts and expectations about the future. In fact, it is clearly seen that self-efficacy has a significant role in one's resilience level and hopelessness. To conclude, examining the relationships among resilience, self-efficacy, and hopelessness is very important to protect and maintain for one's psychological health, and to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between these factors. We also believe that this research will contribute to the relevant literature and guide the intervention programs to be developed in this regard.

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# Investigating the Mobile Learning Readiness Level of Managers in the Digital Transformation Process of Companies: An Empirical Study

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## Abstract

Companies are undergoing a process of change in all organizational processes along with digital transformation processes. Mobile devices are increasingly entering people's daily lives as different smart devices and educational processes in the form of mobile learning. These developments in the field of technology are also effective in companies involved in the digital transformation process. These trends in developed countries are also becoming widespread in developing countries. In this study 109 managers working in a well-known company in the restaurant sector in Turkey to mobile learning processes and the factors affecting their readiness for mobile learning were examined. A partial least squares (PLS) path modelling approach is employed to examine relationships using SmartPLS 3. As a result of the analyses, facilitating conditions and social influence variables were found to have a positive effect on behavioral intention during the acceptance process of managers' mobile learning. In addition, it was found that among the control variables, there was a statistically significant difference only for time spent on the Internet with a smartphone. These results are generally consistent with the findings in the literature. This situation simultaneously draws attention to the future potential of mobile learning in terms of companies in our country in the context of digital transformation. With the implementation of this study in different sectors, the awareness of this issue in our country can be increased.

**Keywords:** Digital Transformation, Mobile Learning, Personal Innovativeness, Behavioral Intention.

## Öz

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İşletmeler, dijital dönüşüm süreçleriyle birlikte tüm organizasyonel süreçlerinde bir değişim sürecinden geçmektedir. Mobil cihazlar, giderek artan oranda insanların günlük hayatlarına farklı akıllı cihazlar olarak ve eğitim süreçlerine de mobil öğrenme şeklinde girmektedir. Teknoloji alanındaki bu gelişmeler, dijital dönüşüm sürecinde yer alan işletmelerde de etkili olmaktadır. Gelişmiş ülkelerdeki bu eğilimler, gelişmekte olan ülkelerde de yaygınlaşmaktadır. Bu çalışmada Türkiye'de restoran sektöründe yer alan tanınmış bir işletmede çalışan 109 yöneticinin mobil öğrenme süreçleri ve bu yöneticilerin mobil öğrenmeye hazırbulunuşluklarını etkileyen faktörler incelenmiştir. SmartPLS 3 kullanılarak ilişkileri incelemek için kısmi en küçük kareler (PLS) yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Analizler sonucunda yöneticilerin mobil öğrenme kabulü sürecinde, kolaylaştırıcı şartlar ve sosyal etki değişkenlerinin davranışsal niyet değişkenini pozitif ve anlamlı bir şekilde etkilediği görülmüştür. Ayrıca kontrol değişkenleri arasında sadece internette akıllı telefon ile internette geçirilen süre için istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu sonuçlar literatürdeki sonuçlarla genel olarak uyumludur. Bu durum aynı zamanda, mobil öğrenmenin dijital dönüşüm çerçevesinde, ülkemizdeki işletmeler açısından gelecekteki potansiyeline dikkat çekmektedir. Bu çalışmanın farklı sektörlerde yapılması ile ülkemizde bu konudaki farkındalık artırılabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dijital Dönüşüm, Mobil Öğrenme, Kişisel Yenilikçilik, Davranışsal Niyet.



## Introduction

The concept of transformation essentially means the change and renewal of certain processes. The transformation process is a turning point that involves the reflection of the changes in their social and economic environment on the companies (Aytar, 2019). The concept of transformation means not only the development of technology, databases and algorithms, but also the adaptation and support of the human factor in this process. At the same time, the human factor, as the main actor in the transformation process, is an important factor that accelerates the process and ensures its permanence. For this reason, the HR function occupies a leading position in the digital transformation of companies (Deloitte, 2017). The need for talented employees who can successfully leverage new business models and digital transformation demonstrates the importance of human resources for digital transformation (Chickowski, 2019; McGuire, 2020). In addition to companies' efforts to adapt to the transformation, it is important for managers to manage the transformation and combine digital transformation with innovation and creativity (Sağlam, 2021). In addition to commitment to transformation, the main goal for managers managing transformation should be to combine digitalization with creativity and innovation and to try to develop and present the technology of the future in advance. The transformation of information systems in companies refers to the competitive potential of information technologies and information technology-oriented transformation. Starting with the change in information technology, this change is based on organizational structure, relationships, user experience, market, customers, and innovation (Lucas et al., 2013).

Digital transformation is becoming an inevitable process for all companies. The capacity and speed of data access of companies in the digital transformation process is increasing, and the functioning of companies is changing. The digital transformation process is essentially similar to the innovation process. Digital transformation refers to the strategic role of new digital technologies,

which is more comprehensive than technology-enabled business transformation (Ismail et al., 2017). The digital transformation process, combined with increased competition, causes companies to review how they do business and all processes. Technologies such as analytics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, business intelligence, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things are effective in differentiating digital transformation in business processes (Ozguner, 2021). The technologies mentioned are agile sourcing for rapid adaptation to customer needs and market usage. For digital transformation, it is discussed along with resources related to digital events and understanding how to conduct business in this way is necessary (Verhoef et al., 2021). Based on digital transformation, new digital technologies are changing competitive scenarios, and this is related to factors that affect the dynamic capabilities of companies to seek, discover, absorb, and apply knowledge about resources and opportunities (Tortora et al., 2021). Digital transformation is a dimension that goes far beyond technological innovations and requires new organizational forms, employee and customer understandings, and new business processes (Sen, 2020). While digital innovations are changing the competitive landscape, companies need to keep pace with this transformational environment. As a result of technological developments and the adaptation of these developments to business processes, the digital transformation process is accelerating. Technological developments are spreading rapidly in all areas of our lives and especially in education (Al-Adwan et al., 2013).

In recent years, studies on digital transformation have increased. The efforts of countries, cities, industries, and people to adapt to digital transformation are similar (Kraus et al., 2022). Digital transformation refers to a process in which work styles, roles, and work differentiate as a result of the adaptation of digital technologies in organizations (Parviainen et al., 2017). Digital transformation is understood as making serious advances and innovations in companies through information, computer, and communication technologies (Vial, 2019). Digital transformation strategies take on a different perspective and

different goals. These strategies start from a business-oriented perspective and focus on product, process, and organizational aspects (Matt et al., 2015).

Today, in the ongoing digital transformation process, it is evident that companies are leveraging evolving information and communication technologies and increasing customer satisfaction. They are more effective and efficient, and most importantly, technological developments are impacting every aspect of life and business. Learning strategies developed in developed countries support the use of educational technologies and mobile devices in particular (Al Adwan et al., 2018). Companies that are trying to adapt to digital transformation are developing new strategies and reflecting innovation in their business processes. These companies are strengthening their competitive areas by using digital technologies such as mobile solutions, social media applications, artificial intelligence applications, smartphones, and the Internet of Things (Sağlam, 2021). Companies must embrace digital trends and must redesign their processes to gain competitive advantage (Sen, 2020). Companies that do well are those that come up with new ideas, keep up with changes in technology, and stand out from their competitors.

In this study, in the context of digital transformation in companies, the readiness level of mobile learning (m-learning) in manager training of a well-known restaurant chain and the factors influencing the behavioral intention are highlighted.

## **Theoretical Background and Conceptual Framework**

### **Mobile Learning**

Among the technological developments, especially with the increase of mobile devices and the support of the internet, the use of m-learning primarily starting from educational institutions, companies and almost everywhere (Shorfuzzaman and Alhusein, 2016). In this digital transformation process starting from higher education, companies

also tend to use mobile devices, especially mobile phones and tablets, which are among the distance education options (Alkış and Doğançay, 2018; Zhonggen and Xiaozhi, 2019; Galić et al., 2020; Khrais and Alghamdi, 2021). Companies use mobile devices for very different purposes, and in this way, newly developing digital technologies support different applications with different combinations (Klein, 2020). Mobile devices support new company training methods as learning tools (Noor et al., 2021). This issue is not only a process that concerns the budget possibilities, but also closely related to the management approach and perspective on innovation. Mobile technologies make training and development processes in companies more dynamic and accessible. They enable employees to create a natural learning environment in a flexible way. Depending on the development of mobile technologies, continuous access to learning content can be provided (Poór et al., 2020). Employees can receive training by using m-learning interactions without being limited to certain learning environments and time.

M-learning, which is included in mobile technologies, is an innovative education approach that is mostly known in the education sector but is actually applied in many fields (Hamidi and Chavoshi, 2018). M-learning has started to become widespread in businesses as well as educational institutions, with affordable smartphones and high-speed internet access (Pillai and Sivathanu, 2018). M-learning applications have started to attract more attention and demand in recent years, and thus m-learning applications have started to take place in modern education systems (Al-Rahmi et al., 2022). When it comes to m-learning, in a narrow sense, it is understood that learning is in the form of m-learning with the use of mobile devices and the learning process continues without traveling or in a classroom environment. This shows how important m-learning will be in providing continuing education in the future and that it is the most effective option in the training and development process of employees. In general, it is claimed that electronic learning will be more important in the future (Purcarea et al.,

2018). Since many employees use mobile technologies for their work, their adaptation to m-learning will make a serious contribution to their careers (Velayanda and Wanninayake, 2020, p.790).

Companies have recently started to increasingly use internet technology and related mobile technologies, artificial intelligence, big data and similar technological transformation areas. As a result of the increase in the number of users of these and similar digital technologies, the interaction between the users increases and a real-time database such as the characteristics, physical locations and social relations of the users emerges (Garcia-Arroyo and Osca, 2021). Organisation and use of big data, effective and efficient execution of critical business processes, and timely strategic decisions are gaining importance in companies that are in the process of transformation.

In m-learning, learning is independent of time and place, and the use of portable devices in education provides flexibility to the education process. In order for m-learning to be used effectively and efficiently, it should be adapted by users and at the same time, users should be ready for m-learning. Factors that affect users' readiness for m-learning can be personal factors, systemic factors, as well as factors related to interaction and quality (Almasri, 2014). For this, first of all, information should be given about what m-learning is, what benefits it brings and the advantages it will provide to users. Here, it is necessary to ensure that all employees have access to information on the m-learning process.

There are limited studies on the use of m-learning in companies (Batalla-Busquets and Martínez-Argüelles, 2014; Shapiro, 2017; Velayanda and Wanninayake, 2020; Khrais and Alghamdi, 2021). The acceptance of mobile technology, for example the mobile phone, by the users is effective in being ready for the use of m-learning and choosing this learning method. Previous studies have revealed that learners' readiness for technology is an important factor in the formation of a m-learning environment (Mahat et al., 2012). When it comes to readiness for m-learning, it is meant the acceptance and conviction of individuals regarding the execution of formal

and informal learning activities with mobile technologies, and a mixture of personalities and beliefs that can change as a result of knowledge and experience is effective in this decision-making process. Therefore, higher readiness level in m-learning means higher acceptance of m-learning systems (Yeh, 2021).

A new learning environment and paradigm is emerging by using mobile communication tools. The concept of m-learning is defined in different ways in the literature. In m-learning; technology, learners and the learning process are dynamic. M-learning is essentially related to distance learning, and as a result of mobile devices being mobile, the learning process cannot be limited to a certain time and place (Yeh et al., 2021). With the presentation of m-learning as a technological innovation, this innovation is being extended to different areas. M-learning will bring the ideal learning advantages where both learners and instructors share educational content via portable devices (Mussa, 2020). In this context, companies want to take advantage of many innovations such as m-learning. Applications used in m-learning include micro courses, m-learning modules, mobile videos, mobile games and mobile books (Pillai and Sivathanu, 2018).

## Research Model and Hypothesis Development

As a result of the literature research, the variables that make up the research model were briefly explained, and then the relationship between these variables was summarized and the hypotheses of the study were put forward.

### Personal Innovativeness

One of the important factors in the acceptance of technological innovations by the user is the personal innovativeness dimension. Agarwal and Prasad (1998), who first introduced the concept of personal innovativeness, discussed the concept in the context of information technology adaptation, as "measurement of individual desire that is effective in testing information technologies". Innovative individuals are expected to prefer m-learning and mobile-based assessments.

Numerous studies have focused on the dimension of personal innovativeness in the context of accepting information technology, and especially the effect of personal innovativeness on behavioral intention has been investigated. By giving some examples from a large number of studies, the tendency of the literature on this subject will be revealed. Both the cause and effect and the moderator effect of personal innovativeness in the technology acceptance process are emphasized (Mahat et al., 2012). Personal innovativeness is widely assumed to have a positive relationship with behavioral intention (Agarwal and Prasad, 1998; Thatcher and Perrewé, 2002; Boyle and Ruppel, 2006; Abu-Al-Aish and Love, 2013), but some studies have found no such relationship (e.g., Lu et al., 2005). In a study, it was revealed that personal innovativeness positively affects the behavioral intention of doctors (Mun et al., 2006). In another study, it was concluded that personal innovativeness, as an external factor, positively affects behavioral intention (Kuo and Yen, 2009). Recent studies also confirm the existence of this relationship (Cao et al., 2019; Simarmata and Hia, 2020). Accordingly, the hypothesis is put forward as follows:

*H1: There is a positive relationship between the personal innovativeness in the m-learning acceptance process of managers and their behavioral intention to use m-learning.*

### **Self-management of learning**

Self-management of learning, which is one of the important factors in the acceptance and adoption of technological innovations, means both adapting to e-learning systems and managing the learning process internally (Balkaya and Akkucuk, 2021). We can express the concept of self-management of learning as “the level at which individuals believe they can adapt themselves” (Um, 2021). Success of the learning process is possible with self-management of learning abilities (Lowenthal, 2010). In the distance education and resource-based flexible learning literature, it is stated that individuals' self-management of learning levels positively affect the user's behavioral intention to

accept technological innovations (Wang et al., 2009). Similar relationships have emerged as a result of numerous studies. Accordingly, the self-management of learning variable positively affects users' behavioral intention to use and reuse by influencing key m-learning factors (Abar and Loken, 2010; Moos, 2010; Zou and Zhang, 2013; Al-Adwan et al., 2018). Accordingly, the hypothesis is put forward as follows:

*H2: There is a positive relationship between the self-management of learning in the m-learning acceptance process of managers and their behavioral intention to use m-learning.*

### **Perceived enjoyment**

The perceived enjoyment variable is a component of the Unified Technology Acceptance and Use Model (UTAUT), and in this model, performance expectation, social impact, effort expectancy, and facilitating conditions are among the determining factors affecting technology use intention (Venkatesh, 2022). Perceived enjoyment refers to the pleasure a user gets from using technology, regardless of performance aspects (Davis et al., 1992). It is stated that individuals who use technology with perceived enjoyment are happy in comfort and pleasure (Bassiouni et al., 2019). It is thought that the perceived enjoyment factor plays an important role in the acceptance of technology by the user. As a result of many studies, it has been observed that perceived enjoyment positively affects behavioral intention (Chao, 2019; Alamri, 2021; To and Trinh, 2021). Accordingly, the hypothesis is put forward as follows:

*H3: There is a positive relationship between the perceived enjoyment in the m-learning acceptance process of managers and their behavioral intention to use m-learning.*

### **Facilitating Conditions**

The facilitating conditions variable, which is among the components of UTAUT, can be briefly defined as “the belief that individuals have the organisational and technical infrastructure necessary for the use of the system (technology)”



(Venkatesh et al., 2003). Since the practical limits of the understanding of adaptation to technology have been reached, the most important criterion here is deliberate or deliberate behavior, and facilitating conditions are among the external factors.

Previous studies have not sufficiently focused on the relationship between facilitating conditions and behavioral intention (Burton-Jones and Straub 2006). However, besides looking at the subject only in terms of intent, various factors that are effective in the use of the system should be included in the analysis and thus the subject should be looked at more deeply (Venkatesh et al., 2008). Perceived behavioral control variable is used to understand technology adaptation of individuals. This variable, which means the control of any behavior, is also affected by facilitating conditions as well as self-efficacy (Püschel et al., 2010). Facilitating conditions refer to the existence of supportive resources in the process of displaying a particular behavior (Ho et al., 2020). Numerous studies show that facilitating conditions have the power to explain a certain part of behavioral intention (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Park et al., 2012; Abu-Al-Aish and Love, 2013; Fitrianie et al., 2021). Accordingly, the hypothesis is put forward as follows:

*H4: There is a positive relationship between the facilitating conditions in the m-learning acceptance process of managers and their behavioral intention to use m-learning.*

### **Social Influence**

The social influence variable was also introduced by UTAUT model. Accordingly, the concept of social influence can be explained as “the process of being influenced by the thought that other people tend to use this system at the point of using a new system” (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Studies have revealed that social influence is a factor that positively affects users' perceptions, especially in terms of the usefulness of the system (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Wang, et al., 2009; Park et al., 2012; Sung et al., 2015; Briz-Ponce et al. al., 2016). Accordingly, the hypothesis is put forward as follows:

*H5: There is a positive relationship between the social influence and the behavioral intention in the m-learning acceptance process of managers.*

### **Behavioral Intention**

Behavioral intention is based on Ajzen and Fishbein's (1969) reasoned action theory and provides a link between attitude and behavior in the decision-making process. Behavioral intention is a factor that greatly influences the occurrence of a behavior. In this study, the author considered behavioral intention as a factor that determines the adaptation and use of m-learning by managers. Behavioral intention, in short, is the tendency to do a behavior and accept a technology, and in this context, behavioral intention in technology use is understood as the interest and desire of individuals to display certain behaviors (Hubert et al., 2018). Behavioral intention, which is associated with different variables in the technology adaptation process in many different studies, has turned into an important concept (Basuki et al., 2022). In this study, it is focused on which factors affect the behavioral intention to use technology. The concept of behavioral intention of information technologies is explained as “the degree of difficulty people experience in using new technology and how much effort is spent to maintain this behavior” (Ajzen, 1991). In the studies, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived pleasure and personal innovativeness factors are emphasized among the factors that affect the behavioral intention of users in the technology acceptance process of m-learning (Wu et al., 2020).

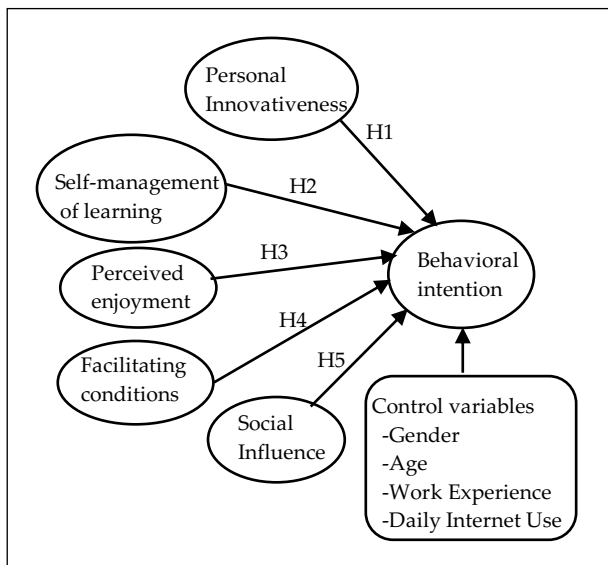


Figure 1. Conceptual model

In this study, the existence and direction of the relationship between personal innovativeness, self-management of learning, perceived enjoyment, facilitating conditions, social influence variables, and behavioral intention are tested. Figure 1 depicts the overall research model.

**Methods**

The research question, which constitutes the starting point of this study, is to reveal the factors that affect the m-learning readiness process and the behavioral intention of the participants. In this study, the acceptance of m-learning processes by 109 managers working in a well-known company in the restaurant sector in Turkey and the factors affecting their readiness for m-learning are emphasized.

**Data collection and sampling**

The data were collected from the managers of a well-known restaurant chain with many branches in Turkey. 200 of the questionnaires distributed and 120 were completed and 109 were returned as usable. The scales used in the study were taken

from the studies by Agarwal and Prasad (1998) and Lu et al. (2005).

**Descriptive statistics**

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics.

**Data availability** Dataset and survey questions are available upon request.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Work Experience</b>		<b>Daily Use of Internet</b>			
Female	44	40.4	1-3 years	33	30.3	Less than 1 h	22	20.2
Male	65	59.6	4-6 years	32	29.4	1-2 h	43	39.4
Total	109	100	7-10 years	23	21.1	2-3 h	26	23.9
			11 and more	21	19.3	3-4 h	10	9.2
			Total	109	100	4-5 h	2	1.8
<b>Age</b>						5-6 h	3	2.8
18-25	27	24.8				6-7 h	3	2.8
26-30	32	29.4				More than 7 h	0	0
31-35	20	18.3				Total	109	100
36-40	15	13.8						
41 and older	15	13.8						
Total	109	100						

**PLS-SEM analysis**

This study employs structural equation modelling (SEM) with SmartPLS 3 to analyse the data (Ringle et al., 2015). The following reasons make SEM an appropriate approach for this study. First, SEM fits well to analyse complex models (Henseler et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2011). Besides, this study has an exploratory approach for theory development, that makes SEM an appropriate method (Henseler, 2012). Secondly, PLS-SEM has the advantage of imposing a minimal requirement on sample size for sufficient statistical power to be achieved (Hair vd., 2011). Our study has a relatively small yet sufficient sample size (n = 109), which makes PLS-SEM a robust analysis technique for our research (Reinartz vd., 2009).

SEM is a widely used approach in research in different disciplines. The fields in which SEM has been successfully applied include MIS, marketing, international management, behavioral sciences,

strategic management, etc. areas draw attention (Ali, et al., 2018, p.515; Kwong and Wong, 2013). SmartPLS is an appropriate approach, especially for small samples that do not have a normal distribution. The sample in this study also seems to fit this definition. In this study, SmartPLS was used in the analysis of the research model established in order to answer the research question.

### Construct validity and reliability

Internal reliability was assessed by using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). The Cronbach's alpha values of each construct were above 0.7, ranging from 0.810 to 0.937, which suggests a high level of internal reliability (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Nunnally, 1978). Additionally, the CR scores were all above 0.8, ranging from 0.879 to 0.959, which suggests that the composite measurement items have sufficient reliability (Hair et al., 2017; Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The validity of the measurement model was assessed based on convergent and discriminant validities. All constructs showed AVE values greater than the 0.5 thresholds, ranging from 0.646 to 0.887, confirming convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 2 below presents the results for each construct.

Table 2. Construct validity and reliability

Construct validity and reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Behavioral Intention	0.937	0.959	0.887
Perceived Enjoyment	0.861	0.916	0.784
Social Influence	0.898	0.929	0.765
Self-management of learning	0.921	0.944	0.809
Personal Innovativeness	0.810	0.883	0.715
Facilitating Conditions	0.818	0.879	0.646

The discriminant validity was assessed with Fornell-Larcker and Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criteria. The Fornell-Larcker criterion compares the square root of AVE of each latent variable with the cross-loadings. A square root of AVE higher than the cross-loading value confirms the discriminant validity of the constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010). The results presented in Table 3, confirm the discriminant

validity in our constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker criterion

	BI	PE	SI	SML	PI	FC
Behavioral Intention (BI)	0.942					
Perceived Enjoyment (PE)	0.496	0.885				
Social Influence (SI)	0.762	0.672	0.875			
Self-management of Learning (SML)	0.543	0.709	0.652	0.899		
Personal Innovativeness (PI)	0.313	0.380	0.465	0.261	0.846	
Facilitating Conditions (FC)	0.733	0.560	0.772	0.603	0.328	0.804

### Results

#### Structural model results

The reliable and valid measurement model estimations allowed us to proceed with the assessment of the structural model. The predictive power of the model was evaluated with R<sup>2</sup> scores. The R<sup>2</sup> value of network commitment is 0.657, which is a high level (Cohen, 1988; Ringle et al., 2012).

To test the three hypotheses in our model statistically, we used a bootstrapping technique, which allowed us to assess the significance of path coefficients (Henseler et al., 2009). PLS-SEM applies a non-parametric form of bootstrapping through which standard errors and *t*-statistics are obtained to assess the significance statistics of the hypothetical relationships (Hair et al., 2011). We used a resampling bootstrapping (5000 resamples) of 109 observations.

The path coefficient for hypothesis 1, "There is a positive relationship between the personal innovativeness in the m-learning acceptance process of managers and their behavioral intention to use m-learning", is -0.068 (*t* = 0.872, *p* = 0.384). Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected. The path coefficient for hypothesis 2, "There is a positive relationship between the self-management of learning in the m-learning acceptance process of managers and their behavioral intention to use m-learning", is 0.065 (*t* = 0.574, *p* = 0.566). Therefore, hypothesis 2 is also rejected. The path coefficient for hypothesis 3, "There is a positive relationship between the perceived enjoyment in the m-learning acceptance process of managers and their behavioral intention to use m-learning", is -0.081 (*t* = 0.738, *p* = 0.461). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is also rejected. The path coefficient for hypothesis 4,

“There is a positive relationship between the facilitating conditions in the m-learning acceptance process of managers and their behavioral intention to use m-learning”, is 0.351 ( $t = 3.012, p = 0.003$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 4 is accepted. The path coefficient for hypothesis 5, “There is a positive relationship between the social influence and the behavioral intention in the m-learning acceptance process of managers”, is 0.521 ( $t = 3.995, p = 0.000$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 5 is also accepted. Among the control variables, it was found to be statistically significant only for the time spent on the Internet with a smartphone. There was no significant effect of age and gender related control variables. The results are presented in the Table 4 below.

**Table 4. Assessment of the structural model and the control variables**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (I/O/STDEV) (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values	
H1: PI -> Behavioral intention	-0.068	-0.052	0.078	0.871	0.384	NS
H2: SML -> Behavioral intention	0.065	0.070	0.114	0.574	0.566	NS
H3: PE -> Behavioral intention	-0.081	-0.069	0.110	0.738	0.461	NS
H4: FC -> Behavioral intention	0.351	0.352	0.116	3.012	0.003	**
H5: SI -> Behavioral intention	0.521	0.506	0.130	3.995	0.000	***
Gender -> Behavioral intention	-0.004	-0.003	0.067	0.060	0.952	NS
Age -> Behavioral intention	0.018	0.010	0.075	0.234	0.815	NS
Work Experience -> Behavioral intention	0.067	0.070	0.068	0.984	0.325	NS
Daily Internet Usage -> Behavioral intention	0.154	0.146	0.077	1.984	0.047	**

Note: \*\*\*,  $p < 0.001$ ; \*\*,  $p < 0.01$ ; \*,  $p < 0.05$ . N.S. Not Significant

## Conclusion

As a result of developments and innovations in technology, it is seen that companies are progressing in the process of digital transformation. With digital transformation, companies have developed their organizational structures and processes to keep up with the digital age. Nowadays, companies need to develop more agile structures and strategies to keep up with technological and digital transformation.

M-learning is expected to become more and more important nowadays, as mobile devices become widespread. M-learning innovations, which started in educational institutions, are also successfully applied in companies. M-learning is a

learning medium that removes time and space limits for companies, supports effective and productivity, and seems suitable for the lifestyle of new generations. Advantages such as effective sharing of learning resources, rich learning experience and continuity of learning process show that m-learning will increasingly continue in companies.

In this study, the hypotheses created by using the literature were tested in the sample of managers. Among the many variables in the literature, the research model was created by selecting the factors affecting behavioral intention, especially within the framework of m-learning readiness of managers. The hypotheses were rejected because there was no positive and significant relationship between personal innovativeness, self-management of learning and perceived enjoyment and behavioral intention among these variables. On the other hand, it was seen that facilitating conditions and social influence variables positively and significantly affect behavioral intention in the m-learning acceptance process of managers. In addition, among the control variables, it was found to be statistically significant only for the time spent on the Internet with a smartphone. These results are in general agreement with the results in the literature.

M-learning has great potential to transform the learning process. Many mobile devices such as mobile phones, smart phones, tablets are used as educational technology tools apart from entertainment and communication purposes. This study shows that managers accept m-learning tools as an innovative learning approach. The factors affecting the adoption process of m-learning can be addressed within the framework of different technology acceptance models. Not only the TAM1, TAM2 or UTAUT, but also the dimensions of other developed TAM models can be emphasized.

As a result of this study being conducted in different sectors and making comparative analyzes, awareness on this issue can be increased. It is noteworthy that both the increasing academic interest in the subject and the adoption of



innovative approaches by companies at this level. This situation also draws attention to the future potential of m-learning for companies in our country within the framework of digital transformation.

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# The Mediating Role of Organizational Identification in the Effect of Organizational Support Perceptions of Employees in Accommodation Businesses on their Prosocial Service Behaviors

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## Abstract

*Businesses in the accommodation industry are often those that engage in labor-intensive production, and as a result, employee and customer relations are of utmost importance. In order to improve the caliber of the services they offer, managers in the accommodation industry require their staff to display prosocial behaviors by developing strong cognitive and emotional relationships with their companies. The ability of employees to identify with organizations and show prosocial behaviors depends on the support provided within the organization and the degree of their perception of this support. Therefore, the study aims to determine the mediating role of organizational identification in the effect of organizational support perceptions of employees in accommodation businesses on their prosocial service behaviors. For this purpose, using the convenience sampling method in the research, data were obtained from 397 blue-collar employees in four and five-star accommodation enterprises operating in the province of Antalya by using the survey method. The obtained data were analyzed with SPSS 24.0 and SMART PLS programs. The findings of the study revealed that participants' perceptions of organizational support have a positive and significant impact on their prosocial service behavior and organizational identity. Additionally, it was determined that organizational identification influences prosocial service behaviors significantly and positively. The final finding was that organizational identification partially mediates the relationship between participants' perceptions of organizational support and prosocial service behaviors.*

**Keywords:** Accommodation Businesses Employees, Organizational Support Perception, Prosocial Service Behavior, Organizational Identification.

## Öz

*Konaklama işletmeleri genellikle emek yoğun üretimin gerçekleştirildiği, işgören ve müşteri ilişkilerinin son derece önemli olduğu işletmelerdir. Bu sebeple yöneticiler tarafından konaklama işletmelerindeki işgörenlerden sunmuş oldukları hizmetlerin kalitesinin artırılabilmesi açısından örgütleri ile aralarında bilişsel ve duygusal bağ kurarak prososyal davranışlar göstermeleri beklenmektedir. İşgörenlerin örgütler ile özdeşleşebilmeleri ve prososyal davranışlar gösterebilmeleri ise örgüt içerisinde gösterilen destek ve bu desteği algılama derecelerine bağlıdır. Bu nedenle çalışmanın amacı, konaklama işletmelerindeki işgörenlerin örgütsel destek algılarının prososyal hizmet davranışları üzerindeki etkisinde örgütsel özdeşleşmenin aracılık rolünün belirlenmesidir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda araştırmada kolayda örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak Antalya ilinde faaliyet göstermekte olan dört ve beş yıldızlı konaklama işletmelerindeki 397 mavi yakalı işgören üzerinden veriler anket yöntemi kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Elde edilen veriler SPSS 24.0 ve SMART PLS programları ile analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda katılımcıların algıladıkları örgütsel desteğin prososyal hizmet davranışı ve örgütsel özdeşleşmeleri üzerinde, örgütsel özdeşleşmelerinin de prososyal hizmet davranışları üzerinde pozitif yönde anlamlı bir etkiye sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Ayrıca araştırmada katılımcıların örgütsel destek algılarının prososyal hizmet davranışları üzerindeki etkisinde örgütsel özdeşleşmenin kısmi aracılık rolüne sahip olduğu tespit edilmiştir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Konaklama İşletmelerindeki İşgörenler, Örgütsel Destek Algısı, Prososyal Hizmet Davranışı, Örgütsel Özdeşleşme.

## Introduction

Because of technological advancements, the pace of competition has accelerated in today's commercial environment. Businesses that are engaged in a tough battle with their rivals must provide their staff with every possible source of support if they are to reap the benefits of their human capital (Tokmak, 2020). In general, the perceived organizational support experienced in organizations that recognize the value of human resources reflects how much the company values the contribution that people make to the business and how much priority the company places on the well-being of its employees (Sears et al., 2016). To put it differently, perceived organizational support is the perception of the value and welfare of the organization in response to the contribution and effort of the employees to the organization. (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Organizations that take the opinions and evaluations of their employees into account and attach importance to intra-organizational participation and consider them in their decision-making processes, ensure job security and promise that employees will remain at their current jobs for as long as they are successful, treat everyone fairly without nepotism within the organization, supply transparent and open communication within the organization, in short, organizations that care about their employees in every aspect provide the necessary organizational support to their employees (Turunç and Çelik, 2010). Perceived organizational support was addressed in three categories by Kraimer and Wayne in 2004. These are adaptation support, career support, and perception of financial support. The ability of the business to put practices and policies in place that will ease the adaptation process so that the employee can adapt to his job is known as adaptation support. When an employee's future career planning and the employment prospects provided by the company are in sync, this is referred to as career support. Nonetheless, financial support emerges when an organization acknowledges the financial requirements of its employees, offers them assistance, and recognizes their contributions as a result of their performance.

The degree of encouragement that employees experience from their employers is essential to their pro-social behavior. Employees may adopt their organizations and accept organizational goals as their personal endeavors if they are confident that their organizations will support them in all circumstances. Positive attitudes and behaviors toward their businesses will be demonstrated by employees who consider they are supported by their employers. Additionally, employees who feel supported by the organization may consider that the organization prioritizes shared interests above individual ones and might be able to define themselves as a member of the business (Kerse and Karabey, 2017).

According to organizational behavior research, the provision of employees' prosocial service behaviors is correlated with the development of organizational variables (Yeşiltaş et al., 2013). Employees are nowadays anticipated to perform with a prosocial attitude in addition to fulfilling their formal job duties so as to help businesses succeed (Pek and Özbilgin, 2015). Prosocial behavior, also referred to as prosocial service behavior, is the positive social conduct that individuals exhibit without being coerced and in excess of what is expected of them in their roles, as determined by their personal desires to assume responsibility for others, act in ways that will benefit others, make others happy, be useful, and accomplish organizational goals effectively and efficiently (Akduru et al., 2016; Carlo et al., 2003; Eisenberg and Mussen, 1989; Esmer and Özdaşlı, 2018; Ewest, 2016).

By fostering behaviors that are consistent with the organization's values and identities, organizational identification serves a fundamental function in coordinating organizational behaviors (Shamir and Kark, 2004). This is due to the fact that employees who feel more competent and independent identify with their organizations and perceive their accomplishments as their own successes and their mistakes as their own failures as a result of the prominence and the value that people attribute to their job (Gün and Turabik 2017).

Organizational identification, a component of social identity theory, is predicated on social

identification (Tajfel, 1978). Identification is one of the most crucial ideas in social identity theory, according to Hortaçsu (2007: 65), who introduces the principle in social identity theory. The imperative tenets of social identity theory define organizational identification as a sort of social identification that people engage in to feel a sense of belonging to their organization, which is a particular social formation (Boroş, 2008: 2). Mael and Ashforth (1992), on the other hand, define organizational identification as individuals' perception of themselves as belonging to classifications in certain groups, as an extension of their social identity.

If employees feel a sense of belonging to their companies, they may be able to accept both the success and failure of the organization as their own. According to Eren and Titizolu (2014) and Gün and Turabik (2017), employees who identify with their organizations may also adopt supporting behaviors freely and be able to exert voluntary effort on behalf of the organization. Organizational identification, which has a feature that influences employee attitudes and behaviors and boosts their motivation and performance levels, is pivotal to the success of companies in this framework. As a result, organizational identification is recognized as an indispensable characteristic that has several advantages for both the employee and the organization (Kanten, 2012). This study aims to ascertain the mediating function of organizational identification in the relationship between employees' views of organizational support and their prosocial service behaviors in the context of accommodation businesses. To fulfill this purpose, data were taken from the employees working in four and five-star accommodation businesses in Antalya. First of all, the received data were analyzed through computer programs, then the results of the research were interpreted, and various suggestions were presented.

## Method

## Data Collection

The population of the research includes of employees working in four and five-star accommodation businesses. A convenience sampling method was used in the research, and data were attained through a questionnaire applied to 397 people working in four and five-star accommodation businesses operating in Antalya province, which is thought to represent the universe best. The data was derived in compliance with Muş Alparslan University's ethical committee's approval of decision number 40 of meeting number 12 dated 02.12.2022. The abridged form of the Perception of Organizational Support Scale, created by Eisenberger et al. (1986) and translated into Turkish by Akalın (2006), was employed in the first section of the questionnaire to gauge employees' perceptions of organizational support. The Prosocial Service Behaviors Scale, established by Ackfeldt and Wong (2006) and translated into Turkish by Soydemir and Özdaşlı (2014), was utilized for the second section of the questionnaire. The Organizational Identification Scale, designed by Mael and Ashforth in 1992 and translated into Turkish by Tüzün in 2006, was utilized for the third section of the questionnaire. Questions assessing demographic and sectoral data, such as gender, age, education level, and tenure in the sector, are addressed in the questionnaire's last chapter. The independent variable of the research is the perception of organizational support, the dependent variable is prosocial service behavior, and the mediating variable is organizational identification.

## Research Model and Hypotheses

The research's model and hypotheses were constructed in accordance with the literature review. The models and hypotheses created are as follows:



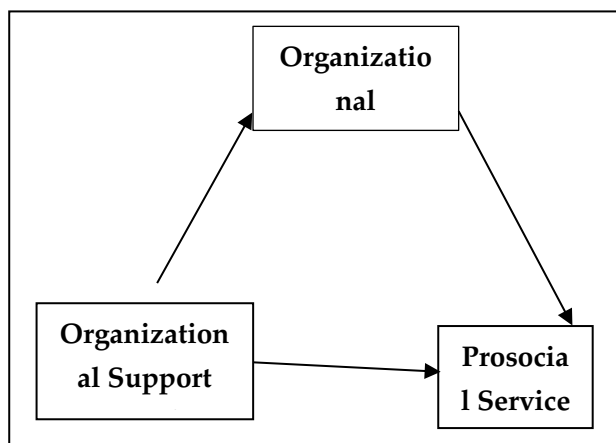


Figure 1. Research Model

### Hypotheses:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The organizational support perceived by the employees in accommodation businesses has a direct impact on their identification with their organization.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** The organizational support perceived by the employees in accommodation businesses has a direct effect on their prosocial service behaviors.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** The identification of employees in accommodation businesses with their organizations has a direct impact on their prosocial service behavior.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Accommodation business employees' identification with their organizations has a mediating role in the effect of perceived organizational support on prosocial service behaviors.

### Normality Test

Utilizing software, the research data was analyzed. The normality distribution of the research data was assessed prior to the validity and reliability analyses of the scales employed in the study. Because normal distribution is very central in studies where numerical data are analyzed, and data should show normal or close to the normal distribution in order to apply many tests. Additionally, incorrect analytical findings come from data that are not normally distributed or not closely related to a normal distribution. The interpretations necessary for the research may be flawed as a result of this circumstance (Kalaycı, 2010; Karagöz, 2017).

Univariate normality tests were carried out to establish the normal distribution of the research's data. Standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis values—one of the approaches recommended in the literature—were analyzed in order to ascertain the univariate normal distribution (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2015). The skewness and kurtosis values should fall between -2 and +2, whereas the standard deviation of normally distributed data should be close to 1 (Bayram, 2013). According to the findings collected as a result of the analysis, it is seen that the standard deviations of the expressions in the questionnaire are close to 1 and the skewness and kurtosis values are between -2 and +2.

To verify the degree to which the independent variable explains the dependent variable and to evaluate the impact of the mediating variable, path analysis and structural equation modeling were used simultaneously. According to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), a two-step procedure should be applied to test the study model as in Figure 1. First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to evaluate the measurement model, and then the hypotheses were tested using the structural equation model (SEM).

### Reliability and Validity of the Research

The validity and reliability evaluations of the study's structural components were undertaken prior to the examination of the research model. Internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were investigated as part of validity and reliability examinations. For internal consistency reliability, Cronbach Alpha and (CR) Composite Reliability coefficients were scrutinized. Factor loadings and (AVE) Average Variance Extracted values were used in convergent validity. Factor loads should be  $\geq 0.70$ , Cronbach Alpha and combined reliability coefficients of  $\geq 0.70$ , and the average variance explained to be  $\geq 0.50$  (Hair et al., 2006; Hair et al., 2017; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results for the study structures' internal consistency, reliability, and convergent validity are displayed in the table below.

When the values in the table are examined, it is noticed that the factor loads are between 0.510 and 0.841. Hair et al. (2017) stated that factor loads should be above  $\geq 0.708$ . Before excluding expressions from the scale below, the AVE and CR values should be considered. The authors concur that if the AVE and CR scores are between 0.40 and 0.70, expressions shouldn't be eliminated from the scale. As can be seen from the table, the expressions used in the analysis are over this cutoff value. It was accepted that the internal consistency validity was ensured since the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the structures are between 0.809 and 0.884 and the CR coefficients are between 0.812 and 0.895. The fact that the factor loads of the structures are between 0.510 and 0.841 and the AVE coefficients between 0.459 and 0.529 indicate that composite validity is provided. As Psaila and Roland (2007) stated that composite validity is adequate if the AVE and CR values are both above 0.40 and 0.70, respectively.

The criteria proposed by Fornell and Lacker (1981) and the HTMT coefficients proposed by Henseler et al. (2015) were utilized to determine discriminant validity. The square root of the AVE values of the structures included in the research, according to Fornell and Lacker (1981), needs to be higher than the correlation coefficients between the structures. The analytical findings are displayed in the following table in accordance with the standards recommended by Fornell and Lacker (1981). The square root of AVE is represented in the table by values in parenthesis. When the values in the table are explored, it is spotted that the AVE square root value of each structure is higher than the correlation coefficients from other structures.

**Table 1 Results on Internal Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Research**

Variables	Expressions	Factor Load	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Organizational Support Perception	ÖDA 1	0,827	0,808	0,837	0,529
	ÖDA 2	0,841			
	ÖDA 3	0,659			
	ÖDA 4	0,536			
Prosocial Service Behavior	PHD 1	0,715	0,884	0,895	0,527
	PHD 2	0,708			
	PHD 3	0,510			
	PHD 4	0,803			
	PHD 5	0,644			
	PHD 6	0,833			
	PHD 7	0,815			

Organizational Identification	ÖÖ 1	0,700	0,809	0,812	0,459
	ÖÖ 2	0,726			
	ÖÖ 3	0,718			
	ÖÖ 4	0,644			
	ÖÖ 5	0,590			

**Table-2 Discriminant Validity**

	Organizational Support Perception	Prosocial Service Behavior	Organizational Identification
Organizational Support Perception	(0,727)		
Prosocial Service Behavior	0,358	(0,726)	
Organizational Identification	0,545	0,678	(0,817)

The HTMT coefficients proposed by Henseler et al. (2015) represent the ratio of the correlation mean of the expressions of all variables to the geometric mean of correlations of the expressions of the same variable. The HTMT coefficient should be below 0.90, according to the authors, if the structures being monitored are theoretically close to one another, and below 0.80, if they are theoretically far apart. The HTMT coefficients in the table below are below the threshold value, as can be observed by looking at the coefficients.

**Table 3 HTMT Coefficients related to the Research Variables**

	Organizational Support Perception	Prosocial Service Behavior	Organizational Identification
Organizational Support Perception		0,347	
Prosocial Service Behavior			0,813
Organizational Identification			0,550

### Descriptive Statistics on Demographic and Personal Characteristics of Participants

The demographic characteristics of the employees participating in the research are displayed in Table 4. 37% (147 individuals) of the participants are under the age of 21, and 52.4% (208 people) of the participants are male. 35.3% (140 individuals) of the participants finished their bachelor's degree, while 44% (175 people) had an associate degree. The majority of participants in the sector, or 29.5% (117 persons), had a working history of between

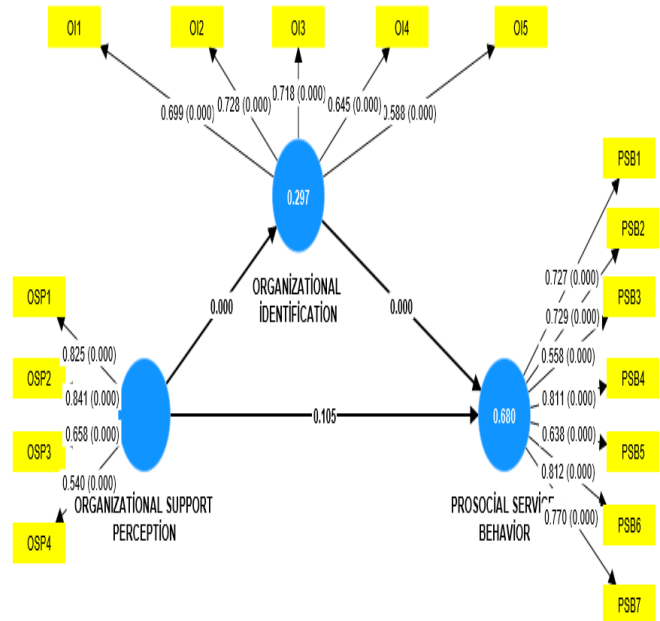
one and five years, according to an analysis of their duration of employment in the industry.

**Table 4. Distribution of the Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

Gender	N	%
Male	208	52,4
Female	189	47,6
Total	397	100,0
Age	N	%
20 and younger	57	14,4
Between 21-30	147	37,0
Between 31-40	113	28,5
Between 41-50	66	16,6
51 and older	14	3,5
Total	397	100,0
Educational Status	N	%
Primary education	13	3,3
High school	27	6,8
Associate degree	175	44,1
Bachelor's Degree	140	35,3
Graduate Degree	42	10,6
Total	397	100,0
Tenure in the Sector	N	%
Less than 1 year	50	12,6
Between 1-5 years	117	29,5
Between 6-10 years	91	22,9
Between 11-15 years	102	25,7
More than 16 years	37	9,3
Total	397	100,0

**Findings Related to Hypothesis Testing**

Below are the findings of the path analysis that was conducted to discern the direct effects of altruistic leadership perception on prosocial service behavior, social comparison orientation, and prosocial service behavior, as well as the mediating and moderating roles of social comparison in the effect of altruistic leadership perception on prosocial service behavior. Figure 2 depicts the structural equation model generated to test the study hypotheses.



**Figure 2. Structural Equation Model**

The study model was investigated using PLS-SEM, or partial least squares path analysis. The statistical software Smart PLS 4.0 was used to review the data. PLS algorithm was run to calculate linearity coefficients, R<sup>2</sup> and effect size (f<sup>2</sup>) of the research model. T-values were calculated by taking 5000 sub-samples from the PLS path sample. VIF, R<sup>2</sup>, and f<sup>2</sup> values related to the research results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Coefficients of the Research Model**

Variables	VIF	R <sup>2</sup>	f <sup>2</sup>
Organizational Support Perception	1,421	0,678	0,033
Prosocial Service Behavior	1,704		
Organizational Identification	1,000	0,296	0,421

**Table 6. Coefficients of the Research Model**

Variables	Standardized β	Standard deviation	t-values	p	Confidence Interval (%95)
Organizational Support Perception	0,355	0,076	4,699	0,000	0,195
Prosocial Service Behavior	0,887	0,059	15,088	0,000	0,769
Organizational Identification	0,545	0,067	8,089	0,000	0,406

It was found that the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values between the variables were below the threshold value of 5, indicating that there was

no linearity problem between the variables (Hair et al., 2017). When the R<sup>2</sup> values of the model are studied, it is prevailed that the prosocial service behavior is explained by 67%. When the effect size coefficients ( $f^2$ ) are assessed, it is learned that the perception of organizational support has a low effect on prosocial work behavior, organizational identification has a high effect on prosocial work behavior, and the perception of organizational support has a high effect size on organizational identification. Cohen (1988) stated that an effect size coefficient ( $f^2$ ) of 0.02 and above can be considered low, 0.15 and above can be considered medium, and 0.35 and above can be considered high. Sarsted et al. (2017) assert that if the coefficient is less than 0.02, there cannot be any discussion of an effect. Table 6 displays the outcomes for the study model's direct impacts.

In light of the results gained, it may be commented that organizational support perception positively affects prosocial service behavior ( $\beta=0,355$   $p<0,01$ ), organizational support perception influences organizational identification positively ( $\beta=0,545$   $p<0,01$ ), and organizational identification positively affects prosocial work behavior ( $\beta=0,887$   $p>0,01$ ). Therefore, hypotheses **H<sub>1</sub>**, **H<sub>2</sub>**, and **H<sub>3</sub>** were **accepted**.

In the first step, the mediating variable, organizational identification, was removed from the research model in order to study the mediation impact, and the significance of the path coefficient was measured. It was ended that the effect of organizational support perception on prosocial service behavior ( $\beta=0,374$   $p<0,01$ ) is statistically significant. In the second stage, the significance of the path coefficients was tested by including the mediating variable in the model. In light of the results, it was determined that the perception of organizational support significantly affected prosocial service behavior ( $\beta=0,355$   $p<0,01$ ) and organizational identification ( $\beta=0,545$   $p<0,01$ ), and organizational identification significantly affected prosocial service behavior ( $\beta=0,887$   $p<0,01$ ).

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the independent variable must have a considerable effect on the dependent variable. Moreover, when a mediating variable is added to the model, the

independent variable should have a weighty effect on the mediating variable and the mediating variable should have a significant effect on the dependent variable. Reviewing the research data, it could become clear that perception of organizational support has a significant effect on prosocial work behavior ( $\beta=-0,355$   $p<0,01$ ) and perception of organizational support has a significant effect on organizational identification ( $\beta=0,545$   $p<0,01$ ). Finally, it was identified that organizational identification had a significant effect on prosocial service behavior ( $\beta=-0,887$   $p<0,01$ ).

To estimate the mediation effect, VAF (Variance Accounted For) values were computed (Doan, 2018). On the basis of organizational support perception, organizational identity, and prosocial service conduct, a VAF value of 0.56 was generated. Full mediation is approved when the VAF value is more than 0.80, and partial mediation is acceptable when the VAF value is between 0.20-0.80. It is acknowledged that there is no mediation effect if this value is less than 0.20. According to VAF value, it is possible to say that social comparison orientation has a partial mediating role in the effect of altruistic leadership perception on social laziness. Therefore, **H<sub>4</sub>** hypothesis was **accepted**.

When the R<sup>2</sup> values gained from the model were researched, it was discovered that the perception of altruistic leadership explained social laziness by 14% in the model without the mediating variable and 67% in the model with the mediating variable. It can be commented that the 53% increase in R<sup>2</sup> in the dependent variable of the study is due to the mediating effect.

## Discussion and Conclusion

In comparison to more conventional organizational structures, contemporary organizational structures demand more behaviors and attitudes from employees. Business managers expect their employees to deliver prosocial behaviors outside of the scope of their job duties and to identify with their organizations by forging emotional and intellectual bonds between them,



and employees hope that their employers may help them in developing these habits and may drive them to display the behaviors. This study handles the influence of organizational identification on how employees' perceptions of organizational support in accommodation businesses affected their prosocial service behaviors.

The study findings indicated that prosocial service behaviors are positively impacted by the attitudes of the employees of accommodation businesses. There are no studies in the literature examining the interactions between these variables. This finding suggests that prosocial service behavior is more likely to be displayed by employees who feel supported by the business. Because the organizations' support for their employees may assist them to feel better about their businesses and jobs and may be useful in boosting their prosocial behavior.

The study also came to the conclusion that employees' perceptions of organizational support in the accommodation industry make favorable impacts on their identification with their organizations. This result is supported by studies related to the subject in the literature (Altaş, 2021; Kerse ve Karabey, 2017; Nartgün ve Kalay, 2014; Sökmen vd., 2015; Turunç ve Çelik, 2010). This finding highlights that when employees feel more support from their businesses, they construct stronger emotional relationships with them. Another finding of the study is that the employees' affiliation with their organizations does not have a significant direct impact on their prosocial service behaviors. This finding underlines how employees who identify with their companies might boost their prosocial behavior by emphasizing corporate success.

Another outcome of the research is that organizational identification partially mediates the relationship between workers' perceptions of organizational support and prosocial service activities in the accommodation industry. There are no studies in the literature examining the interactions between these variables. This finding provides evidence that, at least in part, employees' identification with their companies affects the impact of their perceptions of organizational

support on their prosocial service behavior. This outcome is assumed to be the product of organizational identification, a desirable organizational behavior, which might enhance the impact of employees' perceptions of organizational support on prosocial service behaviors. Following are some suggestions for accommodation companies in light of these findings:

- Employees in the accommodation industry should feel supported by their managers in order to engage in extra-role behavior and identify with organizations. Business managers who want their employees to act outside of their job descriptions and identify with the company can embrace more encouraging approaches domestically.
- Understanding that employees identify more intensely with their organizations the more support they experience from management, managers who want employees to form stronger cognitive and emotional relationships with their organizations can introduce more supportive policies.
- When encouraged by the organization, it has been pictured that the positive behaviors and attitudes of the employees in the accommodation businesses tend to grow. Managers who seek to observe an upsurge in positive attitudes and behaviors in the workplace should endeavor to foster a healthy organizational environment and make sure that the employees are more receptive to the company culture and norms and values.

As a consequence, this research is vital for bridging the knowledge gap on the topic highlighted in the literature, directing future research projects, and illuminating the management in the accommodation industry. Future studies can broaden this field to include diverse industries, including those that are stakeholders in the tourist industry such as travel, food, and beverage businesses. By comparing the results acquired, similarities or differences between the relevant results for the use of stakeholders can be figured out. It may be made sure that other corporate managers, who are sector

constituents, profit from the outcomes for their own businesses by accomplishing this.

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# The Circular Economy, the SMEs, and the State: How to Govern a Circular Institutional Change Process?

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## Abstract

The linear economic (LE) system is increasingly becoming unsustainable as its take-make-use-dispose logic mercilessly exploits the environment. As an alternative to this, the circular economy (CE) has recently gained popularity. The CE promises a more sustainable system through decreasing resource leakage from the economic system via circulating economic activities from production to consumption. However, there is not a clear blueprint on the institutionalization of the CE. To provide an answer to this problem, this research focused on the Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (the SMEs). The research was designed as a qualitative case study benefiting from the secondary data derived from the literature and found that the structural dependence of the SMEs on the existing LE system prevents them from performing proper CE actions. As a solution, the state emerges as a macro-level rule-breaker, which can play a catalyst role in the SMEs' transition to the CE. Particularly, it could provide necessary regulative frameworks, financial sources, technological infrastructures, and a circular change in consumers' attitudes, which are strategically important to drive the SMEs towards the CE system. Therefore, this paper suggests that the re-conceptualization of state-market relationship is an initial need to successfully govern an institutional change towards the CE. Additionally, a successful CE centred transition also needs a differentiated institutionalization perspective due to the uniqueness of different cases.

**Keywords:** Circular Economy, the SMEs, Institutional Change, the Market, the State.

## Öz

Doğrusal ekonomi sistemi sahip olduğu al-yap-kullan-at mantığının çevreyi acımasızca sömürmesinden dolayı giderek sürdürülemez bir hale gelmektedir. Buna alternatif olarak, döngüsel ekonomi son zamanlarda popülerlik kazanmıştır. Döngüsel ekonomi, üretimden tüketime kadar ekonomik faaliyetler arasında bir döngüsellik geliştirerek kaynak kaybını en aza indirme yolu ile daha sürdürülebilir bir sistem vaat etmektedir. Ancak döngüsel ekonominin nasıl kurumsallaştırılacağı ile ilgili net bir plan yoktur. Bu soruna bir yanıt geliştirebilmek adına bu araştırma Küçük ve Orta Büyüklükteki İşletmeler (KOBİ'ler) üzerine odaklanmıştır. Araştırma literatürdeki ikincil veriden yararlanarak nitel bir vaka çalışması olarak tasarlanmıştır ve KOBİ'lerin mevcut doğrusal ekonomi sistemine olan yapısal bağımlılıklarının döngüsel ekonomi merkezli eylemleri tam anlamıyla gerçekleştirmelerini engellediğini bulmuştur. Bu soruna çözüm olarak, devlet, KOBİ'lerin döngüsel ekonomiye geçişlerinde katalizör rolü oynayabilecek makro ölçekli kural kırıcı bir aktör olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Devlet, KOBİ'leri döngüsel ekonomi sistemine yönlendirmek için gerekli mevzuatı, finansal kaynağı, teknolojik altyapıyı ve tüketici tutumlarında döngüsel bir değişikliği sağlayabilir. Bu sebeple, makale döngüsel kurumsallaşma sürecinin başarılı bir şekilde yönetilebilmesi için devlet-piyasa ilişkilerinin yeniden kavramsallaştırılmasının öncül bir gereklilik olduğunu önermektedir. Buna ek olarak her vaka kendi şahsına münhasır olduğundan başarılı bir döngüsel ekonomi dönüşümünün ayrıca farklılaştırılmış kurumsallaşma bakış açısına ihtiyacı vardır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Döngüsel Ekonomi, KOBİ'ler, Kurumsal Değişim, Piyasa, Devlet.



## Introduction

The idea of the CE emerged as a sustainable response to the failure of the existing linear economic system. The LE was gradually institutionalized as a global economic system after the industrial revolution. Its linear logic targeting further consumption depends on “take-make-use-dispose” of resources (Andrews, 2015). However, the vulgar extraction of raw materials for production, fossil-based energy usage, and the ignorance of the depletion of the environment in economic actions are accelerating climate change and worsening resource scarcity and the socio-economic inequalities in the world (Mihai & Minea, 2021). Therefore, it is clear that the LE is becoming increasingly unsustainable. To illustrate, the UN launched its Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to trigger an institutional change from the LE to a more sustainable one (Rodriguez-Anton et al., 2019). Here, two assumptions of the LE logic could be given as the main reason behind the above-mentioned growing unsustainability. Firstly, the LE was institutionalized on the assumption that the Earth has unlimited resources, and this assumption strongly shaped all kind of economic actions from production to consumption in the LE. Secondly, the exploitation of the environment is assumed as a necessary act to create economic development/growth; thus, the environmental damage is considered as a side effect of economic actions. As a response to the unsustainability originating from these assumptions, the CE arises as an attractive sustainable alternative. The CE mainly aims to develop a circular connection among economic actions from production to consumption, and in this way, resource leakage (and waste) will be limited as much as possible. Moreover, a circular system limiting the resource leakage will not only automatically make the economic development/growth more sustainable by easing the resource scarcity problem, but also protect the environment because increasing circularity of resource in the economic activities means less exploitation of the environment (Ghisellini et al., 2016; Julian Kirchherr et al., 2017; Korhonen et al., 2018). Particularly, the increasing

circularity of resources among economic actions will decrease the extraction of raw materials, usage of fossil energy sources, and waste and emission output (Ghosh, 2020).

After the realization of the climate crisis as an output of the linear economic activities in the 1970s, the environmental measures initially aimed to restrict economic activities, and consequently they were not popular in the business world (Kaplan, 2022). The business world became sceptical against prohibitive environmental measures in the LE system (Hillary, 2000; Revell et al., 2010). However, the CE started to change this sceptic attitude as it promises sustainable economic prosperity in line with the environmental protection. For example, the U.S Chamber of Commerce (USCC) (2022), which is famous with its historical scepticism against the environmental measures, urges its members to adopt the CE oriented business practices. In other words, the CE is an economy-oriented approach and aims to protect the environment without limiting economic actions but wants to make these actions more appropriate to the environment (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017). On the other hand, “circular principles need entrepreneurial innovative spirit to become reality” (Zucchella & Urban, 2019, p. vi). This is the reason why circular entrepreneurship appeared in the literature as an important concept, and Zucchella and Urban (2019, p. vii) conceptualizes circular entrepreneurship as:

*“The processes of formation and exploitation of opportunities, using both commercial and ecological logics to address environmental challenges with the aim of closing, slowing and narrowing the loop of resources and regenerating/reconstituting natural capital.”*

In this regard, the SMEs’ ability to play this circular entrepreneurship role emerges as an interesting point as they constitute the core of the world economy. In particular, their CE oriented actions are strategically important to create a sustainable circular socio-economic system across the world (Dey et al., 2020; Lessidrenska, 2019). However, the creation of a sustainable circular socio-economic system does need proper CE actions (but not imitative actions), and this means a paradigm shift from the LE to the CE. Here, a

paradigm could be considered as a logical structure producing a particular cognitive process and specific behavioural patterns, and social institutions as an outcome of this cognitive process (Perlmutter & Trist, 1986). Therefore, actions taken within a particular paradigm are actually the products of this paradigm and there is less chance to change a paradigm through its own products. From this point of view, if the SMEs' limited institutional capacity is considered, some doubts arise about the extent to which they could play a circular entrepreneurship role in transition from the existing LE system to a new CE system (achieving a paradigm shift from the LE to the CE). Put differently, if they could not perform proper CE actions due to their structural limitations, their pseudo-CE actions may not trigger a systemic change from the LE to the CE. For example, Rovanto and Finne (2022) found that some firms take imitative CE actions without having the necessary knowledge of the CE even in Japan which is one of the most successful countries practicing the CE actions. In other words, the structural dependence of the SMEs on the existing linear economic system might actually produce economic actions appropriate to the LE system rather than a true transition to the CE, and an institutional change towards the CE could be hardly possible. At this point, the state with its regulative power emerges as a rule-breaker actor and could play a catalyst role in the transition of the SMEs towards the CE (see: Chang, 2002).

In line with these arguments, this research is devoted to analysing the question to what extent the SMEs could play a circular entrepreneurship role and how the state could ease the structural limitations preventing the SMEs from taking proper CE oriented actions. The first section drew a theoretical framework by benefiting from the new institutionalism and developed hypothetical explanations about how the existing institutional structure (the LE) could limit the SMEs' CE oriented actions and why the SMEs might need the help of the state to perform proper CE actions. The second section aimed to investigate the validity of these hypothetical arguments. Therefore, this section formulated a methodological framework,

which enabled the researchers to access different empirical studies across the globe and qualitatively analyse the secondary data derived from these studies to test the hypothetical explanations proposed in the theoretical section.

### Theoretical Framework

Despite the SMEs' increasing motivation to practice circular entrepreneurship, from the institutionalist theoretical point of view, it could be argued that their institutional dependence on the existing LE institutional structure might dilute this motivation. In a general manner, "[i]nstitutions consist of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour" (Scott, 1995, p. 33). Moreover, an institution is a comprehensive structure which "operates at multiple levels from the world system to subunits of organizations" (ibid., p. 34). In line with this conceptualization, North (1994, p. 361) argued that if an institution is the rules of the game, actors are the players, and the rationality of actors urges them to play the game within its rules. Therefore, according to the institutionalist doctrine, continuity (playing the game according to its rules) is a more possible expectation than change for the future of an institution (Conran & Thelen, 2016). Here, exogenous shocks (e.g. climate crisis) emerge as the main reason behind an institutional change (Pollack, 2009), and the ideas attractive to actors (e.g. the CE) in a crisis time could be considered as a catalyst triggering an institutional change. For example, North (2005) pointed out the importance of ideas in rational actors' institutional change decisions. A rational actor might take an institutional change decision, but this change process does not take place in a linear way, and it actually takes place under the gravitational power of the existing institutional structure. Particularly, Historical Institutionalism (HI) claims that the path-dependence on the existing institutional system even affects actors' institutional change attempts (Streeck & Thelen, 2005).

In a more concrete manner, it could be argued that the common knowledge (the CE makes

economic growth sustainable) and experiences (unsustainable practices of the LE) might drive the SMEs towards an institutional change from the LE towards the CE. However, the SMEs' cognitive map institutionalized in the existing LE system might still shape their actions in the institutional change process (Lin, 1989). Firstly, the increasing returns in the LE system might make a swift circular change costly to the SMEs, and they might prefer a gradual change from the LE to the CE, but the extending time period in a change process increases the structural influence of the existing system on actors (Pierson, 2000, 2004). Secondly, historically institutionalized way of rational thinking in the LE system might produce particular actions under the isomorphic influence of existing system, and the accumulations of these actions do not provide an institutional change (see: DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Regarding these theoretical points, the SMEs do not have an organizational competence like what the multinational corporations have in the transition process from the LE system to the CE system. For instance, Huawei is developing its own global recycling system and urging its partners to get involved in it, and IKEA is developing circular designs for its products (Zhu et al., 2022), but the SMEs do not have this kind of transformative power. As a result of this structural weakness, they are relatively more open to the isomorphic effect of the existing LE paradigm. Furthermore, the CE has three main principles: recycle, reduce, and reuse. While the implementation of the recycle principle does not need any comprehensive competence, the principles: reduce and reuse need further abstract thinking and complex organizational skills (Kirchherr et al., 2017). Therefore, the increasing complexity of the CE principles might increase the isomorphic influence of the existing LE paradigm on the SMEs' circular actions.

All these institutionalist analyses point out the fact that the dependence of the SMEs on the existing LE system is structural, and this structurality raises the question to what extent the SMEs as the micro-level actors allow for carrying out an institutional change towards the CE. From the institutionalist theoretical point of view, these micro-level actors' actions, which are considered

as CE oriented at first glance, might actually maintain/strengthen the functioning of the existing LE system rather than achieving an institutional change towards the CE due to the mentioned structural dependence (e.g. see: Gunderson & Holling, 2002). In other words, the SMEs' bottom-up change initiatives may not be enough to achieve a transition from the LE to the CE, and at this point, the state's top-down regulative measures might be needed to pave the way for a proper institutional change process. Here, it should be noticed that the state with its regulative power is already a significant change agent in the market (see: King & Pearce, 2010; Smallbone & Welter, 2001). Particularly, its strong institutional capacity (e.g. institutional rationality and bureaucracy) enables the state to govern a grand institutional change from the LE to the CE (see: Spruyt, 2013). The state's institutional rationality gives it a cognitive ability to decide on proper actions necessary for a true institutional change and its bureaucratic competence gives it the power to implement this decision. Thus, state regulations might be needed to decrease the dependence of the SMEs on the existing LE system and to encourage them to perform proper CE actions (see: Chobanova, 2020).

### Methodology

This research focused on the SMEs as a case to see to what extent they could play a circular entrepreneurship role in the transition from the LE to the CE. The research mainly aims to provide generalizable knowledge about the extent to which the existing linear economic structure limits the SMEs' CE actions and how the state regulations could ease this limitation. Here, to increase the generalizability of the findings, the research needs to access different cases across the world as much as possible. This means that the research needs a methodological framework enabling exploratory research in different real-life settings. Therefore, it was designed as a qualitative case study as this method is highly effective in exploring the relationship between the theoretical arguments and their real-life practices (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2003). Moreover, beyond discovering any kind of quantitative correlation/regression between

variables, this research wants to deeply understand how the state could help the SMEs to deal with their structural dependence on the existing LE system. In other words, the research aims to obtain in-depth understanding about the role of the state in the SMEs' CE oriented actions, and the qualitative case study is an effective method for this kind of research. Related to this point, the qualitative case study method also helped the researchers to develop a theoretical insight, which was crucially important to explain abstract social phenomena (e.g. the structural influence of the LE on the SMEs' actions) (Mazumdar & Geis, 2001). This means that a new logical structuration of observed phenomena through researchers' re-evaluation/interpretation might help to see previously unnoticed social relationships or facts (see: Peshkin, 2000).

The research applied a systematic literature review to collect relevant data from different countries and sectors on the SMEs' CE centred actions. To this end, the research used Google Academy rather than Scopus or WOS to access the previous case studies as some master's theses and workpapers might contain valuable data. "Circular economy" and "the SMEs" were the main keywords to access the relevant articles. In line with the theoretical framework given above, a screening process was carried out and 55 articles were identified. After the identification of the relevant articles, a detailed reading of them was performed. Subsequently, the findings of these articles were re-evaluated according to the logical framework established in the theoretical framework section and new syntheses were developed to answer the research question (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009, Xiao & Watson, 2019). Put differently, this qualitative case study performed an interpretive analysis to give structure and meaning to the separate findings of different studies; otherwise, these findings stand in the literature irrelatively (see: Trent & Cho, 2014). For example, the re-evaluation of the findings of the accumulated case studies confirms the hypothetical argument that the existing LE system limits the SMEs' CE oriented actions, and the state could ease this structural limitation. Moreover, the

accumulation of these findings also points out bureaucracy, finance, technology and culture as four main fields where the state could help the SMEs to act proper CE actions. As a result of the re-evaluation of the different findings of different research, this study could develop a synthesis arguing that an effective CE oriented institutional change process initially needs the re-conceptualization of state-market relationship in conformity with the circular paradigm.

The research focuses on the SMEs and their relationships with the market and the state as abstract social phenomena; thus, it needs samples from different countries and different sectors. At this point, collecting a mass primary data set from different countries and sectors is far beyond the scope and capacity of this research. However, the findings of previous case studies conducted in different countries provided the necessary secondary data to carry out this qualitative case study. Moreover, the generalizability of the findings of the case study method is criticized in the social science methodology literature (see: Gomm, Hammersley & Foster, 2000; Tsang, 2014). However, by using the secondary data derived from numerous empirical studies carried out in different countries and different sectors, this qualitative case study also tries to overcome this limitation. In addition to this, making extensive references to the relevant literature also strengthens the external validity of the research analyses.

As a result of its qualitative nature, the following section gives the main findings verbally in an institutionalist logic which was developed in the previous section.

### **The Findings and Further Discussions**

One of the main findings of the research is that the SMEs greatly depend on the existing LE system and this structural dependence inhibits the SMEs' proper transition to the CE. For example, by studying 162 different SMEs in India, Luthra et al. (2022) argued that the short-term goal seeking structural tendency of the SMEs is one of the main structural barriers slowing the adoption of the CE



actions. Here, the main reasons behind this short-term goal seeking tendency which prevent the SMEs from performing proper CE actions are the lack of capabilities (expertise) and resources (e.g. human, financial and technological resources). The other side of the coin is this structural factor also explains why the CE oriented start-up firms have a better performance than the firms conventionally established in the LE system while adopting the CE principles (De Mattos & De Albuquerque, 2018; Ghisellini, Passaro, Quinto, et al., 2021). Therefore, the macro-level regulatory frameworks developed by governments emerged as the necessary measures to deal with these structural barriers (see: Dey et al., 2022; Forsander, 2022; García-Quevedo et al., 2020; Horbach & Rammer, 2020; Luthra et al., 2022; Min et al., 2021; Mura et al., 2020; Rizos et al., 2016; Torres-Guevara et al., 2021). As an empirical example, a survey conducted by the network TNS Political & Social in 2016 with 10618 companies across the EU showed that 34 per cent of participant SMEs faced complex administrative or legal procedures in their CE practices, and 32 per cent of them were unhappy with the cost of meeting the regulations (Díaz-García et al., 2020, p. 22). Garrido-Prada et al. (2021) also found that red tape is an increasing cost for the SMEs in the EU to practice the CE oriented actions. Moreover, Min et al. (2021) argued that the CE regulations and laws are needed to consider the SMEs as an essential transformative actor to create a CE ecosystem. Within this ecosystem, it will also be easier for the SMEs to develop circular relationship with other stakeholders (Sohal et al., 2022). For instance, the SMEs in Japan and the EU have more well-organized and effective circular actions compared to the USA thanks to their better CE policy frameworks (Saidani et al., 2019). The EU initiated a macro-level action plan in 2014 and revised it in 2015 and 2020 (EC, 2014, 2015, 2020). In the same vein, Japan launched a legal framework in 2001, which drives the Japanese firms' actions towards the CE. However, the USA does not have a similar legal framework (EPA, 2021). As another example, Ratner et al. (2021) point out the lack of the macro-level policy frameworks as an important reason behind why the Russian firms lag behind the EU firms in

performing circular actions. In this regard, Cantú et al. (2021) also argue that the poor regulative power of the emerging countries compared to the developed countries is an important structural reason for the SMEs in the emerging countries lagging behind the ones in the developed countries. Additionally, Horbach and Rammer (2020) put emphasis on smart regulations to push firms towards novel CE practices. In this regard, green taxes could be given as an example of these smart regulations (Bajnoczki et al., 2021). The smart regulations should also contain clear definitions/rules targeting the institutionalization of the CE, and in this way, they could push the SMEs towards the CE actions. Otherwise, a waste legislation formulated within the linear paradigm might define secondary resources as waste, and this regulative definition might limit the SMEs' consideration of these resources in their reuse actions (Kerstjens, 2021). From this point of view, governmental regulations might increase the awareness of the SMEs, and the high level of awareness is a strategic condition for grasping the opportunities of the CE (Forsander, 2022). To illustrate, Tedesco et al. (2022) found that the lack of awareness of the opportunities of the CE as a big problem limits the implementation of the CE in the Brazilian planted tree sector.

The SMEs also need governmental regulations to access necessary financial sources to reconstitute their businesses according to the CE principles as the existing financial system institutionalized within the linear paradigm does not properly comply with their circular business actions (Gonçalves et al., 2022; Ozili & Opene, 2021; Toxopeus et al., 2021). Demirel and Danisman (2019) found that the SMEs need to invest 10 per cent of their revenues in the CE to receive economic growth returns, but this percentage is too high and it makes the adoption of the CE implementations unconvincing for the SMEs. With regard to this point, the SMEs need both public funds/subsidies and necessary governmental regulations to develop a circular financial system. As an example, after analysing 87 Spanish firms, Aranda-Usón et al. (2019) conclude that public funds and subsidies are a strategic need in promoting circular businesses. Min et al. (2021)

also argued that the Chinese SMEs in the circular businesses need a special financial treatment. In terms of governmental subsidies, a research carried out by Centobelli et al. (2021) supports the argument that governmental subsidies and tax benefits could be a great incentive for the SMEs to practice the CE actions. In the same vein, Milios (2021) found that the waste hierarchy tax and government subsidies might highly increase the performance of the recycling sector by studying Sweden. Nudurupati et al. (2022) produced similar results after analysing Indian SMEs in different sectors. In line with these studies, Garrido-Prada et al. (2021) also argue that the research and development (R&D) activities for the CE should be carried out by governments instead of the SMEs, and these activities will become indirect subsidies to the SMEs due to high costs of the R&D activities. In a similar way, Fernando et al. (2022) claim that “the agro-based industry's waste as the main source to produce energy can be processed in mass production if the [Malaysian] government provides subsidies on the technology”. Additionally, the CE oriented public procurement mechanisms can be considered as another governmental mechanism which could drive the SMEs towards the CE oriented actions (Husgafvel et al., 2022). In addition to direct public funds, the SMEs also need a circular financial market. A Chatham House report argue that an inclusive circular financial system is still missing in the world despite the desperate need for a more sustainable circular system (Schröder & Raes, 2021) simply because “financiers find CE innovations riskier than standard innovations” (De La Cuesta-Gonzalez & Morales-García, 2021). As a result, the SMEs face difficulties in accessing necessary financial sources for their circular transition (Díaz-García et al., 2020). For example, Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2017) figured out that the EU should invest €320 billion by 2025 to achieve a circular transition in its market, but still the financial mechanisms for this large scale of investment are not clear, and the linear financial system is not willing to invest in “suboptimal circular economy projects and companies” (Dewick et al., 2020). As a result, the state's

regulative power is needed in this sector to develop a benign financial atmosphere for circular entrepreneurs.

The SMEs also need high technology to perform the CE actions (Huynh, 2021). For example, Sharma et al. (2021) points out “technology up-gradation” as a major prerequisite for the implementation of the CE by the SMEs. Pizzi et al. (2021) maintain that digital platforms could provide the start-up CE firms with a high degree of flexibility through which they could deal with the above-mentioned structural dependence problem and develop circular ecosystems. In the same vein, Silva and Sehnem (2022) argue that the usage of the industry 4.0 technologies could help the CE start-up firms to implement the CE principles. Despite this need, the lack of high technology is another major structural barrier which impedes the SMEs' transition progress towards the CE in the world (Grafström & Aasma, 2021). To illustrate, Ormazabal et al. (2018) observed this structural impediment for the Spanish SMEs; Min et al. (2021) for the Chinese SMEs; Gedam et al. (2021) for the Indian SMEs; and García-Quevedo et al. (2020) for the European SMEs. In general, the SMEs depend on the existing technology in the LE system contrary to multinational companies which could achieve circular technology development through their R&D activities (Rizos et al., 2016). For instance, Oncioiu et al. (2018) carried out a survey with 196 Romanian SMEs and found that none of them invested circular technology from 2013 to 2018. The lack of high technology is an abstract problem and might cause a more long-term structural barrier deterring the SMEs' transition to the CE (García-Quevedo et al., 2020). Particularly, the circular technology does not need ready-made universal solutions but specifically tailored innovative solutions to the SMEs' specific needs; thus, the SMEs should become the main innovators of the CE in their economic actions, but their limited competence in R&D significantly limits them from playing this innovator role (see also: Manniche et al., 2017). Furthermore, the accession to necessary technology is a bigger problem in the developing world for the SMEs due to their poor

national infrastructure (e.g. see: Cantú et al., 2021; Odongo & Thomsen, 2021). As a result, the SMEs desperately need the state help/policies to access circular technology to trigger a bottom-up circular transition (Rodríguez-Espíndola et al., 2022).

Last but not least, the SMEs are highly sensitive to consumer attitudes in the market; thus, they cannot change their economic actions from the LE to the CE without a change in consumer attitudes towards the CE (Kazancoglu et al., 2021; Piller, 2022). However, as micro-level actors, they do not have power to achieve this change in consumer attitudes. As a result, this fact increases their dependence on the LE oriented actions. On the other hand, as a macro-level actor, the state has the bureaucratic power which could shift consumer attitudes towards the CE, and in this way, it could decrease the structural influence of the existing LE system on the SMEs. For example, there are several studies in the literature which empirically show that government incentives are a necessary condition for directing consumers' intention to use remanufactured products (e.g. see: Abbasi et al., 2022; Badhotiya et al., 2021; Hazen et al., 2017; Pisitsankhakarn & Vassanadumrongdee, 2020; Singhal et al., 2019; Singhal et al., 2020). Furthermore, Hazen et al. (2017) argue that the governmental regulations and taxes might shift consumers' choices from new products towards remanufactured products; however, every nation should develop its own policies and the SMEs should be part of this policy-making process. At the same time, Pisitsankhakarn and Vassanadumrongdee (2020) argue that firms cannot make product quality and price improvements for remanufactured products without the active involvement of government. For instance, an eco-labelling scheme arranged by a government might significantly change consumers' attitudes towards remanufactured products (Gåvertsson et al., 2020). In addition, Zhou and Yuen (2020) point out the importance of governmental subsidises in driving consumers towards the remanufactured products (see also: Wang et al., 2022). Additionally, a change in consumer attitudes also needs a broader cultural change and this might only be possible through the state intervention (Kirchherr et al., 2017).

## Conclusion

The existing LE system is increasingly getting more unsustainable as its take-make-use-dispose of logic causes significant resource leakage from the economic system and serious environmental damage. In respond to this increasing unsustainability in the LE system, the CE emerged as a more sustainable economic system. The CE mainly aims to develop circularity between economic actions from production to consumption in order to prevent the resource leakage from the economic system, and the prevention of resource leakage will automatically result in more economic prosperity and better environmental protection. However, there is not any clear blueprint on how to manage the transition from the LE system to the CE system. To contribute an insight into this issue, this research focused on the SMEs as a case because they constitute the core of the global economy. In particular, it analysed the extent to which the SMEs' structural limitation could dilute their circular entrepreneurship role in the market, and how the state could ease this structural limitation and encourage the SMEs to implement proper CE actions. To do this, the research was designed as a qualitative case study and the secondary data derived from the relevant literature was analysed within an institutionalist theoretical framework.

The primary finding of the research is that the structural dependence of the SMEs on the existing LE market mechanism prevents them from taking proper CE actions. In other words, within the linear paradigm, they are too small to produce deliberative actions triggering a paradigm shift towards the CE. At this point, the state emerges as a macro-level actor with its strong institutional capacity as a rule-breaker. Firstly, the SMEs need regulative frameworks which could drive them towards CE actions. For instance, the regulations enacted according to the LE paradigm might constitute obstacles to the SMEs' CE oriented initiations, or the lack of a necessary CE regulation might inhibit the performance of CE actions by the SMEs. Secondly, the SMEs need the state to access vital financial sources to perform CE actions. In this regard, the state should provide direct

financial support and indirect governmental subsidies and tax benefits to the SMEs, and enact regulations to develop a circular financial market as the existing linear financial market is highly sceptical to the circular entrepreneurship. Thirdly, the circular technological infrastructure is too expensive for the SMEs; thus, the state is needed in the establishment of this infrastructure. Finally, the SMEs are highly sensitive to the attitudes of consumers, but again they are too small to change their tastes. Thus, the current attitudes of consumers shaped within the linear paradigm stands as another structural impediment in front of the SMEs, and the state has a hegemonic power which could drive consumers' attitudes towards the CE oriented consumption. To illustrate, the SMEs could not produce remanufactured goods in a society where the consumption of remanufactured goods is considered as a lower social status.

As a result, this research argues that the SMEs' intention to play a circular entrepreneurship role in the transition from the LE to the CE might create an illusion that the market dynamics will be enough to trigger an institutional change from the LE to the CE. However, a proper institutional change towards the CE also needs the state's top-down regulative policies. From an institutionalist point of view, the market dynamics were institutionalized according to the LE principles; thus, the actors in the market like the SMEs suffer from the path-dependence on this LE oriented institutionalization. The dependence on the existing LE structure means that an institutional change towards the CE might hardly be possible through the market dynamics and the state intervention might be needed. In line with this argument, Chistov et al. (2020) also emphasize the importance of the state regulations in transition from the LE to the CE due to the market gap in terms of the CE oriented actions. According to them, however, the state regulations should not directly target the market, but the actors in the market to encourage them to perform proper CE actions. In conclusion, this research argues that as the institutionalization of the CE system needs the state intervention in addition to the market

dynamics, the new circular paradigm will need the re-conceptualization of the market-state relationship to institutionalize a more sustainable circular system (see also: Ghisellini, Passaro, & Ulgiati, 2021). In this regard, as every country, region or sector has its own unique traits, a successful transition to the CE also needs differentiated institutionalization. As noted above, every CE centred transition case might require different regulative, financial, technological, and cultural treatments. Therefore, from an international political economy perspective, future studies might focus on the questions; how to re-conceptualize the market-state relationship in a circular paradigm and how differentiated institutionalization as a principle could be embedded in national CE policies.

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# Sports in the Early Republican Period: The Turkish Sports Association Magazine as an Ideological Apparatus

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## Abstract

*During the birth of the Turkish nation-state as a republic, sports became one of the dynamics of social transformation, and physical training and sports were described as a "case" in this period. The goal of this study is to reveal the role the journal of the Turkish Sport Association in the concretization and dissemination of the ideology of the regime. The study's theoretical foundations are based on Althusser's theory of the "ideological apparatus of the state". The magazine published by this institution between 1936 and 1938 became the spokesperson of the official ideology in sports. This qualitative study, which explores the meanings and obligations attributed to sports in the Early Republic Period and the ways in which those messages were propagated throughout society, employed the descriptive analytic approach. The study reveals that sports in the magazine serve to embody and spread the official ideology through nationalism, which is one of the basic principles of the Republic; the "new woman" as the symbol of the Republic; and the relationship of the state with population-national defense, which is one of the most important problems of the state.*

**Keywords:** Turkish Sports Association, Sports Magazine, Female Athletes, Ideological Apparatus Of The State.

## Öz

*Cumhuriyet'in, ulus-devletin doğuşu sürecinde spor toplumsal dönüşümün dinamiklerinden biri olmuş, bu dönemde beden terbiyesi ve spor bir "dava" olarak nitelendirilmiştir. Bu çalışma da, Cumhuriyet'in kuruluş sürecinde sporun işlevine odaklanmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda çalışmanın temel amacı, Türk Spor Kurumu Dergisi'nin, rejimin ideolojisinin somutlaşmasında ve yayılmasında nasıl bir rol oynadığını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Althusser'in 'devletin ideolojik aygıtları' yaklaşımı çalışmanın kuramsal çerçevesini oluşturmaktadır. Cumhuriyet'in kuruluşunun ilk yıllarında ülkedeki spor yönetimi görece özerk bir kurum olan Türkiye İdman Cemiyetleri İttifakı'nın idaresi altındayken, 1936 yılında Türk Spor Kurumu adını alan yapılanma Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi bünyesine katılmıştır. Bu kurum tarafından 1936-1938 yılları arasında yayımlanan dergi resmi ideolojinin spordaki sözcüsü olmuştur. Erken Cumhuriyet döneminde spora yüklenen anlam ve görevlerin basın üzerinden hangi mesajlarla topluma aktarıldığı ve yayıldığını inceleyen bu nitel çalışmada betimsel analiz yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Analiz için amaçlı örneklem yöntemiyle seçilen makaleler ve görsellerden yararlanılmıştır. Çalışma, dergide sporun, Cumhuriyet'in temel prensiplerinden olan milliyetçilik, Cumhuriyet'in sembolü olan "yeni kadın" ve devletin en önemli sorunlardan olan nüfus-millî savunma ile ilişkisi üzerinden resmi ideolojinin somutlaştırılması ve yayılmasına hizmet ettiğini ortaya koymaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türk Spor Kurumu, Spor Basını, Sporcu Kadın, Devletin Ideolojik Aygıtları.

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## Introduction

Sports was implemented as one of the major dynamics of the Early Republican Period. In the early establishment process of the nation-state, sports was planned as a national field in line with the goals of reaching the level of civilized nations. Sports, recognised as “soft power” as a tool of image and reputation in the international arena today, had a special significance in terms of both creating a strong and large population and transforming this population into a nation/society, especially in the 1930s’ Turkey approaching the Great War.

Sports is one of the institutions that construct ideology within society. Sports has a significant role in the production of the discourse that constitutes the national identity-belonging, as well as in the creation of common sense, social solidarity and unity (Caldwell, 1982; Houlihan, 1997; Türkmen, 2013; Wheeler, 1978), in the construction of the social identity of women (Cantek & Yazar, 2009; Talimciler, 2006; Yazar, 2014) and Turkish modernization (Tokatlıoğlu, 2021; Zelyurt, 2013). Brian Willan also mentions that sports is important because “it provides the necessary tools to spread the hegemonic value of the community” (cited in Hobwbawn, 2013, p. 277).

Elias defines modern sport as a phenomenon peculiar to modernity. Saying that modern sport was born in England, Elias attributes this situation to the civilization process that started with the decrease in violence since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The most important factor in the emergence of this phenomenon is the pacification of the landowners and the strengthening of the nation-state model, which monopolizes the right to use violence. The industrial revolution was instrumental in the global spread of modern sports, and by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, workers and peasants were able to participate in sports as players (cited as Çakır, 2014, p. 207-213). Thus, practiced by handful elites for centuries, sports started to become popularized as a result of capitalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and turned into an ideology in the real sense. Sports and physical education have been used for

“preparation for war” in the nation-state era (Fişek, 2003, p. 106) and have been an indicator of national superiority since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Caldwell, 1982). In studies dealing with the relationship between nationalism and sports, Houlihan (1997) argues that in countries with a colonial past such as Canada and Ireland, certain sports are seen as symbols of resistance, freedom and protecting ethnic identity, and Caldwell (1982) argues that the resurgence of the Olympics at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is the result of European nationalism. According to Caldwell, the sport of cricket has played a critical role in the construction of Australian nation-identity in Australia through the colony beating the colonist England at her own game. Civralı (2021) also states that baseball was invented in the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to “produce Americans” from within the heterogeneous working class.

There are various studies on the ideological function of sports in Turkey, especially recently. In his study examining the ideological function of sport, Talimciler (2006) focuses on the sport-power relationships, the function of sport in capitalist production, and its role in gender construction. Cantek & Yazar (2009) investigate the press’s role in the history of modernization during the Early Republican Period (1928-1960) in connection to sports and women. The study, which examines the sports magazines of the period and the *Hürriyet* newspaper, examines the role of sports in the transformation process from the single-party regime to the multi-party regime. It reveals that sport is both the lifestyle of the new elite and a technique that enables the state to rule the people. Saying that sport is a tool that enables women to enter public sphere, the study tries to show how the masculine modernization perspective affects gender norms. In his research, Türkmen (2013) also shows, which had a liberal bent in the Early Republican Period, eventually fell under state supervision and contributed to the development of young people who uphold the foundational ideals. Yazar (2014) also critically examines the role of sports as an area and mediator of power and modernization in her study, in which she investigates the establishment of modern sports in



the Early Republic, starting from the Ottoman Empire. Eken (2020), on the other hand, carried out the first study on the Journal of the Turkish Sports Association, which is the spokesperson for the nationalization of sports. The study, which brought the journal to daylight, provides a general framework about the management structure and content of the journal.

Sports provide a public space to the media in the production of the discourse that constitutes the national identity. The media also takes an active part in the process of identity construction, shaping the national identity and rebuilding it with the bond it establishes between nationalism (Kösebalaban, 2004). This study deals with sports in the context of its ideological function and examines it through the sports press as the carrier of such ideology. The subject of the study is the Turkish Sports Association Magazine as the spokesperson of the official ideology in sports. The conceptual framework of the study is built on Althusser's theory of "ideological state apparatuses" (ISA). The main problem of the study is how the meaning and duties attributed by the regime to sports are conveyed to the public through the magazine. The study aims to reveal the function of the magazine as the carrier of the ideology during the foundation of the Republic by identifying the values attributed to sports through the themes of nationalism, "new woman", and population in the articles and photographs published in the magazine.

**Conceptual Framework: Ideology and the State's Ideological Apparatus**

The concept of ideology was coined by the French philosopher Destut de Tracy in 1796. The concept was produced as to reveal the origin of ideas and means the science of ideas (Heywood, 2019, p. 61). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Marx defined ideology as ideas that allow the ruling class to continue to exploit the lower classes. Accordingly, the ruling class of the society transfers and spreads the ideology that they create to serve their own interests to the rest of the society by using various means (Heywood, 2019, p. 61). In this respect, ideology feeds the false consciousness that prevents exploitation from being noticed (Kazancı, 2002). While Marx negates ideology as "false consciousness", Gramsci sees ideologies as "...an

effective organizing force that is psychologically 'valid', providing the ground on which people act, struggle, and become conscious of their own social conditions". "An 'organic' ideology is not false consciousness; it is an ideology appropriate to a particular stage of historical development and to a particular political moment." (Eagleton, 2015, p. 161).

Heywood (2019, p. 61) defines the controversial political concept of ideology as "a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides a basis for organized political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power relationships." Ideology explains the current power relations, envisions a future and creates the outline that will enable it to be realized through political change (p. 98). The ideas and beliefs that make up ideology "inform" the audience how the world should be viewed. These beliefs and values ensure that the dominant values are adopted by the society, making them compatible with the system or establishing a new life system (Kazancı, 2002, p. 57). Within this framework, there are various intermediaries that enable the spread of ideology. The view that mass media is one of them was put forward by Louis Althusser. Althusser (2019) expressed this view through the concept of "Ideological State Apparatuses" (ISA). Accordingly, ideology is reproduced by various devices. As social formation cannot survive if it does not reproduce itself: every social formation has a dominant mode of production. In order for material production to be made and for ensuring its continuity, the conditions and forces of production, and therefore the rules of the established/sovereign order, must also be reproduced. This is made possible by ideology and the reproduction of ideology. The state has social repression institutions such as the army, police, prison and court, namely "Repressive State Apparatus", and these institutions serve to ensure the state order and authority. However, it is understood that social order cannot be achieved only by repression. Althusser, who thought that the state could not establish its dominance with only repression apparatuses, put the concept of Ideological State Apparatuses" (ISA) against these oppression devices. Repressive apparatuses operate using

physical force, while the state ideological apparatuses do such through ideology. The function of the ISA is to reproduce and instil the dominant ideology. Accordingly, family, school, religious structure (such as church), legal structure, political structure such as political parties, cultural structure (such as art, literature, sports) and mass communication tools/media are ideological apparatuses of the state. The devices of repression also make use of ideology in a secondary sense, even if they primarily use violence. In fact, all apparatuses are both repressive and ideological in varying degrees. The common goal of all ideological apparatuses is nationalism, moralism and economism.

With the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the mass communication tools/media, as the ideological apparatus of the state, has become one of the most important tools for the spread of the dominant ideology. By spreading the language and discourse produced by the media, consent to the dominant ideology is produced without use of force. In the modern world, administrators/managers need mass communication tools such as newspapers, radio and television in order to create an opinion on a certain subject within the society, to spread an idea, to build a perception about a phenomenon or to create a common judgment about a subject, institution or belief. Therefore, all kinds of tools that provide mass communication have a very significant function in this respect. These tools "...blast every citizen with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism etc. (Althusser, 2019, p. 61).

On the other hand, sports, located within the cultural structure, constitutes yet another one of the ideological devices of the state. Sports as a cultural device works like a communication device (Althusser, 2019, p. 61). In shaping or building the citizen demanded by the political system, citizens are equipped with virtues such as 'professional conscience', 'morality', 'virtue', 'renunciation', 'humility' and 'obedience' and nationalism and chauvinism, sports contributes in its own specific way. In fact, sports played the most important role in terms of chauvinism. All this is transmitted and

learned through mass media such as 'fine books' and 'movies' or, for example, in 'stadiums'.

The press played a critical role in spreading the principles and values of the Republican regime to the society. Anderson (2017, p. 20), who defined nation as an "imagined political community", also mentions that one of the most important ties that bind this imagined community together is the press (printed material). Developing as a part of the capitalization process in the context of production relations, printing technologies became one of the complements of national unity and nation-identity. The idea and consciousness of national unity was reinforced by the common language spread by these technological tools. Therefore, the press was the means by which words, common meanings, images and values were produced and disseminated.

#### *Nationalism*

In Western Europe, where the ideology of nationalism first emerged, it functioned in terms of creating a nation-state for the nation (Kışlalı, 2006, p. 134-136). It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round (Gellner, 2018, p. 138; Smith, 2017, p. 121). Smith defines nationalism as "...an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'. At this point, traditions, national symbols and ceremonies embody the basic concepts of nationalism. In other words, it transforms abstract ideology into something concrete that evokes emotional reactions in the entire community.

Gellner (2018, p. 232) also mentions that nationalism is a very distinctive type of patriotism. The main features of nationalism as a type of patriotism are "homogeneity, literacy and anonymity". The most important internal function of nation-identity within the community is the socialization of the individual as a "citizen". With a repertoire formed from common values, symbols and traditions, it is possible to establish social bonds between individuals and classes, the members of the society are reminded of their common heritage and cultural closeness, and the sense of common identity and belonging is

strengthened. Thus, the nation/society becomes a 'faith-achievement' group, able to surmount obstacles and hardships (Smith, 2017, p. 27-35).

In the first constitution of the Young Republic, the sentence "sovereignty belongs to the nation" (sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the nation), the principle that Atatürk put on the foundation of the state and first expressed in 1921, declares the sovereignty of the nation in the political system, But who is the "nation" in the 1920s? The nation is technically made up of the population. One of the things needed to transform this population into a nation is the penetration of nationalism into the population. Kemalism is an ideology that was born in revolutionary conditions and in a "backward" society. Its two main goals are "independence" and "modernisation". One of the most important ideologies in achieving these goals occurred to be "nationalism" (Kışlalı, 2006, p. 143). Nationalism was used in the mobilisation of all social groups from left to right for a common purpose during the years of the War of Independence, and united the people around the idea of "establishing a nation-state belonging to the Turks" (Karpat, 2017, p. 239).

#### *Kemalist Biopolitics*

The roots of the approach aiming for regulating the population in the name of the security and welfare of the state and its citizens go back to Antiquity. The concept of biopolitics, which expresses such approach, was born from the Greek words "bios" (life) and politics. It simply means "the politicization of life". It coincides with the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when biological existence became a modern power strategy by being included in political calculations. However, today the concept is identified with Foucault as reformulated by him and has become the most accepted form. Foucault's (2019, p. 3) concept of biopolitics explains that since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the population has entered into the field of power's intervention. For Foucault, the objects of biopolitics are not individual human beings, but biological characteristics of people that can be measured and grouped at the population level. Thus, it is the collective body of the population, not the body of the individual, that matters for biopolitics. Biopolitics is a technology of regulative power of which object and goal is life and which

aims at the security of the whole (Foucault, 2021, p. 245-261). From this point of view, biopolitics means taking into account the facts/problems such as birth, death, health, epidemic diseases, quality of life, sexuality, reproduction, racial characteristics and eugenics by political administrations.

With the coming 19<sup>th</sup> century, the body of individuals and the population as a whole became increasingly the object of state intervention. The organicist state view, which was shaped at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and accepted that the policy was guided by biological laws, gained a racist tendency during the German National Socialism period. However, the "biologicalization of politics" was an issue also for liberal democracies in the period between the First and Second World War (Lemke, 2022, p. 25-31). Therefore, biological knowledge has been used in policy making by both democratic systems and racist governments such as National Socialism. In this context, a strong relationship has been established between sport and population. Even if the regulations regarding sports in Germany or Italy are considered to be related to the fascist system, it is understood that in democratic countries, sports policies are reviewed with the same aim and approach, namely for a strong and healthy population (Tokathioğlu, 2021, p. 129; Türkmen, 2013, p. 737). For example, in France, the necessity of sports/physical training in basic education to prepare for military service is discussed in the parliament, and the fact that citizens are subject to physical obligations from childhood is considered a "national duty" in terms of "the future of the race" and "the safety of borders" (Vuillien, "Physical Culture and Preparation for Military Service in France", 1937).

Therefore, one of the main issues in the establishment of the Republic is population. Mustafa Kemal drew attention to this issue in his speech at the opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1923 and said, "Sirs, the population issue is the most important overtime (issue) of the nation" (TBMM Zabıt Tutanakları, 1923). In the opening speech of the Assembly in 1937, Atatürk mentions the expression, declaring, "A solid and strong generation is the leaven of the state." (TBMM Zabıt Tutanakları, 1937). Thus

the government decided to organize sports as one of the most important tools and an ideological field in raising a healthy and strong generation.

### **Kemalist Ideology and Sports**

In the founding philosophy of the Republic, sport was identified with civilisation/modernisation. The Kemalist modernization project that guided the foundation of the Republic, aimed at reaching the level of civilization in Western countries, being a "member with equal rights of the contemporary community of nations" (Kışlalı, 2006, p. 146), the transformation of society with all its institutions (from family to state power) is the way forward on the map drawn for the nation. One of the main dynamics of this process is sports.

During the establishment of the Republic, sports was considered as one of the multipliers of the regime, and physical training/sports were described in such discourse. In this process, it is recognized that the rising totalitarian regimes in Europe of the 1930s influenced Turkey (Cantek & Yarar, 2009; Türkmen, 2013). In particular, the sports policies of Germany and the Soviet Union, have been taken as examples for the organization of sports and sports education in Turkey. Various experts were invited to Turkey for the establishment of a structure similar to the statist sports understanding in Germany. The most important of these experts is Carl Diem (Cantek & Yarar, 2009, p. 206). Diem has prepared a map-like report on the organization of sports in Turkey (Tokatlıoğlu, 2021, p. 131). In fact, in the first years of the 1920s, the regime did not have a tangible sports policy. The expectation of the state from sports had been to raise healthy and moral generations (Akın, 2019, p. 55-86). Sports was so important for the newly established state that even before the proclamation of the Republic, the Turkish Sports Associations Union (Türkiye İdman Cemiyetleri İttifakı - TİCİ) was established as the authorized body responsible for sports in 1922. The Union, founded by the sports clubs in İstanbul, played a role in the sports management of the country until 1936. On April 23, 1923, before the Republic was declared, the Turkish Soccer

Federation was established. As the executive of the state's sports policies, TİCİ has been the mediator of the state's representation in international sports competitions and thus its recognition in the context of international politics.

In the first years of the Republic, problems such as the lack of order and discipline and physical inadequacies in the field of sports and the Great Economic Depression in 1929 - such as the transition from private entrepreneurship to statism in the field of economy - revealed the need to create a "national sports policy". The budget allocated to sports was increased, propaganda activities encouraging the public to sports were carried out, and the weight of sports in the press increased. In the mid-1930s, sports was accepted as a philosophy and a tool for the Republican regime in terms of "...the improvement of the race and youth, the defense of the homeland and the improvement of public health" (Akın, 2019, p. 63-68).

At the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress held in 1936, the regulation of TİCİ was modified and its name was changed to the Turkish Sports Association (Türk Spor Kurumu - TSA). With the new regulation, the institution directly joined the Republican People's Party (CHP) and became a "party organization" that would direct the "sports cause". This is the reflection of the state-party identification that emerged in the political conditions of the single-party period on sports management (Fişek, 2003, p. 296). The guidelines of the institution were prepared with the "revolutionary atmosphere and the spirit of discipline" (Çağlar, "The Victory of Yaşar and View of Sports, 17.8.1936). Accordingly, the qualities sought in an athlete were "strength in justice and character, high patriotism, discipline, self-sacrifice, self-control, right decision making by thinking well." ("The Duty of Turkish Youth", 6.7.1936). According to Prime Minister Celal Bayar's statement published in the magazine, the purpose of sports was "...to raise Turkish citizens as strong in terms of ideas and thoughts, strong in body and in full health, with character, robust and beautiful." (Baydar, "Declaration of the Prime Minister", 15.11.1937).



## Method

The study aims to reveal the ideological function of the TSA Journal, as the spokesperson of the official ideology in sports during the foundation of the Republic. The journal is a weekly magazine published between June 26, 1936, and November 7, 1938. The main problem of the study is how the meaning and duties attributed by the regime to sports are conveyed and adopted by the public through the magazine. Althusser's concept of "Ideological State Apparatuses" constitutes the theoretical framework of the study. The study aims to examine the TSA Journal in the context of concepts of nationalism, women and population, which are the parameters of Turkish modernization project. For this purpose, descriptive analysis method, one of the qualitative research methods (Demir, 2014, p. 315), was chosen. As Strauss and Corbin suggested, there are two methods in qualitative data analysis: Descriptive analysis and content analysis. Descriptive analysis is more superficial than content analysis and is "used mostly in research where the conceptual structure of the research is clearly defined beforehand." (cited in Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 255). Direct quotations are frequently used in descriptive analysis. The purpose of this analysis method is to present the findings in a structured and interpreted form. In this study, the descriptive method was chosen because the conceptual structure was predetermined, as stated above. It is attempted to convey through examples how the fundamental axes upon which the concepts were founded are embodied in the writings. Current sports news in the magazine are excluded from the scope of the study, and political and historical articles, and images selected by using the purposeful sampling method were examined. Purposive sampling method "...allows the in-depth study of situations that are thought to have rich information." Such sampling method is useful in detecting and explaining facts and events and increases the validity of the findings by enriching the themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 135). In this context, how the components of the modernization ideology of the Republic were embodied and made visible in the content of the magazine is examined.

The ideology of nationalism is examined specifically through the concept/discourse of patriotism. Also, the content of the magazine is analyzed through the "new woman" model, and the population-national defense issue. In the study, the compilation of historical and scientific articles prepared by Suat Karaküçük was also used besides the magazine's collection in the National Library. Karaküçük's work contains exact copies of the articles selected from the journal and serves as a guide and helpful resource for researchers to examine the journal more easily and quickly.

## Findings

Turkish Sports Association Magazine as the Spokesperson of Official Ideology in Sports

The intellectual ground for the full state control of sports and the nationalization of sports was created through the TSK Magazine in 1938. Published on Mondays between June 1936 and November 1938, the magazine was tasked with explaining the purpose of sports to the public, outlining sports policy, promoting sporting events, and preventing "aimless" efforts. The magazine "...will turn Turkish sports from being a messy effort and unproductive enthusiasm into an independent cause of Kemalism, a case of physical culture." (Çağlar, "Türk Gençliğinin Vazifesi, 6.8.1936).

## Nationalism and Sports

TSA Magazine associates sports with patriotism and loyalty to the state in the context of nationalism. While it is mentioned in the magazine articles that sports are a source of pleasure and "health", the most important function is defined as patriotism. In the article titled "The Importance of Sports" (29.6.1936) written by Ali Hikmet Ayerdem, sports are defined as "authentic patriotism" because athletes will strengthen themselves and serve the development of the generation. As Gellner (2018, p. 232) states, nationalism is a very distinctive type of patriotism. Türkmen (2013, p. 737) also argues that sports policies are reviewed with the for a strong and healthy population. 'Getting married and having children at an early age, especially in order to

escape from military service in older times, prevented the bodily development of the "tall and graceful stature" and caused the "breeding of a very short generation" '. Sport was needed for the existence of strong-built generations again. Çağlar states, "It is the duty of every Turk to perform sports." ("Sports Not a Luxury, A Necessity", 7.9.1936) and "Turkish nation is obliged to perform sports" ("Obliged to Do Sports", 5.10.1936). In his article titled "It is necessary to voluntarily enroll in the ranks of sports", Çağlar explains the basic function of sports for society, namely a patriotic duty, with the following words:

Sports is for sports, yes, but sports is also for the country...Sport is a national duty. The moves of the Turkish homeland, the construction of the Turkish homeland, the development of the Turkish Nation demand health, strength, character and discipline from the youth... Being registered in the notebook of any sports club with the enthusiasm of being an active member is as sacred and beautiful as being a volunteer for a war for the homeland;... (27.7.1936).

In some articles, there are explanations that sports such as wrestling and horse riding are more suitable for the structure of the society. However, these explanations were made on the basis of the view that these sports are more favorable in terms of competitive success due to physical characteristics such as short stature and short legs (Baydar, "Why Wrestling Is a Sports Branch We Will Have The Most Success", 18.4.1938). Thus, the magazine does not mark sports (some sports) as a cultural symbol in the context of nationalism. However, there are statements of the regime in this direction. For example, in the speech of Bolu Deputy and President of Güneş Club Gürer, published in the magazine, there are mentions such as wrestling sport being born "with the Turkish existence", "it belongs only to him" and sports are "the most important" ("Mr. Cevat Abbas Gürer's Discourse", 14.3.1938 ). In the next issue of the magazine, Nizamettin Kırşan, one of the permanent writers of the magazine, tells the history of wrestling in his article titled "Freestyle Wrestling" (28.3.1938), referring to Gürer's article and saying that he did not have the opportunity for

"historical studies worth adding to his words". Accordingly, wrestling, which was born in central-eastern Asia, is reflected as the national sport of almost every country in the world, such as Japan, Sweden or Brazil, and even in Egypt, pre-Christian remains showing wrestlers have been found. Therefore, wrestling is not a sport invented by Turks.

On the contrary, sports is described as one of the civilizational elements of the developed West. Western sports such as swimming, tennis, flying (aviation), cycling, mountaineering, skiing were recommended, rather than sports such as wrestling and weightlifting pointed for likely success due to the physical characteristics of race. Moreover, articles that will ideally establish a bridge of international friendship were frequently published in the journal, such as "Role of Sauna in Finnish Trainings" (13.9.1937), "Discus and Javelin in Ancient Greeks" (Aşir, 15.2.1938), "Takwari, Ancestor of Hockey " (Tuna, 24.8.1936), "Sports in Neighboring Countries: Bulgaria " (18.4.1938), which describe the sports of different nations, "with high and humane purposes" (Baydar, "What is the Olympics?", 29.6.1936). In fact, the Olympic fire, which was invented by the Greeks, with whom a war to the death was fought a few years ago, is referred to as "holy fire" ("How the Holy Fire Was Lighted at the Beginning of the Olympics, 3.8.1936). Although the magazine is the spokesperson of the party, it is not willing to be the regime's exaggerated "self-confidence serum", in the words of Bora (1997, p. 61). It tries to balance its editorial policy with the discourse of power and to become a scientific sports journal. In the magazine, the people of countries from all over the world such as Poland, the USA, England, India, Japan or Germany are praised for their sportsmanship and their good qualities are highlighted. On the other hand, Bora (1997, p. 58) also mentioned that the other-image of Turkish identity is "very clearly" internal with its historical-social reality, that is, "old Turkey"/"Ottoman".

## Population as Potential Soldiers, and National Defense

The magazine has become an important instrument in regulating the society in line with the official ideology. In the early years of the Early Republican period, sports were seen as a means of health and education. However, by the middle of the 1930s, it was understood that a new world war was on the way. In Turkey, which had very limited industry and economic power, the individual, as the most important economic resource and the most important weapon in war, occurred to be a very precious ore that needed to be processed. In this respect, the articles in the journal often reminded the readers how important a healthy generation is in terms of country/national defense. Falih Rıfki Atay, one of the most influential journalists of the Republic, declared the importance of sports in the construction of the young state, "For our youth, stadiums are as important as schools." ("Ankara Stadium", 21.12.1936). Stadiums were not only to accommodate actives "but also propaganda events in the form of political speeches and national parades." Thus, in the 1930's, a lot of focus was placed in on sports facilities (Azizoğlu, 2019, p. 14, 41). Therefore, "Kemalists have seized the sports cause." (Çağlar, "Kemalists Seized Sports Cause", 28.4.1936).

Behçet Kemal Çağlar (Yıldırım, 2021), one of the authors of the magazine, was a revolutionary poet. Çağlar's art is for society. He, who had been close to Atatürk since his early youth, was 25 years old when he wrote the Tenth Anniversary March with his teacher, Faruk Nafiz. Since this date, Çağlar, who has entered politics, has been a true believer. His sole purpose, both in his art and in his political life, was to spread nationalism and Kemalism. In 1949, he resigned from deputation in the Parliament on the grounds that Atatürk's principles were compromised. Thus, his articles in the magazine played an important role in transferring the regime's ideal of sports to social life. As Çağlar repeats in many of his writings, he defined sports as a "patriotic duty", summarizing the regime's view of sports. Çağlar's article titled "It is necessary to voluntarily enroll in the ranks of sports" (27.7.1936) is more than encouraging youth

to sports; it is almost a declaration of mobilization: "...It is necessary to voluntarily enroll in the ranks of sports, which is one of the first stages of national protection..." Çağlar also stated that sports is a "debt" of citizenship ("Sport is a necessity, not a luxury", 7.9.1936). In his article, in which he explained that the spread of epidemic diseases such as malaria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had serious consequences on public health and that the bodies of generations were gradually deteriorating, Çağlar mentioned, "With its yellow and scary face, malaria spread in Anatolia and caused the birth of children with bellies like drums and arms like branches." This deterioration continued, as the rebuilding process of the homeland required an indoor working style. Therefore, it was said that sport was a "vital need" for all individuals, and that the "full and efficient service that individuals will do for their homeland and for themselves" depended on this. In short, "It is the duty of every Turk to do sports." ("Sport is a necessity, not a luxury", 7.9.1936).

Therefore, sports are considered patriotic as they prepare people for "defense of the homeland" and "patriotic Turkish youth" should do sports both for their own benefit and for the "greater benefit of the homeland" (Ayerdem, "The Importance of Sports", 29.06.1936). This exactly coincides with Foucault's concept of biopolitics (2021, p. 245-261). The political administration tries to direct the health and reproduction of the population for national security and the continuation of the state. Among the sports branches that are especially recommended and attempted to be popularized were the kinds of sports that will be useful in the service of the country and defense of the country (running-jumping, mountaineering, etc.). Since such sports would develop "intellectual skills" that would help to make rapid decisions and implement them tactically and technically, doing such sports was a sign of patriotism. In addition, physical training and sports became a tool, a technology of power, that disciplined individuals and created familiarity with a sense of "duty".

Aviation sports, one of the most important elements of national defense and security, was especially encouraged in the magazine. Because "the national goal of sports is to raise an

indestructible generation and to make the homeland an invincible homeland” and “the winged generation of the Republic must breed quickly.” (Gürevi, “Winged Generation”, 13.7.1936). For this purpose, the civil aviation institution *Türkkuşu*, which would carry out sports aviation activities, was established in 1935 (Turkish Aeronautical Association, 2022). The school opened under the name *Türkkuşu* would provide glider and parachute training, which again aimed to ensure that civilians are prepared for the upcoming war. In the news of the death of “Mrs. Eribe”, the first female air martyr who received parachute training in *Türkkuşu*, it is stated that she lost her life “...for the sake of our great air cause” (“Our First Female Aviation Martyr”, 26.10.1936). While sports was defined as one of the most important ways to protect the nation, it was stated that “the sports that they do side by side or against each other, binds two British youth tightly together like their front-line mates fighting for the same rights and for the same purposes” (Çağlar, “The English Youth Owes His Spiritual Health to Sports”, 20.7. 1936), the importance of the sense of unity and solidarity created by sports among individuals was thus emphasized, and it is militarized by associating it with military service.

The magazine also published articles reminding of the importance of the sports branches of the Community Centers. The sports branches of the Community Centers played a regulatory role in terms of both giving a useful purpose to “stray excitements” and providing socialization and social unity by enabling formation of clubs. Çağlar also spoke highly of the Community Centers, which were “national and holy places” that saved sports from the “clubbing” atmosphere, and “placed them into the atmosphere of nationalism” (“Sports in the Country”, 3.8.1936). In this respect, the motto of the magazine was “One for all, all for one” (Çağlar, “One for All, All for One”, 10.8.1936).

The approach of identifying sports with patriotism is reflected in the Republican regime's promotion of mass rather than individuality in sports, and the introduction of regulations restricting individualization in sports. As a matter

of fact, with a regulation made in 1930, students in basic education were prohibited from participating in sports clubs and individual competitions outside of school (Türkmen, 2013, p. 737). It may not be said that the state's sports policy was left entirely to the autonomous administration of private sports clubs at first, but with the nationalization of sports in 1936, sports gained a more nationalistic and militaristic tone. In this respect, the importance of mass sports rather than individuality was emphasized also in the magazine (Pura, “Women and Sports”, 24.8.1936), and team sports were encouraged rather than competition between clubs and “individual” championships. Therefore, a discourse was produced that excluded individuality and competition and aimed to strengthen collectivity and massification. As a matter of fact, the 1935 program of the CHP (Republican People's Party) is also related to “militarist nationalism.” (Atalay, 2021, p. 196) Accordingly, physical education will be expanded to include schools, government agencies, and factories. As Atalay said, it is aimed to create a youth that “conserves the country's highest duty and is ready to sacrifice himself for this cause.” (p. 196). As a result, with the nationalism embedded in sports, the society was directed towards sports through the magazine, for sports to create a healthy and strong population. This healthy and large population was especially a potential source of military power. In the context of Kemalist biopolitics, sports become a tool of power that would prepare the population for national defense and war.

### **Citizen-women and Sports**

Women are one of the fundamental elements of the Republican regime and the modernization project. The symbol of the reforms for the Kemalist revolution is the ideal woman image (Göle, 1998, p. 75). In this respect, the ‘ideal woman’ had also been recreated in the nation-state ideology (Arat, 1998, p. 87-88). The ‘citizen woman’, a scientific mother, a modern wife, holder of profession in the public sphere and provided with equality with



men in terms of legal rights, has been seen as the symbol of the Republic.

Among the many criticisms made that the place of women in the modernization project of the Republic is “state feminism” and “restricted to changes at the superstructural level”, Göle (2014, p. 75) defines Kemalism to be— perhaps – the first movement in the world to aim at the transformation of civilization through the will of the state. In this respect, the equality of genders and their visibility in the public sphere were aimed. Berktaş (1998, p. 4) pointed out that the achievement of women's rights serves a certain purpose: In the modern sense, women's rights have been accepted as a tool that reveals the national character of the new state. As an indicator of difference from Ottoman society, visibility in the public sphere is an indicator of the Republic, as opposed to women who are excluded from the public sphere therein.

Sports is an important application area in this respect. Although there are few in number, there were articles directly addressed to women in the magazine. These encourage women both because of their aspect of fertility and their being the producers of the new generation as well as a requirement of modernity, and they hold them responsible for sports. Therefore, sports are presented both for the physical health and beauty of women and as a national duty.

In the magazine, a very different discourse that is only directed towards women, as a different gender from men, has not been produced. Instead, the ideals and goals of the regime are repeated, and women are seen as citizens/individuals. “The step to be taken is the product of the best intentions: Turkish women should be modern women in every respect.” (Baydar, “Haremlik - Selamlık in Sports”, 7.3.1938). In this respect, the first Turkish female pilot Sabiha Gökçen, included on the cover art of the 2<sup>nd</sup> issue, is a very good example. “Turkish women, who have the same rights as men, have made their presence known in every field of life and have shown it to themselves through their power.” Gökçen is an example of “the talent and energy in our women”. (Pura, “Women and Sports”, 6.7.1936). Sports and physical training were defined as the “safe way” for women as well as for men in terms of achieving

strength and beauty of the body. In terms of conformity with aesthetic measures, it is often repeated that Turkish women should also be closely involved in physical training and sports, like “modern nations who discovered this secret” (Pura, “Woman and Sports”, 24.8.1936). In addition, photographs and drawings of clothing fashion for sports such as skiing and seasonal needs were also included in the magazine in order to arouse and keep alive the women's interest in sports. The magazine used many articles and photographs of body exercises that can be performed indoors such as homes in order to make the body beautiful and healthy (Kırşan, “Room Gymnastics”, 21.12.1936; “Slimming with Gymnastics”, 23.5.1938).

The magazine considers women valuable and important for their fertility and their role of producing the new generation (Pura, “Women and Sports”, 24.8.1936). As Cantek & Yazar (2009, p. 209) stated, in the early Republican period, in line with eugenicist policies, it was deemed necessary for women to perform sports for bringing to world a healthy and robust generation. In the opinion of the magazine, the bodies of young girls are so neglected that it causes concern for the “future of the generation”. In the pre-republican society, because of the segregation between men (selamlık) and women (haremlik) the women did not have the opportunity to do sports, and young girls were “squat, stocky, pale”, and “clumsy” when it came to running and jumping (Baydar, “Haremlik - Selamlık in Sports”, 7.3.1938). The magazine stated that these negative physical features could be corrected with sports and changed through sports activities such as athletics, basketball and volleyball. The fact that a woman is physically strong and alive is important in terms of “defense of the homeland”, because “... the offspring she will raise will be strong and alive.” But this point of view is valid not only for women, but also for the ideal male body; a healthy and robust population would be possible with sports. However, as it had been mentioned, “Turkish girls and Turkish women are still spectators of sports” (Pura, “Women and Sports”, 29.6.1936), it was criticized that women did not show enough interest in sports. In order to reverse this situation, the activities of female athletes were always

appreciated in the magazine and women were encouraged to participate in sports: "The daughters of mothers who grew up with veils ran, jumped, and threw, just like their brothers, in front of a crowd of more than ten thousand. Turkish girls, for you, too, a new horizon has been opened... .. Sports that will improve your own health today will be the basis of your family happiness tomorrow." (Haftacı, "A New Step in Our Sports Life", 25.4.1938).

The photographs and drawings in the magazine were also important in encouraging women to participate in sports. However, a small part of the photographs in the magazine, which respected social values, belonged to Turkish women, while the majority of them belonged to especially Western women. Turkish women were seen as spectators in sports activities such as scouting, skiing, flying, fencing, in the stadium during the 19 May celebrations, and in public areas where sportive activities are held, such as racing tracks ("Youth Prepared for the Republic Day", 18.10.1937; "The Last Year of the Turkish Bird", 26.10.1936; "Our Youth Practiced Skiing with Joy", 27.12.1937; "A Group of Fencers Working in Beyoğlu Community Center", 27.12.1937). Photographs of women from other nationalities in swimsuits and shorts were used abundantly. Thus, it was aimed to normalize doing sports in public with sports clothes (Pura, "Women and Sports", 6.7.1936; "Women's Athletics Meeting was Held in Paris Last Week", 9.8.1937).

The magazine gave encouraging messages that women could perform all kinds of sports. In the articles, it is out of question to recommend different sports branches to men and women, or to direct the genders to different areas. Cantek & Yarar (2009, p. 209) reveal that in the atmosphere of 1930, sexist social values focusing on the athlete's female body were articulated to the nationalist discourse. The magazine, which became integrated with the party in 1936, encouraged women to participate in all sports, from running to swimming, fencing, cycling,

tennis, rowing or "aviation" (Pura, "Women and Sports", 24.8.1936). Among them, it is understood that soccer was considered as a sport not suitable for women - since it is banned by the federation in Europe because it does not match with women's elegance, which had been valid for the whole world until very recently.<sup>1</sup>

It is seen that the importance given in the 1930s to sports increased not only in Turkey but also in Western countries. For example, Stevenson (1984: 172) tells that in the 1930s, health and sports were considered as serious issues in England, and sports began to be practiced in schools and parks. Such situation was not only related to aesthetics and fashion, it was an indication that a strong and healthy population has become an important issue in the whole West in the process leading up to World War II.

## Discussion and Conclusion

In the early Republican era, although sports was always under the influence of the government, from the mid-1930s it came under the direct control of the state to be organized as a national field. This study aimed to reveal the ideological function of the Turkish Sports Association Magazine, as the spokesperson of the official ideology in sports, during the foundation period of the Republic. Thus, with the Althusser's (2019) definition, the sports press is a tool that allows the government to penetrate society and transfer new values and ideals of the new state to society, i.e. the state's ideological apparatus (SIA). How the meanings and duties attributed by the regime to sports are transferred and appropriated to the public, and how the neural networks of the society are penetrated, constitute the main problem of the study. In this context, the study reveals that the magazine played an important role in the concretization and visibility of some basic components of the Republican ideology in sports. These components are nationalism, population and "Republican woman".

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<sup>1</sup> *Women's football teams were able to participate in the Olympics for the first time in 1996.*

In the 1930s, influenced by the political atmosphere, interest in healthy and strong populations rose all over Europe. While fascist states such as Germany and Italy tended to regulate the population with racist policies, the population became a serious policy problem in democratic countries as well, and the idea of eugenics (racial breeding) affected the whole of Europe. In this respect, for the existence of a healthy and strong population, sports has been one of the factors in policy making all over the world in the period between the two world wars. In the foundation period of the Republic, sports were considered important both for an independent nation-state existence and continuity and a military issue/national security issue. In this respect, sports/physical education were used as a "biopolitics strategy" (Faucoult, 2021) in the early Republican period. As the spokesperson of the official ideology, the magazine also focused on sports such as athletics, equestrian sports, flying and mountaineering, which would be especially beneficial in the war environment and would create physical skills and capacity, and these sports were recommended to all young people, both men and women. The population, gaining health and strength and becoming larger through sports during peacetime, would be the most important resource in terms of military power in wartime. Sports is a means of training not only physically, but also mentally and morally. In this sense, sports has been attempted to be popularized as a tool that disciplined and internalized the sense of duty, increased resilience and improved organization. In general terms, it has been instrumentalized as a symbol of social benefit and civilization.

Nationalism, one of the founding principles of the Republic, was conveyed to the public as embedded in sports through the magazine. The articles in the magazine presented physical exercise and sports as civic duty, as a way of serving the country. Therefore, the messages of nationalism embedded in sports and transmitted/disseminated through the press created the feeling that individuals were members of the same community and strengthened the sense of loyalty to the nation. Importance has been attached to the prevention of "competition in sports", considered as a principle that segregated

the society, and to the massification thanks to sports rather than individualization. Although, since the mid-1930s, with the influence of authoritarian regimes on the rise in the West, the nationalist discourse in sports took on a chauvinistic and military tone (Cantek & Yazar, 2009). However, 1936-1938, when the magazine was published, covers exactly those years and it is not observed that certain sports were highlighted as a symbol of the nation in the magazine. Although sports were associated with patriotism, it cannot be said that there is a chauvinistic discourse in the magazine. There is no question of glorifying national sports, unnecessary boasting or racist rhetoric. It is clear that the magazine had a very important place in the construction of "us" in the context of serving to establish the opposition of "us and the others", which is one of the main functions of banal nationalism (Bilig, 2002). However, it still served to paint the rest of the world as "them", but only in a sense of peaceful and rational measures.

Women were one of the main building blocks of the Republic and the modernization project. In this respect, the magazine instrumentalized women in terms of both material production and symbolic production. The magazine encouraged the woman, the producer of the new generation with her fertility, to perform sports in order to keep her healthy. Therefore, sports were presented as a national duty as well as for the health and beauty of women (Yazar, 2014). However, for women, apart from being the producer of the new generation, a discourse on gender construction has not really been used. There is no question of further strengthening women's gender roles and squeezing them into these traditional roles. On the other hand, sports made women visible in the public sphere as an indicator of modernity. Women, who existed in the public sphere thanks to sports, represented and proved the egalitarian and progressive character of the Republic as citizens with equal rights with men.

As a result, TSA magazine functioned as an ideological apparatus of the state. The magazine briefly contributed to the formation of a healthy and strong population between 1936-1938, as a political and cultural field, as well as transforming this population into a nation and

individuals/citizens who adhered to the founding principles of the state. Although the military tone of the nationalist discourse increased gradually as the international atmosphere being dragged into World War II, the magazine's prudent and peaceful discourse was preserved until the last issue.

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# Dosing Criticism with Praise: E-Feedback in L2 Student Writing

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## Abstract

The current study deals with e-feedback delivered to the students in higher education during COVID19 pandemic. The data comes from e-feedback delivered to the students in a departmental compulsory course at the department of English language in a state university. Data analysis is conducted in two stages. First, the e-feedbacks classified into three categories regarding the feedback moves by Hyland and Hyland (2012). In the second stage, the categories coded by the two researchers were transferred to SPSS, with the aim of finding out the frequently employed speech act employed by the instructor while giving e-feedback to students. In addition, chi-square test was also conducted to see whether there are significant differences in speech act groups according to the level of success in the study. The findings indicated that the instructor prefers to give e-feedback to unsuccessful students than successful ones using different groups of speech acts such as praise and criticism. Another finding of the study shows that criticism and praise were the most frequently used feedback patterns in our data while suggestion and other feedback acts did not occur frequently. Overall, the study shows the importance of instructor-based e-feedback for academic writing.

**Keywords:** e-Feedback, Criticism, Praise, Advice, Feedback Moves.

## Öz

Bu çalışma, COVID19 salgını sırasında üniversite öğrencilerine verilen e-dönütü (geribildirim) ele almaktadır. Veriler, bir kamu üniversitesinin İngilizce dil bölümünde bölümün zorunlu dersi olarak yürütülen dersin öğrencilerine ders eğitmeni tarafından gönderilen e-dönütlerden (e-geribildirimlerden) oluşmaktadır. İlk aşama, söz eylemler (eleştiri, öğüt ve övgü gibi) Hyland ve Hyland'ın (2012) dönüt (geribildirim) gruplarına göre sınıflandırılacaktır. İkinci aşamada ise iki araştırmacı tarafından kodlanan kategoriler SPSS'e aktararak ders eğitmeninin dönüt verirken hangi söz eylemi daha çok tercih ettiğini bulmayı hedefleyecektir. Araştırma sonucunda veriler arasında eleştiri ve övgü en sık kullanılan geri bildirim kalıbı olurken, öneri söz eylemi sıklıkla kullanılmamıştır. Çalışmada ayrıca söz eylem gruplarının başarı oranlarına göre farklılıklarının anlamlı olup olmadığına bakılmak için Ki-Kare testi yapılmıştır. Bu analiz sonucunda ders sorumlusunun başarılı öğrenciler yerine başarısız öğrencilere farklı gruptaki söz eylemlerle dönüt verdiği görülmektedir. Araştırma sonuçları veriler arasında eleştiri ve övgünün en sık kullanılan dönüt (geribildirim) kalıbı olduğunu gösterirken, öneri söz eyleminin ise sıklıkla kullanılmadığını göstermektedir. Genel anlamda, çalışma, ders sorumlusu temelli geribildirim akademik yazım açısından önemini göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** e-Dönüt (e-Geribildirim), Eleştiri, Övgü, Öğüt, Geribildirim (Dönüt) Adımları.

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## Introduction

The recognition of the importance of academic writing in opening gates for admission to universities and gaining success in higher education depends mostly on success in writing in English (Hyland 2013; Altınmakas & Bayyurt 2019). Academic writing becomes an inevitable and pedagogical part of teaching EAP (English for Academic Purposes) regarding the genre, discourse and style (Akbaşır, 2010; Aktaş & Gündüz, 2007; Kavcar, Oğuzkağan & Aksoy, 2004). Therefore, the development of student writing becomes an essential and ultimate goal for the L2 instructors. More guidance for the learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) to convey their message in a coherent, organized and explanatory way is a necessity and these learners expect more guidance from the language teachers (Berkant, Derer & Derer, 2020; Brown, 2000). It is obvious that teaching writing skills is one of the most challenging parts for the language teachers as it requires rhetoric, communication and critical thinking. Thus, proficiency in writing is not an easy task and academic writing is an inevitable part of teaching English for academic purposes in the EFL setting at the tertiary level. The students are expected to be able to use the language professionally and academically in addition to general language competence. In academic writing, essays have a crucial role to provide the students' transition from basic forms to more professional way of writing. In the context of EFL effective academic writing is a challenging task for the students because the written discourse cannot solely be acquired unconsciously.

Feedback in language education refers to informing the students about whether they have behaved in accordance with the aims of education and/or whether they have attained the target behaviors (Berkant et al. 2020). This definition senses the teacher's feedback to students' writing though there are studies on peer feedback (Abri, 2021; Corbin, 2019). Feedback is also an important tool for language teachers to make the students write effectively. In the literature there are two types of feedback identified: positive and negative.

Positive feedback is used to affirm the students' path followed and to encourage them to go on with their study while negative feedback guides them to the correct path (Aloud, 2022; Nunan, 1999). In the literature, for teaching writing skills, written corrective feedback is also defined as a tool for language teachers to guide their students accurately and effectively in the target language (Aloud, 2022; Corbin, 2019; Ferris, 2010). However, feedback in essay writing is not bounded to the structural aspects of the language but also content and organization should be regarded in the development (Kencana, 2020; Ferris, 2010).

It was in 1980s and early 1990s that the effects of teacher feedback started to be questioned (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). In most of the studies carried out in L2 writing, providing feedback seemed to assess errors rather than the quality of writing (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1995, 1997; Lalende, 1982; Cohen, 1987; Truscott, 1996, 1999). The task of the L2 instructor is to consider the background of the student, his/her needs, preferences and even the relation he/she has with the student to provide an effective feedback (Ferris et al. 1997; Hyland, F. 1998, 2003). Thus, providing feedback is offering advice to students on how to gain better skills in academic writing and has been enormously important in the foreign language writing process to encourage and strengthen learning skills of the students. However, teacher feedback emerging as a pedagogical advice genre encompasses comments of praise, advice and criticism as well. Feedback production does not simply focus on grammar or content but there can be several commenting strategies (i.e. praising, criticizing, advising) as well when teachers respond to texts produced by students (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, 2012). In addition, teacher is interacting personally with the students when giving feedback. This causes them to feel more motivated and encouraged to write more when they receive positive guided feedback. Nevertheless, correcting all the mistakes in writing is not helpful for them (Corbin, 2019; Kencana, 2020).

In addition, Hyland and Hyland's (2012) study showed the metadiscursive aspects of teacher's



feedback writing. The feedback moves in that study were formed from praise, criticism and advice. Feedback seen as a form of advice is realized positively and the teachers were trying to give advice in a balanced manner while at the same time they were focusing on both the positive and negative aspects of the student's writing. In that study, praise was the most frequently employed act as a reflection of positive feedback followed by criticism while suggestion was the least frequently used feedback act. When the teachers were using criticism, they were mitigating the force of the speech act by hedges such as modal lexical items, imprecise quantifiers (i.e. fairly, a bit, somewhat, really) and modals (i.e. should, could) and *usuality* devices (i.e. often, sometimes). In another study, Hyland and Hyland (2001) examined written feedback delivered to the students of English as a second language (ESL). While they state that criticisms and suggestions were mitigated through hedges with the aim of enhancing teacher student interaction, they also point to the fact that hedges could cause incomprehension and miscommunication with the undergraduate students as well.

In Turkish foreign language education context, the teacher feedback is the most preferable (Demirel & Enginarlar 2016) though the teacher feedback is scarcely given and when given, it concentrates on grammar and vocabulary rather than content, fluency or organization of ideas. According to the results of a study conducted by Altınmakas and Bayyurt (2019), students who received feedback from teachers thought that teachers did not understand the intended meaning of the essays they have written. Another significant issue was the lack of consensus between the teacher and the student. Concerning the problems arising from feedback, it is possible that feedback delivering can be related to the feelings of the students. Therefore, the task of the instructor becomes harder considered from this perspective. The teacher must make effort for the student to receive his message about the feedback he has formulated. What is more, feedback could trigger the anxiety of the student. Furthermore, Bayrakçı (2009) indicated that teacher education programs in Turkey lacks in provision of feedback.

As an effective part of the learning system with the emergence of distance education, e-feedback (electronic feedback) delivering became more important than ever in higher education in a student's academic life during COVID-19. As a result of this, teachers who were aware about the rules of establishing face to face communication orally, started faceless communication (Simmons, 1994; Harb, 2016; Harb, 2020) via different online platforms. E-feedback was used effectively to communicate properly in a digitalized world (Akbulut, 2020). Considering the benefits of e-feedback such as reduction in paper work, Tuzi (2004) argues that e-feedback could be more useful than oral feedback. However, Abri (2021) found out that accuracy was more emphasized in the comments than content and organization. Despite the ease of communication, that medium of communication has its shortcomings. There can be face threatening acts in such faceless contexts (Simmons, 1994). When trying to establish faceless contact, one should be aware that one could be misunderstood or could produce vague feedback which is not understood properly by the student. Recognizing the importance of face, Hyland (2013) advises teachers to form interaction through conferencing with students.

In the EFL context, the students have numerous books and articles to facilitate their writing process; however, providing them with relevant feedback to consider their own development in writing is very limited. This is a strong need for EFL students at tertiary level. Taking these into account, this study aims to identify feedback act patterns online to present a detailed analysis of the types and frequencies of feedback acts in COVID-19 period and to evaluate the pragmatic functions of feedback patterns in EFL writing.

This study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the feedback moves patterns used by the L2 instructor in the e-feedback in the online learning environment in COVID-19?
- 2) Does the mitigation as a strategy differ according to success level of the students in COVID-19?
- 3) Do the pairs in feedbacks differ according to the success level of the students in COVID 19?

## Method

This study aims at examining the instructor's e-feedbacks on academic essays written by the freshmen students in a language department. The instructor was supposed to give e-feedbacks on the argumentative essays through the platform of "Google Classroom" during COVID-19. These e-feedbacks were the data for this study. The data was analyzed by the researchers according to the pedagogic purpose of praise, criticism, or suggestion corresponding to three broad speech acts as compliments, criticisms and advice (Hyland & Hyland, 2012).

## Data Collection Instrument and Procedure

The e-feedbacks given by the instructor to the argumentative essays belonging to 98 freshmen were examined to identify *praise*, *criticism* and *suggestion*. They all were written from 2020 to 2022, i.e. during COVID-19. These essays were submitted to the instructor via the "Google Classroom" platform when the classes had to be fully online in those times. These essays were the compulsory assignments of the departmental compulsory course in a department of English language in a state university. The students took 10% of the total grade from this assignment in the course.

The writers of these essays were freshmen students attending in a language department in the university. They all passed the proficiency test administered by a language school affiliated to the university. The students were all Turkish so their native tongue was Turkish but English was their foreign language. They were aged from 17 to 20. From the beginning of the academic year, these students were exposed to academic writing skills as a part of the course. Before the argumentative essay, they were instructed on academic paragraph writing, parts of an essay and four different essays as cause-effect, classification, compare-and-contrast. The topics for all types of writing were assigned by the instructor based on the themes of the units delivered in the instruction. The argumentative essay was assigned as the last

assignment since the students were thought to be ready to write the well-organized, coherent and unified essays. For the argumentative essays two topics were assigned as below:

- "Art, music, and physical education courses are not necessary in the school curriculum." Do you agree or disagree?
- "Children under 15 should not have any social website account." Do you agree or disagree?

These essays were evaluated by the course instructor and they were assigned a score out of 10.

The instructor of this course gave individual e-feedback to all the writings administered to the students. The e-feedbacks were given through the same platform as "Google Classroom". The students and the instructor interacted through this platform and the students were supposed to revise their writings after they got their related e-feedback. These focused on the content, organization and language use. Specifically, for the organization of the essay, the feedback was given considering three main patterns in the content of writing an argumentative essay in the course syllabus. In terms of the content, how the topic was employed was delivered, what the supports and details were used to explain the topic sentence and how unity and coherence were established. In addition, the students were delivered e-feedback on language use such as grammar and the choice of the lexis. The data for this study were based on these e-feedbacks administered to the students by the instructor herself. Regarding the ethical issues in the study, there was no concern based on three reasons: Firstly, the study did not collect data from students because the e-feedbacks were the statements by the instructors. In addition, the study makes a textual analysis on the instructor's own e-feedback as data. Lastly, the e-feedbacks were not person-identifiable.

All the feedback comments given by the instructor were gathered in a document. They all were identified and coded according to the pedagogic purpose of praise, criticism, and advice or suggestion (Hyland & Hyland, 2012). For this coding process, the researchers examined the key expressions such as "I suggest" "Well-done!" and

“However, ...should” in order to identify suggestion, criticism and praise. Also, the frequency for the categories was calculated and then these data were analyzed via SPSS. Moreover, the paired feedback categories were also identified as praise-criticism, praise-criticism and criticism-suggestion while transferring to SPSS.

### Data Analysis

In this study, the data analysis conducted according to the research questions. For the first research question “What are the feedback moves patterns used by the L2 instructor in the e-feedback in the online learning environment in COVID-19?”, the e-feedbacks were examined regarding the feedback moves based on Hyland and Hyland’s definition (2012) as advice, suggestion, praise, and criticism. These can be explained as below:

- *Advice* refers to making general or specific suggestions like “You might want to include an example here.” (Tuzi, 2004, p. 225)
- *Praise* is an act which attributes credit to another for some characteristic, attribute, skill positively valued by the writer (Holmes 1995). As an example for this feedback “This is an excellent beginning to your essay!”
- *Criticism* is defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction or negative comment’ on a text (Hyland, 2004, p.44). An example for criticism is ‘Your first sentences don’t fit the rest of the paragraph at all.’ (Tuzi, 2004, p. 225)
- *Suggestion* differs from criticism in involving an explicit recommendation for remediation, a relatively clear and accomplishable action for improvement and embodying advice deemed to benefit the recipient. As an example for suggestion “You might want to include an example here.” (Tuzi, 2004, p.225)

For the analysis, *advice* and *suggestion* are grouped together as their frequency is so low that the statistical analysis could not be conducted. Also, in the nature of the data, *advice* and *suggestion* do not differ much. All the expressions in the feedbacks are transferred into SPSS and the findings are presented and discussed in Table 1 and Table 2 in the next section.

For both the second and the third research question, Chi-Square Test was conducted to find out the differences. The alpha level is 0.05. The second question focuses on whether the mitigation as a strategy differ according to the success level of the students while the third question concerns whether the pairs in the feedbacks differ according to the success level of the students. The findings are presented and discussed in Table 3 and Table 4 in the next section.

### Findings and Discussion

#### The Findings for The First Research Question

Regarding the first research question “What are the feedback moves used by the L2 instructor in student feedback in online communication?”, the distribution of feedback moves is identified. Considering three main feedback moves (n=330), *praise* is 35%, *criticism* is 53% and *advice* or *suggestion* is 7% in the total number. (Table 1). *Praise* and *criticism* make up approximately 95% of the total feedback moves, while remaining %5 consists of other feedback moves (i.e. suggestion, illocutionary act, personal contact, alternatives, statement, questions, requests, quick fixes).

**Table 1. Distribution of feedback categories**

Feedback moves	Frequency	Percentage
Criticism	173	53
Praise	109	35
Advice/Suggestion	23	7
Others	25	5
Total	330	100

According to Table 1, among the feedback moves criticisms were the most frequently used forms. They formed 53% (n=173) of the data. The finding contradicts the study by Hyland and Hyland (2012) since teachers in that study thought that criticism could be detrimental to face, they preferred to use praise in forming positive feedback to their students. In a study conducted by Tuzi (2004) the ratio of advice, alternatives and criticisms are equally employed both by L2 writers and instructors. Despite the difficulty of criticizing, the instructor employed criticism in COVID19 period as a reflection of directness and being precise.

In the data, the second most frequently used feedback is *praise*. It formed 35.0 % (n=109) of the data. This finding contradicts with the study conducted by Connors and Lunsford (1993). Their findings show that positive acts like praise is not frequent in the feedback contexts; however, *praise* is extensively used in feedback contexts (Bates, Lane, & Lange, 1993; Hyland & Hyland 2001, 2012) as a reflection of the approval. Considering the studies in education, *praise* is regarded as a positive feedback to empower the students' motivation for writing. According to Corbin (2019) and Ferris (2010), the instructor's positive feedbacks arise their enthusiasm for writing in the target language. In Tuzi's study (2005), *praise* was the second frequently used component by L2 writers but it was the fourth frequently used component by the instructors which may mean that L2 writers were easily using praise to other students, while the instructors were not that at ease in engaging with students through praise forms.

The third component *suggestion* is the least frequent one in this study. It formed 5 % (n=25) of the data. This can be due to the cultural context in which the teachers do not think advice or suggestion could guide the students to write better in Turkish educational contexts. Moreover, Bayraktaroğlu (2001, p. 205) stated that in Turkish language advice giving is suitable among friends who are intimate; therefore, this is not relevant to the scope of the study since there is a hierarchical distance between the teacher and the students, advice is scarcely preferred in this type of the context. This finding is also consistent with the findings of the study by Hyland and Hyland (2012). According to them, while praise and criticism are *expressives* that state positive feelings and emotions, suggestions are directives that are directing the recipient to do something. Therefore, praise and criticism seem to be less intruding than suggestion or advice. Thus, in this study, the L2 instructor does not prefer to direct the university students to take some actions. In addition, since advice or suggestion refers to some future action (Locher 2013, House & Kadar, 2021), the L2 instructor solely evaluates the written essays and delivers feedback to students to improve their

writing skills. The example e-feedback in this category can be as follows:

Dear X,

This **is not** an argumentative essay. It **does not have** counterargument (s)and refitting them. This **is** an essay explaining the reasons behind supporting these courses. Also, the supports and details for the pro-arguments are **weak**.

The example e-feedback above is formed from *criticism* acts only. The L2 instructor criticizes the student directly by using negative forms such as 'This is not', 'it does not have' which state that the essay is not an argumentative one. She goes on further to say that there is something wrong in the essay supporting her claims. In addition to these, the instructor strengthens her ideas by adding the adjective 'weak' with an emoji that is not smiling to the students face so that the student can understand why the essay is a low rated one.

An example of *praise* act from the data is as the following:

Dear X, This is really **great!** You have **improved** your writing **a lot**.

In this example, the teacher praises the student's writing by the positive words such as great, improve, a lot and uses emoji to contact with the student even visually. When the instructor only uses praise to the student, this means that everything related to writing is all right and the essay is a high rated one. By doing so, she shows that she approves their composition and the way they write their composition. In the other example below, the instructor gives advice to the student with advice form 'I suggest'.

I suggest you study the document on the argumentative essay in the platform (the institutional system in the university).

In this study, mitigation, as a strategy to give e-feedback to the students, was identified in 75 feedback comments (Table 2). The e-feedbacks start with the positive aspects of the student essays but are followed by the negative aspects of them which seem to appear in feedback pairs. In terms of the pairs, criticisms were stated in the e-feedbacks just after the praise. Another example of *praise* combined with *criticism* from the data is as the following:



Dear Y,

This essay has an organization of CON+REF+PRO in each body paragraph. **However**, the supports and minors **needs** stronger in the argumentative essay so the expert opinion, the researches or a news **would** make this persuasive.

In this example, the instructor first uses praise to indicate that the student followed the pattern taught in the lesson. The second sentence starts with the contrastive conjunction; however, that follows the criticism with what is required and how can the composition become a persuasive one. When *praise* is used in combination with *criticism* as Hyland (2000) states it mitigates the criticisms to come up (Halliday, 2000). They expressed that praise mitigates the criticisms to come up. Similarly, in the study, the *criticism* was used frequently used with the *praise*, which forms *pairs*. This pair is meaningful regarding the study by Hyland and Hyland (2012), which revealed that the teachers wanted to sound less direct so they more preferred to use *praise* and *criticism* than *suggestion*. However, in this study, the findings indicated that the instructor wanted to give her message in a direct manner where faceless communication was a necessity for COVID-19. Another reason for this could be the ease of communication in such a period did not require any redressive or polite action on the part of the instructor giving feedback. Therefore, it can be said that faceless communication reduces interpersonal relations (Kohl, Newman & Tomey, 1975, cited in Chesebro and Bonsall, 1989, p.123).

**Table 2. Mitigation of Feedback**

Feedback comments	Number	Percentage
Feedback formed from praise only	18	24
Feedback formed from criticism only	9	12
Feedback pair as praise and criticism	48	64
Total feedback comments	75	75

In conclusion, in this study, other feedback acts (i.e. suggestion, illocutionary act, personal contact, alternatives, statement, questions, requests, quick fixes) were rarely identified (n=17; 5,3%). It is clearly observed that praise and criticism takes more than suggestion in this learning environment in Turkey in COVID-19. Also, this e-feedback was

given online learning process where the students and teachers had to have faceless communication and they had an online platform to interact with each other. Besides, these findings indicate that *praise* and *criticism* forms were seen as beneficial pairs to transfer the message so clearly that the students could take actions and make necessary improvements in their essays.

**The Findings for The Second and Third Research Questions**

For the second question, a chi-square test was performed to examine whether the e-feedbacks involving mitigation differ in terms of the success level of the students. The score for the assignment is 10 and the students scored 10-8 are successful and the students 7-1 are unsuccessful According to the results, there is a significant relation between these two variables (X= 55.048, p<.000). More e-feedbacks having mitigated statements were written for the unsuccessful students. This finding is relevant because in the educational context, the instructors are required to give the direct feedback so that the students could modify and improve their writings. According to Hyland and Hyland (200, 194), mitigation is used as a strategy by the teachers as “criticism can represent a direct challenge to a writer and undermine his or her developing confidence”.

**Table 3 . Chi-Square Results**

Variable	Chi -Square	df	p value
Statements with Mitigation and Success Level	55.048	1	.000
Paired Feedback and The Success Level	45.908	1	.000

Moreover, a chi-square test was performed to examine whether the e-feedbacks having pairs differ in terms of the success level of the students, which is the third question. The score for the assignment is 10 and the students scored 10-8 are successful and the students 7-1 are unsuccessful. According to the results, there is a significant relation between these two variables (p<.000). More feedbacks having the pairs were written for the unsuccessful students. This finding is relevant because in the educational context, the language instructors tend to give detailed feedbacks to the

students to be a clear guide them for their review process (Hyland & Hyland, 2001).

Regarding the paired e-feedback in mitigation, this study has more e-feedback pairs ( $n=47$ ) beginning with *praise* and following on *criticisms* (Table 4). Moreover, Vattoy and Smith (2019) stated that teacher's feedback is a tool to build up the self-efficacy and self-confidence on the students to move on; therefore, the feedback pairs with praise and criticism is relevant. Considering the context of this study, this pair is meaningful since there is an online platform the students interact with the instructor. Thus, the instructor wanted to clearly express what the students should revise after these e-feedbacks.

**Table 4. The Distribution of E-Feedback Pairs**

Pairs	Number	Percentage
Praise-Criticism	47	72
Praise-Criticism-Suggestion	13	20
Criticism-Suggestion	5	8
Total	65	100

As a result, these findings signify that the teacher's or instructor's feedbacks are not ordinary statements but they serve the needs of the students to write better essays. *Criticism* is followed after *praise*, which is meaningful in the pedagogical contexts since *criticism* and *praise* are two ends of the continuum.

## Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper focused on feedback moves delivered to students by the instructor. Among the feedback moves, *criticism* was the most frequently employed act followed by praise and suggestion. In the literature, criticism was considered as a feedback move that causes the demotivation of the students in the language learning environment; however, the teachers and instructors see them as an opportunity for reinforcing the writing skills (Yunus, 2020; Biber, Nekrasova & Horn, 2011). Thus, the teachers do not only act as the authority but as a facilitator, guide and even proofreader or editor. Regarding this study, sharing the feedback between the instructor and the students had to be conducted online during COVID-19, which means the faceless communication. Hence, the instructor

had a pressure to facilitate and guide the students about their writing manners only by this online platform and this can be one of the main cause to deliver the e-feedback in *criticism*.

Regarding *praise* and *advice* or *suggestion* as the feedback moves, the findings showed that praise was the second move and *advice* or *suggestion* was the third move used in this e-feedback giving. The reason behind could be the cultural context. The participants of the study were Turkish learners of English and the instructor was also Turkish. Therefore, though English was the medium of the instruction, the instructor wanted to share her comments in a detailed way considering lacking points of the feedback. In other words, Turkish students would like to see their mistakes so that they could make necessary changes and improvement (Berkant, Derer and Derer 2020; Yücel and Ataç 2019). In addition, the study indicated that pairing the feedback moves have significant differences between the successful and unsuccessful students. This finding is meaningful in this study as the unsuccessful students are required to have more detailed feedback to identify the errors in their writing. Thus, the instructor would like to meet this expectation of these students and make them comprehend their errors in COVID-19.

In terms of mitigation, this study signified that the mitigation strategies are not meaningful to in this context. This can be the result of the online communication which the instructor has almost little contact with the students so there is a strong requirement to transmit the errors to be corrected directly. Moreover, Turkish context of this study could be another reason for this. Since mitigation strategies involve indirect and hidden messages, these learners are expected to have straight forward feedback expressing what they need to revise or rewrite in their writing materials.

In conclusion, the significance of this study is the exploration of feedback moves in writing in EFL setting. Moreover, it helps the experts understand what feedback in the writing courses acts regarding the linguistic features of the target language in EFL learning environment. However, the study has some limitations. The scope of the

study focuses on the limited the students' feedbacks in Turkish advanced learners of English so there could be further studies having extensive data on feedback moves. Furthermore, the data comes out of the e-feedback comments of the instructor. Thus, the future research will deal with the views of the instructors and the students on feedback giving processes. Besides, the speech acts *praise*, *advice* or *criticism* should be evaluated pragmatically in different contexts. The combination of these speech acts has different functions in feedback context in Turkish which needs to be further studied in different languages. Also, online education needs to be scrutinized in terms of feedback processes in future studies.

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# Price Sensitivity, Perceived Food Quality, and Intention to Purchase Fast Food in the Context of Health-Consciousness of University Students

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## Abstract

*This study aims to investigate the moderating effect of university students' health consciousness on the relationship between price sensitivity and their intention to purchase, as well as the relationship between perceived food quality and their intention to purchase in the fast-food industry. Data were collected from 147 and 144 university students in Canada and Turkey, respectively, and analyzed using PROCESS analysis. The results of the analyses revealed that the moderating role of health consciousness is significant in the food quality-purchase intention and price sensitivity-purchase intention relationships in both samples. In the Canadian sample, the influence of price sensitivity on purchase intention becomes weaker (stronger) when health consciousness increases (decreases). In Turkey sample, the influence of price sensitivity on fast-food purchase intention is significant when health consciousness is at a low level, however, as health consciousness increases (i.e., medium and high), the effect of price sensitivity on purchase intention becomes insignificant. Moreover, when health consciousness increases (decreases), the impact of perceived food quality on fast-food purchase intention decreases (increases). Understanding these mechanisms is of substantive importance for managers and policymakers considering the growing prevalence of fast-food products in most developed and developing countries and their consumption by university students.*

**Keywords:** Health Consciousness; Price Sensitivity; Perceived Food Quality; Purchase Intention; Fast Food; University Students.

## Öz

*Bu çalışma, üniversite öğrencilerinin sağlık bilincinin fiyat duyarlılığı-satın alma niyeti ve algılanan gıda kalitesi-satın alma niyeti arasındaki ilişkilerdeki düzenleyici etkisini fast food sektöründe araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Kanada ve Türkiye'den sırasıyla 147 ve 144 üniversite öğrencisinden veri toplanmış ve PROCESS analizi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Analiz sonuçlarına göre, her iki örnekleme de gıda kalitesi-satın alma niyeti ve fiyat duyarlılığı-satın alma niyeti ilişkilerinde sağlık bilincinin düzenleyici rolü bulunmaktadır. Kanada örnekleminde, sağlık bilinci arttığında (azaldığında) fiyat duyarlılığının satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisi zayıflamaktadır (güçlenmektedir). Türkiye örnekleminde, sağlık bilinci düşük seviyede olduğunda fiyat duyarlılığının fast-food satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisi anlamlı iken, sağlık bilinci arttıkça (orta ve yüksek) fiyat duyarlılığının satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisi anlamsız hale gelmektedir. Ayrıca, sağlık bilinci arttığında (azaldığında) algılanan gıda kalitesinin fast-food satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisi azalmaktadır (artmaktadır). Çoğu gelişmiş ve gelişmekte olan ülkede fast-food ürünlerinin artan yaygınlığı ve bunların üniversite öğrencileri tarafından tüketilmesi göz önüne alındığında, bu mekanizmaların anlaşılması yöneticiler ve politika yapıcılar açısından önem taşımaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sağlık bilinci; fiyat duyarlılığı; algılanan gıda kalitesi; satın alma niyeti; fast food; üniversite öğrencileri

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## Introduction

Fast food poses public health problems, such as obesity (Wie & Giebler, 2014). It makes consumers vulnerable to diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) (Polsky, Moineddin, Dunn, Glazier, & Booth, 2016) such as hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases (Saha, Al Mamun, & Kabir, 2021). It was found that the frequency of eating fast food by young adults aged 18-30 was directly related to weight gain or an increase in weight (Dahm et al., 2010). Onurlubaş and Yılmaz (2013) found in their study that more than 90% of participants consider fast food to be unhealthy. Furthermore, when asked about the harmful effects of fast food, 80.8% of participants cited obesity, 72.8% cited cardiovascular problems, and 57.7% cited high cholesterol.

Even fast-food restaurants may adversely affect the well-being of society in the long run if consumed in excess and for long periods of time. Fast food is becoming increasingly popular among people of any age, and young adults, in particular, continue to be the largest fast food consumers worldwide (Saha et al., 2021). Fast food has become popular for young adults who eat more outside of the home, which contributes to greater consumption of it (Saha et al., 2021). University life places financial and time constraints on students who do not live with their parents, forcing them to adopt *laissez-faire* dietary lifestyles with little worry about the consequences (Arnett, 2000; Roehrich, 2004; Stockton & Baker, 2013). Compared to other age groups in society, university students have some of the worst eating habits (Pelletier & Laska, 2013). Poor dietary lifestyles make university students six times more likely to gain weight than the general population (Small, Bailey-Davis, Morgan, & Maggs, 2013). University students are also associated with obesity and diet-related NCDs (Horacek et al., 2013). Young adults, such as university students, purchase fast food at increasing levels due to low prices and time and budget constraints. Also, they complain about the unavailability of tasty, healthy, and affordable foods on-campus (Racine et al., 2022). Accordingly, examining fast-food

consumption on campus in the context of university students is crucial.

The growing health concerns pose a threat to the fast food industry (Keynote, 2016), and the stigma inherited from negative health and wellness publicity remains in the minds of consumers (Franchised Help, 2015). To overcome this, the social marketing orientation requires companies to consider the welfare of the society in addition to satisfying customers and gaining profits (Kotler, Armstrong, & Opresnik, 2020). Based on this perspective, the fast-food industry has responded with improvements to their menus to include healthier menu items such as salads and fruit juices (Namkung & Jang, 2007). However, even if fast-food restaurants offer healthier options, will consumers choose them over other alternatives? It is unclear whether providing consumers with healthy food options will result in their choice (Racine et al., 2022). Thus, marketing managers of fast-food restaurants may be hesitant to invest in healthy alternatives.

Consumers consider their health when making any form of food purchase (Chambers et al., 2016). For example, health threats from fast food showed a significant impact on customer satisfaction (Ali & Lee, 2019). However, this finding and its potential implications have not been analyzed further. Earlier research frequently placed an emphasis on consumers' overall health perceptions of entire menu items or consumer perceptions of fast-food meals without considering their health consciousness (Hwang & Cranage, 2015).

In this context, marketing managers in the fast-food industry strive to create *value* for their target market. Value serves as the basis for marketing (American Marketing Association, n.d.) and can be defined in various ways (Gültekin & Kement, 2018). A central perspective on value, according to Zeithaml (1988), is the exchange between a "give" component, such as price, and a "get" component, such as quality. In other words, "value is affordable quality." (Zeithaml, 1988, 13) Similarly, Onurlubaş and Yılmaz (2013) find that the most frequently mentioned factor as a cause for university students to prefer fast food is the price-quality relationship.

Relying on this value approach, the price should be reviewed first. Fast-food restaurants had the lowest acceptable prices among the other types of restaurants, such as fine dining/gourmet, theme/ambiance, and popular/family restaurants (M.-A. Lee, 2007). Furthermore, price is the most important factor for both Korean and Filipino college students when selecting fast-food restaurants (Baek, Ham, & Yang, 2006). This may be due to the students' price sensitivity (Baek, Ham, & Yang, 2006). Fast-food restaurants demonstrated the highest level of price sensitivity compared to other types of restaurants (M.-A. Lee, 2007). Accordingly, companies in the fast-food industry focus on attributes such as low prices (Wie & Giebler, 2014). Low prices enable businesses to obtain a competitive advantage (M. Lee & Ulgado, 1997). Even though several studies have examined the factors that influence price sensitivity (Hsieh & Chang, 2004; Ramirez & Goldsmith, 2009; Wakefield & Inman, 2003), there has been little research into the effect of price sensitivity on customers' behavioral intentions. Furthermore, some findings concerning the price sensitivity research contradict one another. For example, Meyer et al. (2014) found that individuals prefer fast food more frequently when the price is low, which was significantly higher among participants with less education, whereas Kim et al. (2010) emphasized that one of the reasons university students prefer fast food is because of the relative low price. In this context, it is crucial to find out how the price sensitivity of university students impacts their purchase intentions for fast food.

According to the price-quality value approach, quality is discussed next. There are various studies that investigate the effect of fast-food quality on satisfaction (Lefrid, 2021; Majid, Rojiei, Shafii, Ghoni, & Hassan, 2021; Zhong & Moon, 2020) and behavioral intention (Lefrid, 2021). Furthermore, consumer surveys in developed countries show that price, quality, taste, and health are the most influential factors in determining food preferences (Fox, Davis, Downs, McLaren, & Fanzo, 2021). However, while fast food, in terms of price and quality, provides value to consumers and is influential in their fast-food preferences, research on the health aspect in this context is limited. In

addition, consumer preferences, which determine demand, play a crucial role in achieving healthy diets (Fox et al., 2021). Although university students are price sensitive, favour fast-food quality, and thus prefer fast food, health consciousness could act as a boundary condition. For instance, health consciousness has been shown to act as a moderator in the consumption of organic (Singhal, 2017) or healthy foods. Thus, it is important to consider how university students' health consciousness levels influence their food quality perceptions and price sensitivity levels within the fast-food industry.

In this context, the aim of this study is to examine the moderating role of health consciousness on the effect of price sensitivity and food quality on university students' intentions to purchase fast food. Accordingly, the results of this study would help managers make decisions about their product assortment and promotional messages to university students.

## 2. Conceptual Framework and Development of the Hypotheses

### 2.1. Moderating Role of Health Consciousness in the Price Sensitivity-Purchase Intention Relationship

Ramirez and Goldsmith (2009) pointed out how important it is for future research to investigate the consequences of price sensitivity. Fast-food restaurant customers are sensitive to price changes (Min & Min, 2011). In other words, a significant increase in price without a corresponding increase in food quality or service quality leads to a decrease in sales (Min & Min, 2011). For example, a 20% price increase in fast-food products resulted in a 25% decrease in visits to a fast-food restaurant (Gordon-Larsen, Guilkey, & Popkin, 2011). This explains why firms in this industry always strive to set low prices to remain competitive (M. Lee & Ulgado, 1997). These low prices tend to attract and retain price-sensitive customers in the fast-food industry. Accordingly, it could be argued that there is a positive relationship between consumers' price sensitivity and their intention to purchase low-priced fast-food products.

This relationship can be explained using the food choice process model of Furst et al. (1996). According to this conceptual model, consumers' food choices are influenced by various factors. Besides monetary considerations, consumers' food choices are influenced by a variety of factors, such as health, quality, social context, food context, convenience, and value negotiations. Also, economic theory postulates that individuals with less disposable income are more price-sensitive when faced with a purchase situation (Andreyeva, Long, & Brownell, 2010). Thus, the high price sensitivity of low-income consumers, such as university students, could increase their preference for fast-food products due to their relatively low prices.

Over the lifetime of a consumer, their income level influences the development of a personal value system for food choices. Personal value systems represent the repeated food selection experiences throughout a consumer's lifetime (Furst, Connors, Bisogni, Sobal, & Falk, 1996). In other words, customers with limited financial resources will develop a price-sensitive personal value system when making food choices unless their financial resources significantly increase over the duration of their lives. However, the boundary condition of health consciousness might change this price sensitivity-purchase intention relationship. Health consciousness influences consumers' willingness to pay for healthy food (Her & Seo, 2017). Therefore, as the health consciousness of university students increases, the effect of price sensitivity on purchase intention decreases.

The moderating role of health consciousness can be explained by Rogers' (1975) Protection Motivation Theory. Rogers' Protection Motivation Theory explains how fear appeals influence health attitudes and protective behaviours (Ronald W. Rogers, 1975). According to this theory, an individual's motivation to adopt protective behaviours results from a perceived threat and the individual's desire to avoid the possible negative outcome (Floyd, Prentice-Dunn, & Rogers, 2000). Consider an educational flyer that describes the threat of obesity and diet-related NCDs and

recommends regular exercise and a healthy diet to prevent or reduce this threat. According to the Protection Motivation Theory, such a fear appeal activates cognitive appraisal processes regarding the severity of the threat, the probability of its occurrence, and the effectiveness of the recommended coping response (Ronald W. Rogers, 1975). These cognitive processes act as mediating variables between a fear appeal and an individual's motivation or intention to adopt a protective behavior (R. W. Rogers, 1983). Moreover, customers need to keep their attitudes and behaviors consistent to reduce the unpleasant feeling of cognitive dissonance that occurs after a purchase transaction (Gawronski & Strack, 2004). Accordingly, as customers become more health-conscious, the likelihood that they will prefer unhealthy fast-food products decreases. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H1:** *Health consciousness has a moderating role between consumers' price sensitivity and their fast-food purchase intention. As health consciousness increases, the influence of price sensitivity on fast-food purchase intention decreases.*

## 2.2. Moderating Role of Health Consciousness in the Food Quality-Purchase Intention Relationship

The quality of the food has become an important factor for customers when they are deciding on dining out (Keynote, 2016). Memery, Angell, Megicks, and Lindgreen (2015) state that quality is one reason why consumers buy local food. Research has shown that food quality is one of the main reasons that influences consumers to purchase fast food (Ehsan, 2012; Goyal & Singh, 2007). The relationship between food quality and consumers' purchase intentions can be explained using Radder and Le Roux's (2005) food choice model. According to this conceptual model, consumers use sensory variables such as color, taste, appearance, texture, and smell to guide their food choices. A positive relationship exists between these food quality dimensions, such as the appearance dimension (55% of respondents), color



(52% of respondents), and smell (59% of survey respondents), which positively influence consumers' purchase intentions (Radder & Le Roux, 2005). Furst et al. (1996) found that food quality is one of the predominant values articulated by participants in their conceptual food choice process model that needs further research in other populations.

Besides food quality, health is a primary concern in purchasing food because of the increasing prevalence of obesity and diet-related NCDs, which affect societal well-being, especially in most developed countries (Mai & Hoffmann, 2015). Health-conscious customers pursue health-protective behaviors (Ahadzadeh, Sharif, & Ong, 2018). Lee et al. (2014) found that when healthful food options are provided, high-health-conscious customers perceive a restaurant to be socially responsible and are more willing to dine in such restaurants than low-health-conscious customers.

Her and Seo (2017) emphasize how important the "health halo effect" is to how people choose what to eat. The health halo effect refers to an erroneous reasoning process whereby consumers perceive food as healthy due to the nutrition claim, brand, package, price, promotion, or distribution. For example, consumers prefer more side dishes in the restaurants declared to be healthy, such as Subway, than restaurants without such claims like, McDonald's (Her & Seo, 2017).

Since health-conscious consumers' willingness to consume healthy options causes them to make healthier choices than less health-conscious consumers, health consciousness is crucial in terms of consumer food choice decisions (Shin & Mattila, 2019). In this context, high health consciousness causes customers to have more healthy and nutritious food and helps them avoid fast food. Accordingly, this paper examines the moderating role of health consciousness on the influence of food quality on fast-food purchase intention. We propose that health consciousness changes the positive influence of food quality on fast-food purchase intention. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H2:** *Health consciousness has a moderating role between consumers' food quality perceptions and their fast-food purchase intentions. As health consciousness*

*increases, the influence of food quality on fast-food purchase intention decreases.*

Based on the hypotheses established, the proposed model of the study is given in Figure 1.

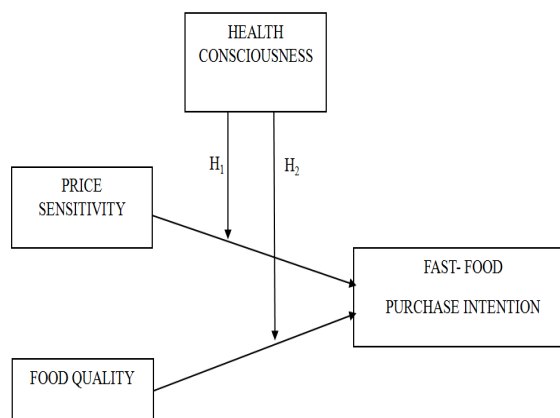


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Sampling

The present study is conducted among public university students of the department of business administration in Toronto (Canada) and Ankara (Turkey). The health of people in a country is determined by the behaviors they adopted when they were young (Lomax, 1999). Stockton and Baker (2013) stated that university students are youths who are on the cusp of becoming the parents and leaders of tomorrow. In other words, university students are the future decision-makers in the world of business and society. Therefore, using university students as a sample for food-related research is one way to influence the future dietary habits of a society (Kral & Rauh, 2010).

In addition, some university students also live in hostels, which give them some freedom from their parents (Arnett, 2000). This independence may lead them to espouse laissez-faire dietary lifestyles without caring much about the consequences (Stockton & Baker, 2013). Also, their new independent environment created by university life may result in financial and time constraints (Dodd et al., 2010). These constraints could influence university students to develop a

strong preference for cheap and convenient fast-food products. Moreover, according to Pelletier and Laska (2013), university students exhibit some of the poorest dietary lifestyles compared to other age groups in society. In other words, university students generally consume low-quality meals (high in calories, sugar, fat, and salt) and consume inadequate amounts of fruits and vegetables (Harring et al., 2010). Poor dietary lifestyles cause university students to gain weight at a rate that is six times higher than that of the general public (Mihalopoulos et al., 2008, cited in Small, Bailey-Davies, Morgan & Maggs, 2013). Similarly, university students have been associated with obesity and diet-related NCDs (Horacek et al., 2012).

Despite policy interventions from some universities to provide healthy food options on campuses, poor food choices still persist among university students (Small et al., 2013). This view is supported by several authors (Lee & Ulgado, 1997; Ehsan, 2012; Bujisic et al., 2014; Hwang & Cranage, 2015) who report that university students constitute the heavy user segment of fast-food restaurants. Accordingly, it can be argued that most university students do not make healthy food choices (Stockton & Baker, 2013). University students between the ages of 18 and 24 represent an appropriate market segment to use when studying consumers' perceptions towards fast-food products (Bujisic et al., 2014). Thus, examining the effect of food quality, health consciousness, and price sensitivity on fast-food purchase intentions amongst university students may contribute to the global fight against obesity and diet-related NCDs.

Research found that price sensitivity might differ due to the gross national income (GNI) per capita (Yeh, Schafferer, Lee, Ho, & Hsieh, 2017) and type of restaurant (M.-A. Lee, 2007). The GNI per capita for Canada is \$ 46,370 while that for Turkey is \$ 9,690 (World Bank, 2019). Therefore, considering two countries with different levels of development is also important. The convenience sampling method was used to collect data from 147 respondents in Canada and 144 in Turkey, as given in Tables 1 and 2. Of these respondents, 88 and 77

are female, and 101 and 121 classify themselves in the low and middle-income groups in the samples of Canada and Turkey, respectively. The mean age of the respondents is 27.27 years in Canada and 23.60 years in Turkey. Moreover, 68 participants in the sample in Canada and 98 participants in the sample in Turkey are of normal weight. About 33% of the consumers in the Canadian sample and almost half of the Turkish sample consume fast food on a monthly basis.

*Table 1. Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics*

Turkey Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Canada	
			Number of Respondents	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	77	53.5	88	59.9
Male	67	46.5	59	40.1
Total	144	100	147	100
<b>Academic Semester</b>				
1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester	37	25.7	56	38.1
3 <sup>rd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> Semester	53	36.8	68	46.3
5 <sup>th</sup> or 6 <sup>th</sup> Semester	36	25.0	12	8.2
7 <sup>th</sup> or 8 <sup>th</sup> Semester	13	9.0	4	2.7
9 <sup>th</sup> and above	5	3.5	7	4.8
Total	144	100	147	100
<b>Income Level</b>				
Very Low	8	5.6	42	28.6
Low	19	13.2	52	35.4
Average	102	70.8	49	33.3
High	14	9.7	3	2.0
Very High	1	.7	1	.7
Total	144	100	147	100
<b>Body Mass Index</b>				
Underweight	13	9.0	8	5.4
Normal weight	98	68.1	68	46.3
Overweight	25	17.4	35	23.8
Obese	8	5.6	36	24.5
Total	144	100	147	100
<b>Age</b>				
Less than 21	21	14.6	18	12.2
21 – 24	85	59	38	25.9
25 – 28	20	13.9	46	31.3
29 – 32	14	9.7	21	14.3
33 and above	4	2.8	24	16.3
Total	144	100	147	100

There are no differences in participants' ratings of price sensitivity, food quality, health consciousness, and fast-food purchase intention by

differences in gender, income, semester, and body mass index (BMI) in Canada, as given in Table 2 (p > 0.01). Similarly, there are no differences in participants' ratings of food quality, price sensitivity, and fast-food purchase intention by differences in gender, income, semester, and BMI in Turkey as given in Table 3 (p > 0.01). However, in Turkey, there is a significant difference in participants' BMI and health consciousness ratings, as shown in Table 3. Multiple comparisons from Scheffe's post-hoc test show that there is a significant difference between normal ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.36) and obese ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.34) participants' ratings of health consciousness (p = 0.024). In other words, respondents with a normal BMI have a significantly higher level of health consciousness than those in the obese category.

**Table 2. ANOVA results of the variables in terms of gender, income, semester, and body mass index (Canada Sample)**

	Price Sensitivity	Food Quality	Health Consciousness	Purchase Intention
	F (between groups d.f., within groups df), p	F (between groups d.f., within groups df), p	F (between groups d.f., within groups df), p	F (between groups d.f., within groups df), p
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
<b>Gender</b>	F (1,145) = 1.456, p = 0.230	F (1,145) = 0.030, p = 0.863	F (1,145) = 1.206, p = 0.274	F (1,145) = 1.790, p = 0.183
Female	3.32	3.40	3.40	2.89
Male	3.54	3.38	3.25	3.11
<b>Income</b>	F (4,142) = 0.654, p = 0.625	F (4,142) = 0.567, p = 0.687	F (4,142) = 0.942, p = 0.442	F (4,142) = 1.878, p = 0.118
Very low	3.27	3.30	3.19	3.01
Low	3.56	3.39	3.30	3.20
Medium	3.35	3.42	3.51	2.71

High	3.78	3.91	3.46	3.44
Very high	2.67	4.00	3.36	2.33
<b>Academic Semester</b>	F (4,142) = 1.368, p = 0.248	F (4,142) = 1.079, p = 0.369	F (4,142) = 1.001, p = 0.409	F (4,142) = 0.579, p = 0.678
1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester	3.24	3.39	3.27	2.96
3 <sup>rd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> Semester	3.53	3.37	3.44	2.98
5 <sup>th</sup> or 6 <sup>th</sup> Semester	3.78	3.32	3.09	2.81
7 <sup>th</sup> or 8 <sup>th</sup> Semester	2.75	4.21	3.73	3.67
9 <sup>th</sup> and above	3.19	3.27	3.10	3.05
<b>Body Mass Index</b>	F (3,143) = 0.199, p = 0.897	F (3,143) = 0.661, p = 0.577	F (3,143) = 0.679, p = 0.566	F (3,143) = 1.012, p = 0.390
Underweight	3.46	3.18	3.56	3.29
Normal weight	3.46	3.38	3.26	3.09
Overweight	3.42	3.54	3.46	2.82
Obese	3.29	3.31	3.33	2.86

**Table 3. ANOVA results in terms of gender, income, semester, and body mass index (Turkey Sample)**

	Price Sensitivity	Food Quality	Health Consciousness	Purchase Intention
	F (between groups d.f., within groups df), p	F (between groups d.f., within groups df), p	F (between groups d.f., within groups df), p	F (between groups d.f., within groups df), p
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
<b>Gender</b>	F (1,142) = 1.260, p = 0.263	F (1,142) = 0.118, p = 0.732	F (1,142) = 0.699, p = 0.405	F (1,142) = 0.005, p = 0.946
Female	2.95	3.35	3.35	3.05
Male	3.13	3.30	3.22	3.06
<b>Income</b>	F (4,139) = 2.316, p = 0.060	F (4,139) = 1.514, p = 0.201	F (4,139) = 1.528, p = 0.197	F (4,139) = 0.604, p = 0.661
Very low	2.75	3.14	2.97	2.67
Low	3.60	3.62	2.94	2.84
Medium	3.00	3.33	3.41	3.14
High	2.71	2.96	3.11	2.95
Very high	2.67	4.14	3.18	3.33
<b>Academic Semester</b>	F (4,139) = 0.575, p = 0.681	F (4,139) = 1.662, p = 0.162	F (4,139) = 0.974, p = 0.424	F (4,139) = 0.647, p = 0.630
1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester	3.10	3.10	3.05	2.93

3 <sup>rd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> Semester	3.13	3.37	3.32	3.09
5 <sup>th</sup> or 6 <sup>th</sup> Semester	2.85	3.32	3.41	3.20
7 <sup>th</sup> or 8 <sup>th</sup> Semester	2.90	3.53	3.49	3.13
9 <sup>th</sup> and above	3.20	4.03	3.44	2.47
<i>Body Mass Index</i>	F (3,140) = 2.205, p = 0.090	F (3,140) = 0.416, p = 0.742	F (3,140) = 3.305, p = 0.022	F (3,140) = 0.504, p = 0.680
Underweight	3.08	3.44	3.22	3.28
Normal weight	2.98	3.34	3.36	3.08
Overweight	3.39	3.31	3.35	2.84
Obese	2.46	3.02	2.34	3.08

The t-test results demonstrate that there is no difference, except for price sensitivity ( $t(2.79, 289) = 3.10, p < 0.05$ ), in terms of food quality ( $t(0.331, 289) = 0.628, p > 0.1$ ), health consciousness ( $t(1.89, 289) = 0.470, p > 0.1$ ), and purchase intention ( $t(4.06, 289) = -0.633, p > 0.1$ ) between the Canada and Turkey samples as given in Table 4.

**Table 4.** t-test Analysis Results for Canada and Turkey

	Canada Mean	Turkey Mean
Price Sensitivity $t(2.79, 289) = 3.10, p = 0.002$	3.40	3.03
Food Quality $t(0.331, 289) = 0.628, p = 0.530$	3.38	3.32
Health Consciousness $t(1.89, 289) = 0.470, p = 0.639$	3.34	3.29
Purchase Intention $t(4.06, 289) = -0.633, p = 0.527$	2.97	3.05

In this study, fast food is defined as a limited menu of foods (e.g., hamburgers, pizzas, chicken, or sandwiches) produced using assembly line techniques (Rabotata & Malatji, 2021) and served in classic fast food restaurants such as "McDonald's, Burger King, and others" that "have built their brand identities and reputation over time." (Lefrid, 2021: 4348). At the time the data were collected, both campuses had at least one of the above-mentioned fast-food outlets.

The data collection technique used for this study was an online survey, which supports anonymity. Furthermore, the voluntary participation form stated that there were no right or wrong answers in the survey and that participants could opt out at any time if they did not wish to participate. We also assessed the extent of common method bias in the research questionnaire using Harman's single-factor approach (Harman, 1976). In the Canada sample, Harman's single-factor test revealed that four

factors emerged from unrotated factor solutions, and the first factor explained only 31.859% of the total variance. In the Turkey sample, exploratory factor analysis revealed five factors, and the first factor explained only 32.024% of the total variance. The first factors' total variances explained in both countries are below the 50% threshold. Thus, the results give the authors confidence that common method bias is not a problem in either the Canadian or Turkish samples.

### 3.2. Measures

The questionnaire was first designed in English and then translated into Turkish, employing the translation/back-translation technique (Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973). All of the research constructs were measured with multi-item reflective measures that had already been tested in other studies and found to be valid. Food quality was measured using six items (e.g., "The restaurant offers nutritious options" and "Food presentation is visually attractive.") from Namkung and Jang (2007) and one general food quality measurement item (e.g., "The restaurant serves quality food") from Kivela et al. (1999). *Price sensitivity* was measured using Wakefield and Inman's (2003) three-item (e.g., "I am sensitive to differences in the prices of fast-food products") measurement. *Health consciousness* was assessed using 11 items (e.g., "Careful of what I eat to keep my weight in control" and "Use a lot of low-calorie products") from Dutta-Bergman (2004). *Purchase intention* of fast food was measured using a three-item scale (e.g., "I intend to purchase fast food within the next fortnight."), adapted from Michaelidou and Hassan (2008). All of the scales are of the Likert type, with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and 5 indicating *strongly agree*.

### 3.3. Analyses and Results

#### 3.3.1. Measure Validation

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was run to assess the validity of the study measures. The CFA results show acceptable model fit in both samples (Canada Model Fit Indices:  $\chi^2(244) = 435.299$ , CFI



= 0.904; RMSEA = 0.073; Turkey Model Fit Indices:  $\chi^2$  (244) = 434.288, CFI = 0.905, RMSEA = 0.074). All the factor loadings are high and statistically significant (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Cronbach's alpha scores for all the multi-item scales were greater than the threshold level of 0.70, indicating that the measures are reliable in both samples. The average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) scores given in Table 4 exceeded 0.50 and 0.70, respectively (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), except for the AVE of food quality in the Turkish sample. This score can also be regarded as acceptable due to its CR score (0.87) being greater than 0.60, as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). These findings suggest evidence of the convergent validity of the scales. Discriminant validity was tested using the AVE-squared correlation comparison test (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In both samples, for all pairs of constructs, the AVE estimates were higher than the corresponding squared correlations as given in Tables 5 and 6. This confirms the presence of discriminant validity in both samples.

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Canada Sample**

Variables	Mean	Std.Dev.	$\alpha$	AVE	CR	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Food Quality	3.38	0.82	0.89	0.53	0.89	<b>0.73*</b>			
2. Price Sensitivity	3.40	1.08	0.87	0.70	0.87	0.45**	<b>0.84*</b>		
3. Health consciousness	3.34	0.82	0.91	0.47	0.91	0.43**	0.17*	<b>0.69*</b>	
4. Purchase Intention	2.97	0.99	0.85	0.66	0.85	0.24**	0.33**	-0.12	<b>0.81*</b>

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ ; +Diagonal axis square root of AVE.

**Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for Turkey Sample**

Variables	Mean	Std.Dev.	$\alpha$	AVE	CR	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Food Quality	3.32	0.87	0.87	0.49	0.87	<b>0.70*</b>			
2. Price Sensitivity	3.03	0.92	0.76	0.54	0.78	0.33**	<b>0.74*</b>		
3. Health consciousness	3.29	0.97	0.93	0.54	0.93	0.41**	0.13	<b>0.74*</b>	
4. Purchase Intention	3.05	1.12	0.88	0.71	0.88	0.43**	0.16	0.03	<b>0.84*</b>

Significance codes: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ ; +Diagonal axis square root of AVE.

### 3.3.2. Measurement Invariance

Cross-national research needs to consider three levels of measurement invariance, such as configural, metric, and scalar (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). First, the multi-group CFA

model, the baseline model, examines configural invariance. In this model, cross-group factor constraint was not imposed (Byrne, 2016). In other words, the factor loadings of the constructs across the Canada and Turkey samples were freed. This baseline model fits the data well ( $\chi^2$  (488) = 869.587;  $p < 0.001$ ; CFI = 0.904; RMSEA = 0.052). This result proves that the study constructs exhibit configural invariance between the two samples.

To test metric invariance across the Canada and Turkey samples, the authors constrained all the factor loadings to be invariant across the two samples ( $\chi^2$  (508) = 888.603;  $p < 0.001$ ; CFI = 0.905; RMSEA = 0.051). The difference in  $\chi^2$  from the configural model was not statistically significant ( $\Delta\chi^2(20) = 19.016$ ,  $p = 0.520$ ). Similarly, the difference in the CFI values met the recommended cut-off criterion of 0.01 ( $\Delta CFI = 0.001$ ) (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). This indicates that both samples attribute the same meaning to the latent constructs, confirming the presence of metric invariance across the research samples. Next, we tested for scalar invariance by constraining all factor loadings and intercepts to be equal across the Canadian and Turkish data sets. This resulted in  $\chi^2$  (518) = 906.289;  $p < 0.001$ ; CFI = 0.903; and RMSEA = 0.051. The difference in  $\chi^2$  from the metric model was not statistically significant ( $\Delta\chi^2(10) = 17.686$ ,  $p = 0.060$ ). Further, the difference between the CFI values was less than 0.01 ( $\Delta CFI = 0.002$ ), supporting the presence of scalar invariance. Overall, these tests support the cross-country comparison of the Canada and Turkey measurement models.

### 3.3.3. Process Analyses

To test the moderating role of health consciousness in the relationship between price sensitivity and purchase intention (H1), process analyses (Model 1) of Hayes (2017) were conducted for the Canada and Turkey samples. Health consciousness is a moderator in the relationship between price sensitivity and purchase intention in the Canadian ( $b = -.19$ , 95% CI [-.34, -.03],  $t = -2.4840$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and Turkish samples ( $b = -.27$ , 95% CI [-.45, -.09],  $t = -3.01$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, H1 is supported for both samples.

In the Canadian sample, as health consciousness increases, the strength of the relationship between price sensitivity and purchase intention decreases, as shown in Table 7. Besides, at low, medium, and high levels of health consciousness, the impact of price sensitivity on purchase intention is significant, and this relationship is weakened as health consciousness increases.

**Table 7. Process Analysis Results for the Moderator Role of Health consciousness: Price Sensitivity-Purchase Intention (Canada Sample)**

Predictors of Purchase Intention	B	S.E.	t	p
<i>Predictors of Purchase Intention (R<sup>2</sup>= .17)</i>				
Constant	3.00	.07	39.67	.00***
Price Sensitivity	.34	.07	4.92	.00***
Health consciousness	-.24	.09	-2.59	.01***
Price Sensitivity*Health consciousness	-.19	.07	-2.48	.01***
<i>Conditional Effect of Health Consciousness</i>				
$\Delta R^2 = 0.03; F(1, 143) = 6.17$				
<i>Health consciousness: Low (-.79)</i>				
Price Sensitivity Purchase Intention	.50	.09	.31	.69
<i>Health consciousness: Medium (.11)</i>				
Price Sensitivity Purchase Intention	.32	.07	.18	.46
<i>Health consciousness: High (.77)</i>				
Price Sensitivity Purchase Intention	.19	.09	.02	.37

\*\*\* p < 0.01, \*\* p < 0.05, \* p < 0.1; b: Unstandardized beta coefficient; SE: Standard error of unstandardized estimate; LLCI: lower level confidence interval; ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

In the Turkey sample, health consciousness operates as a moderator in the relationship between price sensitivity and purchase intention, as shown in Table 8. At the low level of health consciousness, the impact of price sensitivity on purchase intention is significant and positive. However, at medium and high levels of health consciousness, the impact of price sensitivity on purchase intention is insignificant. Therefore, health consciousness as a moderator weakens the

strength of the positive relationship between price sensitivity and purchase intention.

**Table 8. Process Analysis Results for the Moderator Role of Health consciousness: Price Sensitivity-Purchase Intention (Turkey Sample)**

Predictors of Purchase Intention	b	S.E.	t	p
<i>Predictors of Purchase Intention (R<sup>2</sup>= .08)</i>				
Constant	3.09	.09	34.06	0.00***
Price Sensitivity	.11	.09	1.24	0.21***
Health consciousness	-.09	.10	-.94	0.34***
Price Sensitivity*Health consciousness	-.27	.09	-3.01	0.00***
<i>Conditional Effect of Health Consciousness</i>				
$\Delta R^2 = 0.05; F(1, 140) = 9.08$				
<i>Health consciousness: Low (-.92)</i>				
Price Sensitivity Purchase Intention	.37	.11	.14	.60
<i>Health consciousness: Medium (-.01)</i>				
Price Sensitivity Purchase Intention	.12	.09	-.06	.31
<i>Health consciousness: High (.88)</i>				
Price Sensitivity Purchase Intention	-.12	.13	-.03	.14

Significance codes: \*\*\* p < 0.01, \*\* p < 0.05, \* p < 0.1; b: Unstandardized beta coefficient; S.E.: Standard error of unstandardized estimate; LLCI: lower level confidence interval; ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

It was found that health consciousness has a moderating role between food quality and purchase intention in the Canadian (b = -.15, 90% CI [-.30, -.01], t = -1.79, p < 0.10) and Turkish samples (b = -.19, 90% CI [-.35, -.03], t = -2.34, p < 0.05). In both samples, when health consciousness is low, medium, or high, food quality positively affects purchase intention, as given in Table 9 (Canada sample) and Table 10 (Turkey sample). Therefore, H2 is supported in both samples.

**Table 9. Process Analysis Results for the Moderator Role of Health consciousness: Food Quality-Purchase Intention (Canada Sample)**

Predictors of Purchase Intention	b	S.E.	t	p
<i>Predictors of Purchase Intention (R<sup>2</sup>=0.13)</i>				
Constant	3.02	.08	37.33	.00***
Food Quality	.40	.10	3.83	.00***
Health consciousness	-.34	.10	-3.31	.00***
Food Quality*Health consciousness	-.15	.08	-1.79	.07***
<i>Conditional Effect of Health Consciousness</i>				
$\Delta R^2 = 0.01; F(1, 143) = 3.21$				
<i>Health consciousness: Low (-.79)</i>				
Food Quality Purchase Intention	.52	.11	.33	.72

Health consciousness: Medium (.11)	.38	.10	.20	.55
Food Quality → Purchase Intention				
Health consciousness: High (.77)	.27	.13	.05	.49
Food Quality → Purchase Intention				

Significance codes: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ ; b: Unstandardized beta coefficient; S.E.: Standard error of unstandardized estimate; LLCI: lower level confidence interval; ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

**Table 10. Process Analysis Results for the Moderator Role of Health Consciousness: Food Quality-Purchase Intention (Turkey Sample)**

	B	S.E.	t	p
<i>Predictors of Purchase Intention (R<sup>2</sup>= .19)</i>				
Constant	3.11	.08	35.68	.00***
Food Quality	.47	.10	4.37	.00***
Health consciousness	-.19	.09	-1.96	.05***
Food Quality*Health consciousness	-.19	.08	-2.34	.02***
<i>Conditional Effect of Health Consciousness</i>				
$\Delta R^2 = 0.03$ ; F (1, 140) = 5.48				
	Boot Effect	SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Health consciousness: Low (-.92)	.65	.11	.43	.87
Food Quality → Purchase Intention				
Health consciousness: Medium (-.11)	.48	.10	.26	.69
Food Quality → Purchase Intention				
Health consciousness: High (.88)	.30	.14	.009	.60
Food Quality → Purchase Intention				

Significance codes: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ ; b: Unstandardized beta coefficient; S.E.: Standard error of unstandardized estimate; LLCI: lower level confidence interval; ULCI: upper level confidence interval.

More specifically, as health consciousness increases, the positive impact of food quality on purchase intention decreases in both the Canadian and Turkish samples. Health consciousness weakens the positive relationship between food quality and purchase intention. When health consciousness is high (low), the likelihood of purchase intentions of the respondents relying on the food quality is low (high).

### Conclusion and Discussion

Fast-food managers' creation of value by means of price and quality would make university students prefer fast food. However, fast food is usually

associated with being unhealthy (Shin & Mattila, 2019), and in the long run, would have serious consequences such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases (Saha et al., 2021), and obesity (Wie & Giebler, 2014). Although there are various causes of obesity, such as more sedentary lifestyles that are influenced by computer games, reduced levels of physical exercise in schools, poor nutrition at home, and genetics, fast-food restaurants have received the greatest share of the blame (McCann, 2004; Baker, 2009). Managers of fast-food restaurants also have the moral obligation to protect consumers, especially students who live away from home during their university education.

Managers introduced healthy options to their menus. However, it is not clear whether the students would prefer these. This study suggests that university students' health consciousness is a critical factor in whether or not they buy fast food within a well-established value creation mechanism based on affordable price and quality. This explains whether there is market potential in terms of health-related concerns.

The findings of this study indicate the moderating effect of health consciousness, similar to Shin and Mattila (2019) and Singhal (2017), on the effects of price sensitivity and food quality on purchase intention in both the Canada (a developed country) and Turkey (a developing country) samples. More specifically, in the Canadian sample, the influence of price sensitivity on purchase intention becomes weaker (stronger) when health consciousness increases (decreases). Similarly, in the Turkey sample, the influence of price sensitivity on fast-food purchase intention is significant when health consciousness is at a low level. This is consistent with the findings of a study from Turkey, which stated that consumers with health concerns about food safety issues and those considering price as a critical variable when eating out tend to consume less fast food (Akbay, Tiryaki, & Gul, 2007). On the other hand, as health consciousness increases (i.e., medium and high), the effect of price sensitivity on purchase intention becomes insignificant. Thus, health consciousness level changes the basic value creation method in terms of the positive influence of price sensitivity and purchase intention. Accordingly, fast food

companies operating on campuses should consider not only price sensitivity but also health consciousness in their strategies in Turkey. Fast-food products are generally preferred by university students due to their relatively low prices and large sizes. However, in the Turkey sample, this study clarified that consumers who are health conscious do not even consider price sensitivity in their fast food purchases when their health consciousness level is high.

As mentioned in the sampling section, the cross-national differences between Canada and Turkey were significant only for the price sensitivity variable ( $\bar{X}_C = 3.40$ ;  $\bar{X}_T = 3.03$ ;  $t(2.79, 289) = 3.10$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). It was found that Canadian respondents were more price sensitive than Turkish respondents. This finding is similar to that of Lee and Ulgado (1997), who found that Americans placed more importance on low fast-food prices than South Koreans. Similarly, this difference could also stem from the differences in fast-food perceptions between individualistic and collectivist cultures. In Turkey, research suggests that eating at global franchised fast-food chains is perceived as a status symbol in collectivist cultures, while it is seen as a common daily meal for convenience in individualistic cultures (Etemad-Sajadi & Rizzuto, 2013). Since Turkey is considered a collectivist culture and Canada an individualistic culture (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010), differences in cultural perceptions could also change the interaction of health consciousness with price sensitivity in the Turkish sample.

Food quality should be considered with the boundary condition of health consciousness on purchase intention in both samples. In other words, the analysis revealed a significant interaction between health consciousness and food quality in predicting purchase intention. When health consciousness increases (decreases), the impact of perceived food quality on fast-food purchase intention decreases (increases). This result is consistent with Rogers' (1975) Protection Motivation Theory. Food quality is not perceived differently by the samples from Canada ( $\bar{X}_C = 3.38$ ) and Turkey ( $\bar{X}_T = 3.32$ )  $t(0.331, 289) = 0.628$ ,  $p =$

0.530;  $p > 0.1$ ). Therefore, from a social perspective, firms in the fast-food industry should assess consumers' health consciousness levels when planning operations in a developing country and invest in developing healthy options in their menu.

## 6. Implications for managers and health policymakers

### 6.1. Implications for managers

Understanding motivations for eating various food categories can help facilitate new food product development and better understand the marketing of these new products (Chambers et al., 2016). For example, Akbay et al. (2007) found the importance of 'socio-economic and demographic characteristics of households, facilities, restaurant environments, the presence of children, health, and price on fast-food purchase. Since it is not solely one indicator, such as price sensitivity or food quality, that influences fast-food purchase intention, the interaction effect of health consciousness should be considered by managers. This might be the reason why fast-food restaurants, which are widely perceived to be unhealthy, now include healthy options such as organic products (Shin & Mattila, 2019).

Accordingly, managers become certain about whether the basic option for creating value (e.g., the price-quality relationship) with consumers' having low or high health consciousness will encourage or discourage their preference for fast food. Based on their levels of health consciousness, managers would be more confident in investing in healthy alternatives and capturing value in return. Also, when they better understand the role of health consciousness, they will have greater insight into choosing keywords for their promotional messages.

Fast-food restaurants also have the moral obligation to protect the health of students who have limited purchasing power and are living away from home. Although health-conscious consumers may not be the target market of fast-food companies, this study found that consumers' health consciousness interacts with price



sensitivity and food quality in determining their fast-food purchase intentions.

Managers of fast-food restaurants on Canadian university campuses should pay close attention to how students feel about the quality of the food, how health-conscious they are, and how sensitive they are to price. This is because these factors have a significant impact on whether or not students plan to buy fast food. For example, marketing managers could transform the negative effect of health consciousness on fast-food purchase intention that was identified in the Canadian sample into a competitive advantage. This could be done by developing new menu items that are more nutritious, healthy (i.e., contain small amounts of fat, salt, sugar, and cholesterol), and affordable in order to meet the needs of the health-conscious and price-sensitive market segments identified in the study. In addition, marketing managers of university-based fast-food restaurants should post the calorie information of their newly developed healthier menus and provide other nutrition information to students on request. This recommendation is in accordance with Wie and Giebler (2014), who found that the majority of university students always believed that calorie information posted on marketing communication media like brochures and indoor menu boards at all restaurants could assist in weight gain or weight loss. It is also consistent with the findings of Kim and Kim (2020), who concluded that respondents in a low brand-health issue fit situation reacted more favorably to a health issue-focused advertising message than a brand-focused advertising message. Such an approach could, in the long run, positively change the perceptions of the health-conscious segment about the nutritional value of fast-food products and create the potential for university students to improve their menu choices and eating habits (Wie & Giebler, 2014).

Just like their Canadian counterparts, university-based fast-food restaurant managers in Turkey need to pay attention to consumers' perceptions food quality because of its positive effect on fast-food purchase intentions. Although both the health consciousness and price sensitivity constructs did not have a significant direct effect on fast-food purchase intentions in Turkey, a closer examination of the boundary conditions relating to

these variables suggests there is a health-conscious and price-sensitive market. Therefore, Turkish fast-food restaurant managers should also offer healthier and more affordable menu items to satisfy the health-conscious and price-sensitive market segments.

## *5.2. Implications for health professionals and policymakers*

Diet-related NCDs such as obesity and coronary heart disease are prevalent in Canada (Branchard et al., 2018) and Turkey (Chambers et al., 2016). Examining the food preferences of the youth in both countries would guide the governments in preparing suitable dietary programs to improve their eating habits. Thus, in the context of Canada and Turkey's health policies, it is recommended that basic health education lessons in relation to healthy foods and diets be provided, particularly at the primary school level. Within the scope of this education, emphasis must be placed on daily calorie limits and the relationship between the non-respect of these limits and conditions like overweight, obesity, and diet-related NCDs. In addition, public spots (radio and television), social media tools (such as Twitter and Facebook), and advertising campaigns could be used to increase consumers' health consciousness levels.

Similarly, according to Wie and Giebler (2014), providing customers with information on what constitutes good food quality would contribute to combating the global obesity epidemic. When university students have sufficient nutritional knowledge about healthy foods and diets, they would be more critical in evaluating menu items in fast-food restaurants, and this might contribute to compelling firms within the industry to provide healthier menu items. For Canada and Turkey, it is recommended that fast-food restaurants be required by law to provide the number of calories and nutritional information on their menus. In addition, more stringent monitoring of food establishments should be undertaken by the government. Such an approach could ensure compliance by fast-food restaurants in providing relevant nutritional information to guide students' fast-food choices. In other words, as consumers become more health-conscious, unhealthy fast-

food purchase intentions could decrease. This decrease could prompt university-based fast-food managers to offer healthier menu items in order to improve consumers' perceptions about the healthiness of fast-food products. Such measures could contribute partly to combating the global obesity epidemic and diet-related NCDs in the long run.

### Limitations and future directions

This study examines purchase intention with only two antecedents (price sensitivity and food quality) and one moderator (health consciousness). Accordingly, we propose that in future research, variables in the context of value creation by means of cost-benefit analysis be included in the model. For example, besides price, other costs such as effort and time can be included. For the benefits, besides quality, convenience and customer service may be included in the model.

This study examined consumers' perceptions of fast-food quality from a general perspective. Future studies could examine consumers' food quality perceptions towards a specific fast-food product like a hamburger, French fries, or pizza, which are commonly offered in several fast-food restaurants. Also, consumers' health consciousness levels were examined from a general perspective. Future studies could investigate consumers' health consciousness levels towards fast-food products or a specific fast-food product. Future studies could examine consumers' perceptions towards local fast-food products like 'kebab' and 'döner' in different countries. Such an approach could lead to the classification of fast-food products according to their levels of healthiness (Hwang & Cranage, 2010). In addition, future studies could examine consumers' health consciousness levels towards products like cigarettes or genetically modified foods.

Malik and Guptha (2014) reported that a celebrity endorser contributes significantly to positively influencing customers' purchase intentions in both the personal care and food product categories. Future studies could examine the effect of cultural factors such as status and

power distance on fast-food purchase intentions. Also, the research model developed in this study could be tested in mid- to up-scale restaurants. Finally, in order to guide multi-national firms in their global expansion strategies, the research model developed in this study should be tested in countries other than Turkey and Canada.

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## CORRECTIONS

The original version of Mr. Mehmet Özcan's article "Alija İzzetbegoviç's Conception of Civilization" in Volume 18th of OPUS Journal of Social Research was missing the footnote that was supposed to be on the front page. We correct the mistake that was made unintentionally to avoid putting the author in an unethical situation. The article was based on the unpublished doctoral thesis of Mr. Mehmet Özcan titled "Change and Continuity in Balkan Islam: A Study on Alija İzzetbegoviç," which should be noted in the article's footnote.

The original version of Mr. Mehmet Özcan's and Mr. Bekir Keskin's article " Social Transformation in The Context Of Digitalization" in Volume 29th of OPUS Journal of Social Research was missing the footnote that was supposed to be on the front page. We correct the mistake that was made unintentionally to avoid putting the author in an unethical situation. The article is an expanded version of a conference presentation given at the International Symposium on Business and Economics (ISBE) in 2020 titled "Social Transformation in the Context of Digitalization."

Editor

## DÜZELTME

Sn. Mehmet Özcan tarafından hazırlanan ve OPUS Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi'nin 2019 yılında 11. Cilt, 18. Sayısında yayınlanan "Aliya İzzetbegoviç'in Medeniyet Tasavvuru" başlıklı makalenin giriş sayfasında yer alması gereken bilgi dipnotuna yayın hazırlık sürecinde sehven yer verilmemiştir. Yazarın etik olarak zor durumda kalmaması amacıyla sehven yapılan bu hatayı düzeltiriz. "Aliya İzzetbegoviç'in Medeniyet Tasavvuru" başlığının dipnotu olarak verilmesi gereken bilgi şu şekildedir: "Bu çalışma Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsünde "Balkan İslam'ında Değişim ve Süreklilik: Aliya İzzetbegoviç Üzerine Bir Çalışma " isimli yayımlanmamış doktora tezinden üretilmiştir."

Sn. Mehmet Özcan ve Sn. Bekir Keskin tarafından hazırlanan ve OPUS Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi'nin 2020 Eylül ayında 16. Cilt, 29. Sayısında yayınlanan "**Dijitalizasyon Bağlamında Sosyal Dönüşüm**" başlıklı makalenin giriş sayfasında yer alması gereken bilgi dipnotuna yayın hazırlık sürecinde sehven yer verilmemiştir. Yazarın etik olarak zor durumda kalmaması amacıyla sehven yapılan bu hatayı düzeltiriz. "**Dijitalizasyon Bağlamında Sosyal Dönüşüm**" başlığının dipnotu olarak verilmesi gereken bilgi şu şekildedir: "Bu çalışma 2020 yılında yapılmış olan International Symposium on Business and Economics (ISBE) isimli uluslararası katılımlı sempozyumda özet olarak sunulmuş çalışmanın genişletilmiş halidir."

Editör