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Sustainable HRM, Well-Being and Employee Outcomes in Maritime Sector Employees

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Abstract

The increasing awareness of both the intensive use of natural resources and the physical and mental well-being of society has amplified interest in organizational sustainability. Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) integrates human resource strategies, policies, and practices with long-term sustainability objectives. In this study, SHRM is conceptualized through three key dimensions: decent work (fair wages, safe conditions, equity), workplace democracy (employee voice and participation), and sustainable career climate (opportunities for learning and employability). These dimensions align with the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework, in which SHRM practices are understood as mechanisms that develop employees' competencies (ability), foster intrinsic motivation (motivation), and enhance participation in decision-making (opportunity).

This study investigates the mediating role of employee well-being in the relationship between SHRM practices, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. A quantitative survey was conducted with 467 employees

in the Turkish maritime sector, a high-pressure industry where sustainable work practices are critical for employee retention. Using structural equation modeling (AMOS-SEM), the findings indicate that SHRM practices significantly enhance well-being and job satisfaction, while reducing turnover intention. Furthermore, well-being was found to mediate the relationship between SHRM and both job satisfaction and turnover intention. These results reinforce the strategic value of SHRM practices in high-demand industries by highlighting their capacity to foster sustainable employee outcomes. The study provides practical implications for managers and HR professionals seeking to integrate socially sustainable practices into organizational systems, particularly in contexts where human capital sustainability is a strategic imperative.

Keywords: Sustainable HRM, Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intention, Well-Being, Maritime Sector.

JEL Codes: D23, M12, I10

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1. Introduction

The increasing pressure on organizations to address not only economic but also environmental and social concerns has prompted a growing emphasis on Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM). Unlike conventional HRM, which primarily focuses on performance and efficiency, SHRM integrates long-term sustainability objectives—social justice, environmental responsibility, and economic resilience—into HR strategies, policies, and practices (Ehnert et al., 2016; Kramar, 2014). In this context, SHRM seeks to balance organizational effectiveness with the protection and development of human and natural resources, thereby contributing to sustainable development goals.

This study adopts a multidimensional conceptualization of SHRM based on the framework proposed by Guerri et al. (2015) and operationalized by Dubois and Dubois (2012), which includes three core dimensions: decent work, workplace democracy, and sustainable career climate. These dimensions address not only the social but also the developmental and ethical aspects of human resource practices. First, decent work includes fair wages, safety, equal opportunities, and work-life balance, reflecting the social protection and dignity of labor (ILO, 2015). Second, workplace democracy emphasizes participative decision-making, employee voice, and organizational justice, fostering a culture of mutual respect and transparency (Wilkinson et al., 2010). Third, the sustainable career climate promotes continuous learning, internal mobility, and long-term employability, ensuring the adaptability of both the employee and the organization (De Prins et al., 2014).

These SHRM dimensions are theoretically aligned with the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework, which posits that organizational performance and employee outcomes improve when employees have the ability to perform (through skills and knowledge), the motivation to exert effort, and the opportunity to participate (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Specifically, sustainable career climate enhances ability via continuous development; decent work improves motivation through fair and humane treatment; and workplace democracy increases opportunity by encouraging active participation in organizational processes.

Among the key outcomes of SHRM, employee well-being has emerged as a crucial mediating variable in the pathway to desirable workplace outcomes. Well-being encompasses both hedonic dimensions (such as life satisfaction and positive affect) and eudaimonic aspects (such as personal growth and purpose) (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Numerous studies

have shown that SHRM practices improve employee well-being by providing psychological safety, social support, and a sense of meaning at work (Zaugg et al., 2001; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). In turn, well-being has been found to positively influence job satisfaction, a central construct in HRM that reflects employees' evaluative judgments of their work, and to reduce turnover intention, which represents the likelihood of voluntary departure from the organization (Goetz et al., 2012; Wu et al., 2017).

While the positive impacts of SHRM on well-being, job satisfaction, and retention are increasingly acknowledged in theory, there is a lack of empirical research exploring these relationships in high-demand sectors, where employees face heightened physical and psychological stress. The maritime sector, in particular, is characterized by long working hours, isolation, hazardous environments, and exposure to volatile economic conditions. These factors heighten the relevance of SHRM, especially in emerging economies like Turkey, where maritime operations are both strategically vital and socially challenging (Håvold, 2005; Sanrı & Kamanlı, 2020). Despite this, SHRM has received limited scholarly attention in the context of maritime employment.

To address this gap, the present study investigates the mediating role of employee well-being in the relationship between SHRM practices and two key outcomes: job satisfaction and turnover intention, using data collected from 467 employees in the Turkish maritime sector. The analysis is grounded in the AMO framework and social exchange theory, which together provide a basis for understanding how investments in employee sustainability generate reciprocal employee behaviors and attitudes. The research employs structural equation modeling (AMOS-SEM) to assess both measurement and structural components of the hypothesized model. Instruments used in the study have been validated in previous literature and adapted to the maritime context.

This research contributes to the SHRM literature by extending its theoretical application to a high-stress, under-researched industry and by specifying the mechanisms through which SHRM affects employee outcomes via well-being. From a managerial perspective, the study offers actionable insights for human resource professionals aiming to strengthen retention and satisfaction while advancing organizational sustainability. By linking SHRM with both individual and organizational performance through a nuanced understanding of well-being, this study enhances the evidence base for strategic HRM in contexts where it is most needed.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Sustainable Human Resource Management as a Predictor of Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

Since the 1980s, strategic human resource management (SHRM) has emerged as the dominant paradigm in human resource management (HRM). A pivotal development in this field was the establishment of a direct link between HRM practices and financial performance (Huselid, 1995). Scholars have primarily drawn on the resource-based view (Barney, 2001) and the abilities-motivation-opportunities (AMO) framework (Appelbaum et al., 2000) to explain the HRM–performance nexus. These perspectives emphasize that organizations must create the necessary motivation and opportunities for employees, assuming that human capital is the most valuable and developable resource. The notion that HRM enhances knowledge, skills, and behaviors through structured HR practices, ultimately improving performance, has gained widespread acceptance (Paa-uwé & Boselie, 2005).

Since the 2010s, SHRM has evolved to incorporate sustainability concerns, shifting its focus beyond financial outcomes to encompass broader individual, organizational, and societal impacts (Kramar, 2014). This transformation has been driven by increased attention to organizational sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Organizational sustainability is defined as “meeting the needs of a firm’s direct and indirect stakeholders (such as shareholders, employees, clients, pressure groups, communities, etc.), without compromising its ability to meet the needs of future stakeholders” (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002, p. 131). CSR, a core dimension of sustainability, underscores that organizations bear not only economic and legal responsibilities but also ethical obligations. Unlike short-term initiatives, CSR requires organizations to consider long-term stakeholder needs and align their objectives with broader societal values. As a result, for HRM to meaningfully contribute to sustainability, it must extend its focus beyond short-term financial gains to long-term organizational resilience and positive employee outcomes (Wilkinson et al., 2001).

SHRM is conceptualized as the adoption of HRM strategies and practices that align financial, social, and ecological objectives, ensuring a positive impact both within and beyond the organization while mitigating negative consequences (Ehnert et al., 2016: 90). This perspective shifts the focus from short-term financial performance to long-term value creation for multiple stakeholders. The SHRM framework comprises human capital, HRM strategy, HR policies, and HR practices (Kramar, 2014). While discussions persist regarding the specific practices en-

compassed within SHRM, there is broad agreement that these practices contribute to positive individual, social, and environmental outcomes (Ehnert, 2006). From an operational and managerial standpoint, SHRM practices include policy development, implementation, performance evaluation, employee empowerment, skill development, and autonomy facilitation (Chams & Garcia-Blandon, 2019). Diaz-Carrion et al. (2018) further identify key SHRM practices such as staffing, training, performance evaluation, career management, compensation, work-life balance, diversity promotion, and occupational health and safety.

In line with this evolving conceptualization, the present study adopts the operationalization of SHRM proposed by Guerci et al. (2015), which identifies three key dimensions of SHRM: decent work, workplace democracy, and sustainable career climate. Decent work encompasses fair compensation, occupational safety, equitable treatment, and work-life balance initiatives. Workplace democracy refers to participative decision-making, employee voice, and transparent organizational practices that foster fairness and inclusion. The sustainable career climate dimension includes initiatives that support long-term employability, continuous learning, and professional development. These dimensions are conceptually aligned with the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework (Appelbaum et al., 2000): sustainable career climate initiatives develop employees’ abilities; decent work practices foster motivation by ensuring respectful, safe, and supportive environments; and workplace democracy expands employees’ opportunities to engage meaningfully in organizational processes. This alignment reinforces the theoretical consistency between SHRM and the AMO model, offering a robust framework for examining how sustainable HR practices influence employee outcomes such as job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Job satisfaction, a core HRM construct, refers to an individual’s overall sense of fulfillment in their job (Locke, 1969). It is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Herzberg et al. (1959) classify intrinsic factors as elements such as responsibility, skill development, and personal achievements, which contribute to self-actualization. Intrinsic job satisfaction is driven by the inherent characteristics of work rather than external rewards (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). Research suggests that intrinsic factors exert a stronger influence on job satisfaction than extrinsic factors (Kalleberg, 1977; Wernimont, 1966). Goetz et al. (2012) found that the ability to apply one’s skills significantly impacts job satisfaction. This relationship is particularly relevant in SHRM, as sustainable HR practices prioritize employee development and fulfillment (Grant, 2008). Job satisfaction, in turn, serves as a key predictor of job performance (Ziegler et al., 2012), work engagement (Garg et al., 2017), and organizational commitment (Ćulibrk et al., 2018).

HRM practices have been consistently shown to positively influence job satisfaction (Ileana Petrescu & Simmons, 2008; Jiang et al., 2012). SHRM further enhances person-organization fit, aligning employee needs and values with those of the organization, which strengthens job satisfaction (Gully et al., 2013). From this perspective, Sypniewska et al. (2023) identify well-being, development, and retention as key SHRM dimensions positively associated with job satisfaction. Similarly, Davidescu et al. (2020) examine employee development and work characteristics as SHRM components, demonstrating their positive impact on job satisfaction. The AMO framework further suggests that a workplace conducive to employee development fosters positive work-related attitudes (Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016). Cahyadi et al. (2022) conceptualize SHRM as a combination of collaborative, high-involvement, and commitment-based HRM practices, all of which contribute to job satisfaction.

Despite growing research, consensus on the specific practices encompassed by SHRM remains elusive. Wojtczuk-Turek et al. (2024) examined the SHRM–job satisfaction relationship across 54 countries, highlighting the role of organizational identification and cultural dimensions, such as individualism-collectivism, in shaping this relationship. Given cross-cultural variations, further research is necessary to explore the influence of SHRM on job satisfaction across different organizational and national contexts. Based on the AMO framework, SHRM's long-term, employee-centered approach is expected to enhance job satisfaction. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Sustainable HRM practices are positively related to job satisfaction.

Organizations depend on employees who demonstrate high levels of commitment and dedication to maintain a competitive advantage in the labor market (Joo & Park, 2010). However, increasing labor mobility and the evolving nature of business environments have made employee retention an escalating challenge. As a result, employee turnover has remained a central focus in academic research (Allen & Griffeth, 2000). Turnover intention is shaped by multiple antecedents, including work engagement (Halbesleben et al., 2008), perceptions of organizational justice (Loi et al., 2006), and experiences of burnout (Bartram et al., 2012). Among these, work characteristics play a crucial role, encompassing psychosocial factors such as job demands, workplace bullying, and discrimination (Bakker et al., 2021), alongside structural conditions like working hours and workload (Liu et al., 2016).

HRM practices have been widely recognized as effective mechanisms for creating an empowering work environment and reducing turnover intention by fostering knowledge sharing and organizational sup-

port (Islam et al., 2023). Furthermore, the adoption of socially responsible HRM strategies significantly decreases turnover by strengthening employees' sense of belonging and perceptions of fairness within the organization (Nie et al., 2017). Research also highlights that sustainability-driven HRM practices enhance employee retention by fostering long-term commitment and job embeddedness (Jam & Jamal, 2020). Supporting this perspective, Cachon-Rodriguez et al. (2022) demonstrate that SHRM strengthens employee retention by leveraging social capital as a mediating factor.

SHRM embodies a strategic approach aimed at cultivating long-term employment relationships by fostering a humane and ethical work environment (Peiró et al., 2023). By prioritizing employee well-being, SHRM enhances organizational embeddedness, thereby increasing employees' intention to remain with their employers (Almagharbeh et al., 2023). Additionally, SHRM promotes development opportunities and intrinsic motivation, both of which serve as key drivers of employee retention. Employees who perceive opportunities for growth, skill development, and personal fulfillment within their organizations are more likely to develop long-term career commitments. Based on this framework, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Sustainable HRM practices are negatively related to turnover intention.

2.2. The Mediating Role of Well-Being in the Relationship Between Sustainable HRM, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention

Employee well-being, a central outcome in sustainable HRM frameworks, is widely acknowledged as a multidimensional construct encompassing both subjective and objective components (Ryff, 1989; Diener, 2000). Objective well-being refers to tangible life conditions such as health status, income, and living standards, whereas subjective well-being reflects individuals' cognitive and emotional evaluations of their lives. Subjective well-being is further conceptualized through two distinct perspectives: the hedonic view, which emphasizes life satisfaction and affective pleasure, and the eudaimonic view, which highlights self-realization, meaning, and personal growth (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2008).

While both dimensions are theoretically valuable, this study focuses on subjective well-being, in alignment with prior SHRM literature (Goetz et al., 2012; Islam et al., 2023), as it captures employees' immediate cognitive and emotional experiences related to their work. This analytical choice is particularly relevant in high-demand sectors such as maritime services, where job-related stressors directly influence affective states and perceived well-being.

SHRM practices are posited to promote well-being through mechanisms such as fair treatment, meaningful work, safe working conditions, and developmental opportunities (Grant, 2008; Zaugg et al., 2001). By addressing both personal and professional needs, SHRM supports employees in maintaining positive psychological functioning, which is known to foster job satisfaction and reduce turnover intention (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Wu et al., 2017). Moreover, emerging research highlights the mediating role of well-being in the relationship between HR practices and employee attitudes (Zhang et al., 2019), suggesting that well-being may function as a key psychological mechanism through which SHRM exerts its effect. Based on this theoretical foundation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Sustainable HRM practices are positively related to well-being.

Job satisfaction is shaped not only by employees' perceptions of their work and working conditions but also by the alignment of these perceptions with their expectations and value systems (Schneider & Snyder, 1975). At the organizational level, factors such as leadership style (Altaş et al., 2024; Braun et al., 2013), compensation, work environment, and organizational climate have been shown to significantly influence job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959; Gündüz Çekmecelioğlu, 2005). Research further suggests that fair compensation, a supportive work environment, and career development opportunities enhance job satisfaction, which in turn contributes to greater overall life satisfaction (Kosec et al., 2022; Wright et al., 2007).

Individuals with high levels of well-being tend to experience more positive emotions, enabling them to manage workplace challenges more effectively, ultimately leading to higher job satisfaction and motivation (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Recent findings indicate that well-being is intertwined with family satisfaction, extrinsic job satisfaction (related to job security and salary), and intrinsic job satisfaction (associated with competence and self-determination) (Jarosova et al., 2017). Similarly, Pradenas et al. (2021) demonstrate that both extrinsic factors (e.g., financial stability) and intrinsic factors (e.g., recognition, autonomy) jointly shape subjective well-being. The unique challenges of the maritime profession—such as social exclusion, isolation, and demanding work environments—further underscore the importance of job satisfaction in shaping well-being (McVeigh et al., 2017). Employees in this sector frequently experience high levels of psychological distress and depression (McVeigh et al., 2019), making job satisfaction—rooted in competence, autonomy, and recognition—a crucial factor in enhancing overall well-being. Based on this theoretical foundation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Well-being is positively related to job satisfaction.

Turnover intention refers to an employee's inclination to voluntarily leave their current position in the foreseeable future (Podsakoff et al., 2007) and is recognized as one of the strongest predictors of actual turnover (Lazzari et al., 2022). Workplace stressors are widely acknowledged as key contributors to turnover intention, as they negatively impact employees' well-being and job satisfaction. Wright and Cropanzano (2004) argue that positive emotions foster favorable job attitudes, which, in turn, strengthen organizational commitment and reduce turnover intention. Conversely, workplace instability, excessive demands, and a tense organizational climate erode employees' sense of attachment, reinforcing their likelihood of leaving the organization.

The maritime industry, characterized by unpredictable working conditions, high occupational risks, and long working hours, presents unique challenges that contribute to high turnover intention (Håvold, 2005). Employees in this sector frequently experience excessive workloads, extended work shifts, and high-pressure environments, all of which can elevate stress and turnover intention. However, subjective well-being may serve as a psychological buffer, mitigating the negative effects of these challenging conditions (Wu et al., 2017). Employees with higher levels of well-being are more resilient to workplace stressors and more likely to remain engaged and committed to their organizations despite challenging work environments. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Well-being is negatively related to turnover intention.

A meta-analysis conducted by Judge and Kammerer-Mueller (2011) established that the core components of subjective well-being serve as key antecedents of job satisfaction. Similarly, a longitudinal study by Bowling et al. (2010) identified a reciprocal relationship between job satisfaction and subjective well-being, with subjective well-being exerting a stronger influence on job satisfaction than vice versa. These findings underscore the critical role of well-being in shaping employees' perceptions of their work experiences. Research further highlights the significance of organizational policies that support work-life balance (Nunes & Rodrigues, 2024) and initiatives aimed at enhancing employee well-being (Dagenais-Desmarais & Savoie, 2012). Sustainable HRM (SHRM) integrates these elements by fostering self-efficacy, career commitment, and subjective well-being through programs that facilitate career development and long-term employability (Mariappanadar, 2022). Moreover, SHRM promotes a positive work environment by implementing inclusive practices that engage employees in decision-making processes, ensure fairness and job security, and foster positive emotional states (Islam et al., 2023).

While existing research suggests that well-being plays a critical role in the relationship between HRM

and employee performance, further empirical investigation is needed to fully elucidate this connection (Peccei & Van De Voorde, 2019). In this context, well-being is posited as a key mediating factor between HRM practices and employee outcomes. By promoting long-term employment stability, career and performance development, and work-life balance, SHRM is expected to enhance overall well-being. A work environment that fosters fulfillment and well-being is, in turn, likely to contribute to greater job satisfaction. Based on this theoretical framework, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: The relationship between SHRM and job satisfaction is mediated by well-being.

In an organization, both the substance of HR policies and employees' perceptions of them play a critical role in shaping work-related outcomes (Wright & Nishii, 2013). When SHRM is implemented as a long-term approach that prioritizes employees' well-being and professional development, it promotes trust, strengthens organizational commitment, and ultimately reduces turnover intention. Employee retention is influenced by multiple factors, including perceived organizational support, career development opportunities, favorable working conditions, competitive compensation, and comprehensive benefits. These elements collectively contribute to employee commitment and willingness to remain with the organization (James & Azungah, 2020; Choi

et al., 2013; Lam et al., 2013).

By fostering a positive work environment, SHRM enhances employee well-being, which in turn reduces turnover intention. Research has demonstrated that SHRM practices lead to significant improvements in employee attitudes and behaviors. For instance, Lu et al. (2023) found that SHRM enhances employee resilience, work engagement, and overall performance. Similarly, Qamar et al. (2023) reported that SHRM contributes to employee well-being while concurrently lowering turnover intention. Although SHRM remains an evolving field encompassing diverse practices, there is broad consensus on its beneficial effects on employee outcomes (Diaz-Carrion et al., 2018).

These positive outcomes are realized through the development of a supportive and empowering work environment that prioritizes work-life balance and fosters long-term employment relationships. Given that SHRM is designed to nurture and sustain employee relationships, it is expected to significantly decrease turnover intentions. By promoting well-being, SHRM creates an organizational climate in which employees feel valued and engaged, reducing their likelihood of leaving. Based on this theoretical framework, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: The relationship between SHRM and turnover intention is mediated by well-being.

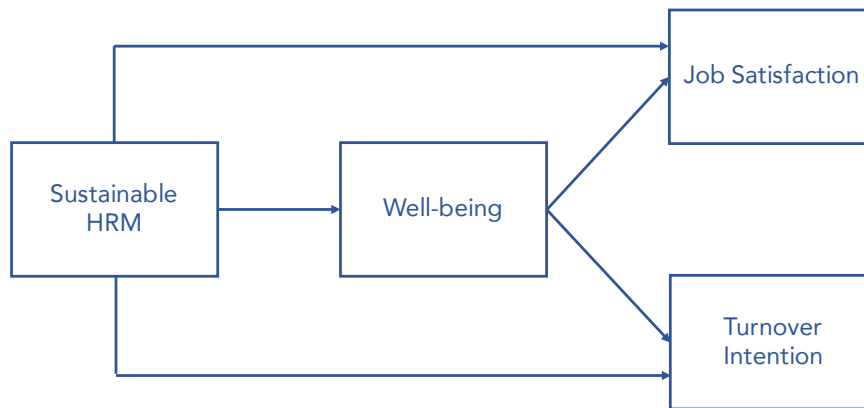


Figure 1. Research Model
Source: Figure by the Authors

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The study sample consisted of 467 professionals employed in Turkey's maritime sector. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling via an online platform. Prior to participating, respondents gave informed consent by filling out an online form that outlined the study's aims, voluntary participation requirements, and data confidentiality guarantees. Furthermore, ethical permission for the study had been obtained from the authors' associated institution. Despite the utilization of convenience

sampling, the demographic and professional composition of the sample corresponds to the general employee structure of the Turkish maritime sector, hence guaranteeing sufficient representation for this study's objectives. Data were gathered via an online survey platform, enabling participants to reply at their convenience, hence enhancing accessibility across various roles and locations within this sector. Of the participants, 13.5 % (n = 63) were women, while 86.5% (n = 404) were men. The educational distribution of the sample included 24.2% (n = 113) high school graduates, 22.9% (n = 107) associate degree holders, 47.3% (n = 221) bachelor's degree

holders, and 5.6% (n = 26) postgraduates. Regarding professional roles, 73.7% (n = 344) were employees, whereas 26.3% (n = 123) held managerial positions at various levels. The distribution by generations is as follows: 1.5% (n = 7) were born in 1965 or earlier, 16.1% (n = 75) between 1966 and 1979, 54.6% (n = 255) between 1980 and 1999, and 27.8% (n = 130) in 2000 or later.

3.2. Measurement Tools

Sustainable HRM. Employees' perceptions of SHRM were assessed using the 11-item Sustainable HRM Scale developed by De Prins et al. (2020). Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). A sample item includes: "Jobs are a reflection of what employees are good at and like to do in our organization." Although SHRM is often conceptualized as a multidimensional construct—encompassing dimensions such as decent work, workplace democracy, and sustainable career climate (Guerci et al., 2015)—in this study, it was operationalized as a unidimensional composite variable. This decision was based on both theoretical and methodological grounds. Conceptually, the dimensions of SHRM are interdependent and collectively represent a unified strategic orientation toward sustainability. Empirically, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses supported a unidimensional structure with strong internal consistency. Moreover, given the study's focus on examining SHRM's overall influence on employee outcomes, a composite measurement provided a parsimonious and theoretically coherent representation of sustainable HR practices.

Well-Being. Subjective well-being was measured using the 8-item scale developed by Diener et al. (2010). Participants rated their responses on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated "completely disagree" and 5 indicated "completely agree." Higher scores reflected greater levels of subjective well-being. A sample item is: "I lead a purposeful and meaningful life."

Job Satisfaction. Job Satisfaction was measured using a 15-item, two-dimensional scale developed by Warr et al. (1979), comprising seven items assessing intrinsic job satisfaction and eight items assessing extrinsic job satisfaction. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Completely Disagree, 5 = Completely Agree). Sample items include "I am satisfied with the freedom to choose my own method of working" (intrinsic job satisfaction) and "I am satisfied with my chance of promotion" (extrinsic job satisfaction).

Turnover Intention. Turnover intention was measured using the 8-item scale developed by Bothma and Roodt (2013). Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating stronger turnover intention. A sample item is: "I often consider leaving my job."

4. Findings

4.1. Measurement Model

First, the normality of the data distribution was assessed by examining skewness and kurtosis values. The skewness values ranged from -0.586 to 0.244, while the kurtosis values ranged from -0.515 to 0.986, indicating that the data distribution approximates normality. Following this, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using the AMOS software to assess the measurement model. Due to factor loadings exceeding 0.50, two items from the SHRM scale, two from the well-being scale, four from the job satisfaction scale, and two from the turnover intention scale were excluded from the analyses. Subsequent analyses confirmed the validity of the scales. Table 1 presents the CFA results, providing evidence for the validity of the constructs. The model fit was evaluated using multiple fit indices, including Chi-square (χ^2), degrees of freedom (df), χ^2 /df ratio, p-value, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI).

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Variables	Effect	S.E.	C.R.	p	Standardized Regression Weights	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Sustainable HRM								
SHRM1	1.000	-	-	-	.613	.495	.897	.899
SHRM2	1.195	.086	13.929	***	.633			
SHRM3	1.461	.110	13.300	***	.759			
SHRM4	1.508	.113	13.364	***	.764			
SHRM7	1.042	.095	11.006	***	.591			
SHRM8	1.542	.111	13.931	***	.810			

SHRM9	1.284	.104	12.395	***	.688			
SHRM10	1.398	.106	13.241	***	.753			
SHRM11	1.243	.101	12.351	***	.685			
Wellbeing								
WB2	1.000	-	-	-	.691			
WB5	.941	.072	13.140	***	.680			
WB6	.983	.073	13.427	***	.696			
WB7	1.274	.092	13.803	***	.718	.491	.852	.85
WB8	.900	.069	13.076	***	.676			
WB1	1.168	.082	14.166	***	.740			
Job Satisfaction								
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction								
JSI1	1.000	-	-	-	.802			
JSI2	.994	.057	17.569	***	.751			
JSI3	1.009	.065	15.626	***	.683			
JSI5	.952	.053	17.835	***	.759			
JSI6	.859	.052	16.434	***	.713			
JSI7	.847	.051	16.455	***	.712	.644	.782	.877
Extrinsic Job Satisfaction								
JSE2	1.000	-	-	-	.677			
JSE4	1.071	.086	12.393	***	.684			
JSE5	1.011	.086	11.721	***	.639			
JSE7	1.073	.097	11.112	***	.601			
JSE8	1.038	.092	11.252	***	.610			
Turnover Intention								
TT2	1.000	-	-	-	.624			
TT3	1.004	.067	14.978	***	.667			
TT4	1.326	.093	14.333	***	.859			
TT5	1.341	.101	13.230	***	.761	.545	.877	.884
TT6	1.286	.104	12.340	***	.695			
TT7	1.368	.100	13.714	***	.800			

Note. N=467. Items not included in the table were excluded due to factor loadings below 0.5. Model Fit Index: N= 467. $\chi^2 = 1060.828$; df = 451; $\chi^2/df = 2.352$; p = .000; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .06; CFI = .93.

Source: Table by the Authors.

The four-factor model, consisting of SHRM, well-being, turnover intention, and job satisfaction— the latter modeled and tested as a second-order construct with intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction as its first-order dimensions—demonstrates an accep-

table model fit. The RMSEA value (0.05) and SRMR value (0.06) fall within established acceptable limits, while the CFI value of 0.93 further supports a strong model fit.

Additionally, Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were calculated as key indicators of construct validity and reliability. Table 1 presents the results of the validity and reliability analysis for SHRM, job satisfaction, well-being, and turnover intention. CR evaluates the internal consistency of the constructs, with values above 0.70 generally considered acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown in Table 1, the CR values for all constructs exceed this threshold, indicating strong internal consistency.

AVE assesses the proportion of variance explained by a construct's indicators, with a commonly accepted threshold of 0.50, suggesting that at least 50% of the variance is attributed to the latent construct (Hair et al., 2013). The results in Table 1 indicate that the AVE values for the study constructs either meet

or are very close to this threshold. Overall, these findings confirm that the measurement model exhibits a satisfactory level of validity and reliability.

4.2. Structural Model

To test the hypothesized relationships among sustainable HRM, well-being, job satisfaction, and turnover intention, structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted using AMOS 24.0. The model demonstrated an acceptable overall fit: $\chi^2 = 1061.360$, $df = 452$, $\chi^2/df = 2.348$, CFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.05, and SRMR = 0.06. All indices fall within commonly accepted thresholds ($\chi^2/df < 3$; CFI > 0.90; RMSEA < 0.08; SRMR < 0.08), indicating a good fit between the model and the observed data (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Table 2. Path Results

Path	DE	95% CI	IE	95% CI	TE	95% CI
Sustainable HRM --> Wellbeing	0.499**	[0.374;0.658]			0.499**	[0.374;0.658]
Sustainable HRM --> Job Satisfaction	0.520 **	[0.415;0.665]			0.663**	[0.513;0.843]
Sustainable HRM --> Turnover Intention	-0.798**	[-1.005;-0.625]			-0.907**	[-1.129;-0.706]
Wellbeing --> Job Satisfaction	0.286**	[0.175;0.444]			0.286**	[0.175;0.444]
Wellbeing --> Turnover Intention	-0.217**	[-0.398;-0.054]			-0.217**	[-0.398;-0.054]
Sustainable HRM --> Wellbeing --> Job Satisfaction			0.143**	[0.081;0.232]		
Sustainable HRM --> Wellbeing --> Turnover Intention			-0.108**	[-0.217;-0.030]		

Note. DE = Direct effect; IE = Indirect effect; TE: Total effect; CI = confidence interval, ** $p < 0.01$, $\chi^2 = 1061.360$, $df = 452$, $\chi^2/df = 2.348$, CFI = 0.93, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .05, $p = .000$

Source: Table by the authors

Table 2 displays the standardized path coefficients, 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (CIs), and significance levels for both direct and indirect effects, estimated using 5,000 bootstrap resamples.

- **Direct effects:** Sustainable HRM had significant positive effects on well-being ($\beta = 0.499$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [0.374, 0.658]) and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.520$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [0.415, 0.665]), and a significant negative effect on turnover intention ($\beta = -0.798$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [-1.005, -0.625]). Well-being also positively predicted job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.286$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [0.175, 0.444]) and negatively predicted turnover intention ($\beta = -0.217$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [-0.398, -0.054]).
- **Indirect effects:** SHRM had significant indirect effects on job satisfaction through well-being ($\beta = 0.143$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [0.081, 0.232]) and

on turnover intention through well-being ($\beta = -0.108$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [-0.217, -0.030]). These findings confirm that well-being mediates the effects of SHRM on both outcomes.

- **Total effects:** The total effects of SHRM on job satisfaction (TE = 0.663, 95% CI [0.513, 0.843]) and on turnover intention (TE = -0.907, 95% CI [-1.129, -0.706]) remained statistically significant, affirming the cumulative influence of both direct and mediated pathways.

These results fully support Hypotheses H1 through H7 and highlight the central role of well-being as a psychological mechanism in the SHRM-outcomes link (See Figure 2). The use of bootstrapped confidence intervals enhances the robustness of the mediation findings by reducing dependency on normality assumptions.

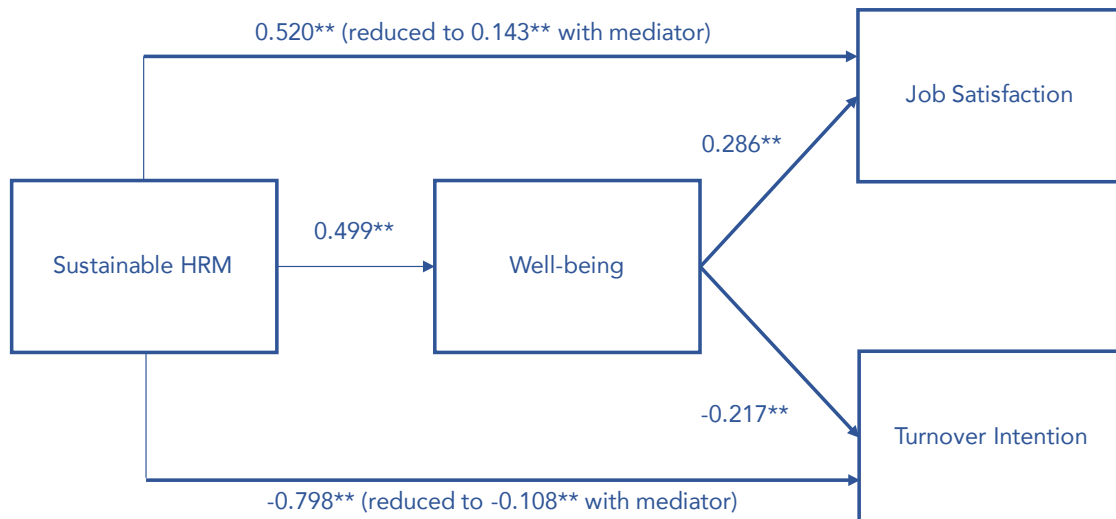


Figure 2. Resulted Model
Source: Figure by the Authors

5. Discussion

This study examines the employee-level outcomes of SHRM, focusing on its impact on job satisfaction and turnover intentions, with a particular emphasis on the mediating role of well-being. The findings provide empirical support for the strategic importance of HRM practices in fostering a supportive work environment and enhancing employee well-being, ultimately contributing to higher job satisfaction and workforce retention.

First, the results confirm that SHRM promotes a work environment where employees experience greater job satisfaction while reducing their turnover intention. When organizations integrate SHRM strategies, employees perceive their workplace as more supportive, fair, and growth-oriented, which enhances their overall satisfaction (Hauff et al., 2018; Diaz Carrion et al., 2018). By prioritizing long-term value over short-term efficiency, sustainable HRM policies instill a sense of stability and purpose, strengthening employees' connection to their roles (Grant, 2008; Cachon-Rodríguez et al., 2022). Moreover, these strategies significantly reduce turnover intention, as employees working in organizations that emphasize fairness, consistency, and long-term employee investment are less likely to seek alternative employment (Kramar, 2014; Islam et al., 2023). These results reinforce the idea that sustainable HRM is not solely concerned with policies; rather, it involves the development of a work environment that prioritizes consistency and satisfaction (Ziegler et al., 2012). This finding aligns with recent international evidence from the maritime sector, where Yuen et al. (2018) found that seafarers' job satisfaction is highly dependent on support from management, fair scheduling, and decent working conditions—all core concerns of SHRM. Similarly, a 2024 global seafarer survey showed that well-being and happiness onboard are significant predictors of retention, directly affected

by organizational treatment and perceived fairness (Hayes-Mejia & Stafström, 2024).

Second, the findings demonstrate that SHRM positively influences well-being, revealing that SHRM is more than an administrative function; it is a foundational element of a healthy work environment. Employees in organizations with a structured, long-term HR vision report higher well-being, as they experience a workplace that prioritizes psychological safety, stability, and a sense of belonging (Cooper et al., 2019; Peiró et al., 2023). This is consistent with research that indicates that well-being is not simply a consequence of effective HRM, but rather a direct result of the structure of organizations' people management strategies (Wright & Cropanzano, 2004; Kowalski & Loretto, 2017). This finding resonates with studies from other high-pressure sectors such as logistics and healthcare, where sustainable HRM practices have been found to buffer employees from stress and enhance their psychological well-being (Čižiūnienė et al., 2025; Armeanu et al., 2023). In particular, in crisis-prone logistics contexts, SHRM has been shown to reduce attrition and boost resilience through flexible policies and well-being initiatives.

Third, the results confirm that well-being is a key determinant of both job satisfaction and turnover intention. Employees with higher well-being derive greater satisfaction from their roles, as they perceive alignment between their professional aspirations and organizational practices (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Diener et al., 2010). Similarly, those with stronger well-being are less likely to leave, as they feel more embedded in an environment that meets both their professional and personal expectations (Wright & Cropanzano, 2004; Wu et al., 2017). These findings suggest that organizations seeking to enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover must first address employee well-being as a strategic priority (Podsakoff et al., 2007; Lazzari et al., 2022). From a global

perspective, similar conclusions were drawn by Simha Vihari et al. (2024), who demonstrated that sustainable HRM boosts employees' well-being and empowerment through ethical and supportive organizational climates. This cross-national alignment supports the generalizability of the SHRM–well-being–performance model beyond a single sector or country.

Finally, the results establish that well-being mediates the relationship between SHRM, job satisfaction, and turnover intention, reinforcing its role as the mediator between HRM practices and employee outcomes. Employees in organizations that treat HRM as a sustainable, long-term investment rather than a short-term operational necessity experience higher well-being, which in turn strengthens job satisfaction and decreases turnover (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Kowalski & Loretto, 2017). These findings underscore that sustainable HRM is not merely an ethical responsibility but a strategic necessity, essential for fostering long-term organizational stability and employee well-being (Dagenais-Desmarais & Savoie, 2012; Liu et al., 2019). Research in Turkey's maritime sector has identified significant relationships among HRM, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. Yorulmaz (2024) discovered that alienation from work in marina and yacht firms elevates turnover intention, particularly due to low job satisfaction and limited organizational support, which intensify this tendency. Arıcan's (2025) research highlights the significance of improvements in factors such as compensation and working conditions to improve job satisfaction and diminish turnover intention. This study's results, although corroborating previous findings, offer a fresh approach by demonstrating that SHRM affects job satisfaction and turnover intention through a mediating effect of subjective well-being. Importantly, by framing these effects within a formal SEM structure and drawing on a multi-dimensional understanding of well-being, this study aligns with and expands on international models proposed in sectors like healthcare (Armeanu et al., 2023), logistics (Čižiūnienė et al., 2025), and maritime (Yuen et al., 2018; Hayes-Mejia & Stafström, 2024).

The results of this study offer important perspectives for HRM policies and sustainability plans. The findings indicate that SHRM practices improve subjective well-being, job satisfaction, and retention, particularly in high-stress sectors, hence underlining the necessity of incorporating SHRM into organizational policy. Human resources professionals and organizational leaders are encouraged to use sustainable and employee-centric strategies to enhance workforce retention and foster long-term success and competitive advantage. These observations highlight the importance of synchronizing HRM programs with broader sustainability objectives, especially in sectors characterized by demanding working conditions and operational difficulties.

5.1. Theoretical Contributions

This study advances the AMO model (Appelbaum et al., 2000) by demonstrating the mediating role of well-being in the relationship between SHRM, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The AMO framework suggests that organizational performance is maximized when HRM practices enhance employees' abilities, motivate them effectively, and provide opportunities for meaningful engagement (Guest, 2017; Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016). First, this study extends AMO by positioning well-being as a central mechanism rather than a passive outcome of HRM interventions. Usually, the AMO model regards well-being as a subsequent result of HRM activities, whereas our findings indicate that well-being serves as an active mediator of the influence of SHRM on job attitudes (Van De Voorde et al., 2012; Wright & Cropanzano, 2004). Second, this study strengthens the motivation component of AMO by demonstrating that SHRM enhances motivation indirectly through well-being. Employees with higher well-being are more likely to be engaged, and satisfied, and less inclined to leave their organizations (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Wright & Nishii, 2013). The findings suggest that SHRM enhances motivational mechanisms by fostering psychologically safe, empowering, and fulfilling workplaces (Peiró et al., 2023).

5.2. Practical Implications

The findings underscore the importance of integrating well-being initiatives into HRM strategies to enhance job satisfaction and employee retention (Nunes & Rodrigues, 2024). Organizations operating in high-risk industries, such as the maritime sector, where employees experience long working hours, psychological strain, and hazardous conditions (McVeigh et al., 2017), can particularly benefit from SHRM practices. By implementing work-life balance policies, job security measures, and participative decision-making mechanisms, organizations can cultivate a work environment that supports employees' psychological and physical well-being while strengthening organizational commitment.

Moreover, given the negative association between SHRM and turnover intention, organizations should focus on retention-driven HRM strategies such as career development programs, leadership support initiatives, and well-being-focused workplace interventions. Addressing employees' mental and physical health needs can help reduce turnover risks and promote long-term retention. Furthermore, HR policies should be adapted to address sector-specific challenges, particularly in industries with demanding work conditions. SHRM should include fatigue management programs, social support mechanisms, and stress reduction initiatives, ensuring employees feel valued and supported both professionally and personally (McVeigh et al., 2019; Zaderei, 2020).

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The reliance on cross-sectional data limits causal inference, highlighting the need for longitudinal studies to track the long-term effects of SHRM on employee outcomes (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, the sample is limited to maritime industry employees in Turkey, which, while relevant given the sector's challenges, restricts generalizability to other industries and cultural contexts. Future research should explore cross-sector and cross-cultural comparisons to assess whether these findings hold across different workplace settings (Hofstede, 1980). Furthermore, the study is based on self-reported data, which introduces a potential risk of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Future research should incorporate multi-source data collection, including supervisor assessments, HR policy audits, and objective turnover data, to enhance measurement validity. While well-being is identified as a mediating factor, additional variables such as leadership style, job autonomy, and organizational support may also shape the SHRM–job satisfaction and SHRM–turnover intention relationships (Cooper et al., 2019). Future research could examine moderated mediation models to identify the conditions under which SHRM exerts its strongest effects. Lastly, while this study focuses on employee-level outcomes, future research should explore the broader organizational implications of SHRM, including its effects on financial performance, innovation capacity, and long-term corporate sustainability (Ehnert et al., 2016; Chams & Garcia-Blandon, 2019).

5.4. Conclusion

This study emphasizes the significance of SHRM in promoting well-being, increasing job satisfaction, and increasing employee retention, especially in high-demand and high-stress work contexts such as the maritime sector. This research positions subjective well-being as a critical mediating factor, enhancing the AMO paradigm and demonstrating how SHRM practices may lead to positive employee outcomes that promote long-term organizational sustainability. The empirical findings provide significant, evidence-based insights for HR practitioners and managers in organizations aiming to formulate and execute HR strategies that prioritize employee well-being and satisfaction along with performance goals. These insights are particularly essential for industries with distinct psychological and operational difficulties. This study emphasizes the need to incorporate sustainability concepts into HRM to develop adaptable and engaged employees that can maintain a competitive advantage. Future research should further explore the dynamic and developing connection of sustainability, human resource mana-

gement, and employee experience across numerous sectors. Such research would enhance comprehension of how SHRM supports organizational resilience and human capital development, ensuring employees remain central to sustainable business success.

6. Data Availability

The data is available upon any reasonable request.

7. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the researchers' institution.

8. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

9. Financial Support

This study received no funding.

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The Relationship of Five Factor Personality Characteristics and Workplace Incivility in Health Institutions: A City Hospital Example

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Abstract

The fundamental question that shapes the design of this study is whether personality traits play a role in combating the frequent workplace incivilities encountered in the delivery of health services and in developing strategies to cope with these problems. Based on this, the aim of the study is to examine the relationship between the five-factor personality traits of health personnel working in a public hospital and incivility behaviors in the workplace, as well as to determine how workplace incivilities vary according to employees' demographic characteristics. The study is designed as a cross-sectional survey. Two scales were used in the study. A total of 324 healthcare workers were included in the study, which was conducted at a city hospital in the Mediterranean region. It was found that gender, job, years of service, and income variables created significant differences in workplace incivility. A negatively low-level ($r:-.200$) relationship was observed between the personality

trait of responsibility and workplace incivility. No significant relationship was found with other personality traits. Therefore, considering that healthcare workers are expected to be more responsible and careful in terms of the nature and consequences of their work, workplace incivility can be considered an important risk in this regard. Given that negative behaviors in the workplace can affect employee motivation, job satisfaction, and even relationships with patients, it is important for healthcare workers to work in an environment where more polite and respectful behaviors are exhibited in terms of the quality of health services.

Keywords: Five-Factor Personality Traits, Workplace Incivility, Healthcare Workers.

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1. Introduction

Studies on the five-factor personality traits of healthcare workers are significant in understanding their interactions with colleagues, patients, and patients' relatives. The "Big Five" personality traits, commonly used in psychology, business, and multidisciplinary studies, include conscientiousness, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Openness to experience is associated with imagination, curiosity, and willingness to try new things, while conscientiousness refers to being an efficient and reliable organization member with a strong sense of responsibility. Extraversion is linked to sociability, high-energy interactions, and leadership qualities. Agreeableness involves cooperation, kindness, and a general concern for others, whereas neuroticism includes emotional instability, anxiety, and a tendency toward negative emotions (Bhatti et al., 2018).

Workplace incivility refers to ambiguous behaviors that violate norms of mutual respect and may create an environment that harms colleagues or, in the healthcare field, patients. Establishing a civil and respectful workplace is essential for healthcare professionals to provide the best possible care. Identifying specific personality traits that contribute to or mitigate incivility can help proactively address these challenges (Mete, 2022).

This study aims to investigate the relationship between five-factor personality traits and workplace incivility among healthcare professionals and to determine whether these traits and workplace incivility vary based on demographic characteristics.

2. General Information

2.1. Courtesy, Incivility, and Workplace Incivility

Courtesy is defined by the Turkish Language Association (2006) as "acting respectfully and delicately toward others, politeness, and gentleness." Courtesy is influenced by an individual's upbringing, family structure, geography, and social environment. It is a key communication skill that facilitates social harmony, ensuring honesty, respect, and tolerance in interpersonal relationships. Courtesy plays a vital role in human interactions, helping maintain smooth and healthy relationships while emphasizing honesty, respect, and social decorum.

Conversely, incivility involves disrespect, prejudiced behavior, rudeness, and extreme selfishness, leading to discomfort, trust issues, exclusion, and weakened relationships (Navaey & Bakšić, 2018). Workp-

lace incivility, in particular, describes frequent rude behaviors violating mutual respect norms, often causing harm to colleagues and organizational culture (Namin et al., 2021). Examples include disruptive actions in meetings, ignoring colleagues' feelings, passive-aggressive behavior, gossiping, discrimination, and harassment, which can damage workplace harmony. Studies indicate that workplace incivility correlates with organizational justice, cynicism, turnover intentions, work anxiety, exclusion, and job dissatisfaction (Tutar et al., 2021; Kavaklı & Yildirim, 2022; Samma et al., 2020; De Clercq et al., 2019).

In healthcare settings, workplace incivility poses significant risks to organizational well-being. Awareness of employees' personality traits can help managers foster a professional culture that promotes respectful interactions. Training on workplace behaviors, clearly defining expectations, and swiftly addressing incivility can contribute to a more supportive and professional work environment (Zhang et al., 2022).

2.2. Five-Factor Personality Traits

The five-factor personality model was introduced by Tupes and Christal in 1961, explaining personality through five key traits. Despite various personality models, the five-factor model remains the most widely used (Almlund et al., 2011). Psychologists and psychiatrists have conducted extensive studies demonstrating the significant role of these traits in various psychological and behavioral outcomes. The model provides a structured way to differentiate individuals based on distinct characteristics (Basim et al., 2009; Çiçek & Aslan, 2020).

The five-factor personality traits are commonly used in multidisciplinary research. Studies show correlations between these traits and emotional exhaustion, resilience, and organizational justice perceptions (Swider & Zimmerman, 2010; Yavaş, 2020). The sub-dimensions of the five-factor model are as follows (Tatar, 2021):

- **Extraversion:** Describes sociability, energy in interactions, and preference for engaging in social environments.
- **Conscientiousness:** Involves being organized, disciplined, and reliable.
- **Agreeableness:** Reflects a person's inclination toward cooperation, kindness, and empathy.
- **Neuroticism:** Characterized by emotional instability, anxiety, and frequent worry.
- **Openness to Experience:** Encompasses curiosity, imagination, and adaptability to new experiences.

2.3. Workplace Incivility and Five-Factor Personality Traits in Healthcare Professionals

Workplace incivility in healthcare workers can lead to stress, emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, decreased service quality, and social dysfunction (Raza et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022; Frisbee et al., 2019). Healthcare professionals work under high stress due to the nature of their jobs, long shifts, and emotional burdens, which can make maintaining workplace civility challenging (Kim & Yi, 2022). A toxic work environment can increase turnover intentions and reduce commitment to the profession. Ethical considerations and professional responsibilities play a crucial role in shaping healthcare workers' behavior (Lee et al., 2022).

Healthcare workers require teamwork and coordination to ensure high-quality patient care. Workplace incivility disrupts organizational harmony, reducing service efficiency and effectiveness (Hawkins et al., 2021). Conscientiousness, in particular, is a valuable trait for healthcare professionals, ensuring responsibility, ethical decision-making, and meticulous work performance (Karakurt et al., 2022). Extraversion is also beneficial, aiding communication and teamwork (Donald & Oluwatelure, 2016). Conversely, neuroticism is associated with increased stress and burnout, negatively impacting patient care (Boncalo & Polyakova, 2020). Openness to experience fosters adaptability, innovation, and continuous improvement in healthcare settings (Opoku Mensah & Ko-omson, 2021).

Understanding the relationship between personality traits and workplace incivility is crucial in addressing organizational challenges. Healthcare institutions must implement policies that promote respectful workplace interactions and provide training programs emphasizing professional conduct and teamwork (Yasin & Jan, 2021).

3. Methods and Materials

3.1. Purpose and Importance

The aim of this research is to determine the relationship between the five-factor personality traits of healthcare workers in a public hospital and workplace incivility behaviors, as well as to examine these behaviors according to the demographic characteristics of the employees. Addressing workplace incivility, which is frequently encountered in healthcare services, is crucial for making situational assessments and developing strategies to combat these issues. Given that employee personality traits have been previously associated with concepts such as burnout and mobbing, evaluating them in the context of workplace incivility is considered significant. Accordingly, the study seeks to answer the following

questions:

- Is there a relationship between five-factor personality traits and workplace incivility in healthcare institutions?
- How do personality traits vary according to demographic characteristics of healthcare employees?

How does workplace incivility differ based on demographic characteristics?

3.2. Population and Sample

The study population consists of 2,048 employees working in a city hospital in the Mediterranean region. With a 95% confidence level and a 50% prevalence rate, it was calculated that a sample of 324 participants was required. After reaching 324 valid survey responses, data collection was concluded.

3.3. Data Collection Tool

A "Simple Random Sampling" method was used in this study. The study consists of three sections: the first section examines the five-factor personality traits and their dimensions, the second section analyzes workplace incivility and related concepts, and the third section evaluates survey responses obtained from healthcare employees working in both public and private hospitals in Adana, Turkey.

Participants in this study were selected completely randomly. A list of healthcare professionals working in the hospital was obtained and each individual was given an equal chance of being selected. Participants were selected using a random number table (or computer-aided random selection method). No inclusion or exclusion criteria were applied.

Two scales were used in the research. The first scale is the "Big Five Personality Inventory," originally developed by Benet-Martinez and John (1998) and adapted into Turkish by Sümer and Sümer (2005). This inventory consists of 44 items, measuring five personality traits: "extraversion," "conscientiousness," "agreeableness," "neuroticism," and "openness to experience." Higher scores indicate stronger possession of the respective trait.

The second scale is the "Workplace Incivility Scale," developed by Cortina et al. (2013) and adapted into Turkish by Kutlu and Bilgin (2017). This 12-item scale is rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "Never (0)" to "Very Frequently (4)," with higher scores indicating increased workplace incivility.

3.4. Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 statistical software. A Pearson correlation analysis, independent sample t-test, and one-way ANOVA were con-

ducted with a 95% confidence level. To ensure the normality assumption, skewness and kurtosis values were examined following Tabachnik and Fidell's (2013) reference range (-1.5 to +1.5). Cronbach's alpha values for each scale ranged from 0.6 to 0.87, confirming sufficient reliability.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Com-

mittee of İstanbul Arel University on October 23, 2019 (Decision No: 3). Permission from the Provincial Health Directorate was granted on February 1, 2020. Participants provided informed consent before completing the survey.

4. Finding

Demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Demographic Variables	Groups	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	157	48.5
	Male	167	51.5
Marital status	Connubial	181	55.9
	Single	143	44.1
Job	Doctor	14	4.3
	Dentist	4	1.2
	Pharmacist	22	6.8
	Medical Officer	34	10.5
	Health Administrator	9	2.8
	Charge Nurse	19	5.9
	Nurse/Midwife	132	40.7
	Technician	13	4.0
	Auxiliary Health Personnel	19	5.9
	Other Personnel	58	17.9
Age	18-24 age	23	7.1
	25-34 age	150	46.3
	35-44 age	99	30.6
	45-49 age	42	13.0
	50 age and above	10	3.1
Total Working Time	0-5 year	143	44.1
	6-10 year	52	16.0
	11-15 year	71	21.9
	16-20 year	29	9.0
	21-25 year	19	5.9
	26 year and above	10	3.1
Income Status	My expenses are more than my income	86	26.5
	Income-expense equal	165	50.9
	My income is more than my expenses	73	22.5
Total		324	100.0

The Relationship of Five Factor Personality Characteristics and Workplace Incivility in Health Institutions: A City Hospital Example

157 of the participants are women and 167 are men. 181 of them are married and 143 of them are single. 14 are physicians, 4 are dentists, 22 are pharmacists, 34 are health officers, 9 are health administrators, 19 are charge nurses, 132 are nurses/midwives, 13 are technicians, 19 are auxiliary health personnel, and 58 are other personnel. Other personnel include cleaning, security and canteen managers. There are 23 people between the ages of 18-24, 150 people between the ages of 24-34, 99 people between the ages of 35-44, 42 people between the ages of 45-49,

and 10 people aged 50 and over. The total working period is 143 people with 0-5 years, 52 with 6-10 years, 71 with 11-15 years, 29 with 16-20 years, 19 with 21-25 years, and 10 with 26 years and above. There are 86 people whose expenses are more than their income, 165 whose income is equal to their expenses, and 73 whose income is more than their expenses (Table 1).

Correlation analysis performed to analyze the relationship between five factor personality traits and workplace incivility score is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability Tests of the Five-Factor Personality Traits and Workplace Incivility Scales

Cronbach's Alpha Value		
Five Factor Personality Trait Scale (N=44)	Workplace Incivility Scale (N=12)	Both Scales (N=56)
0,67	0,96	0,86

Depending on the alpha coefficient, the scale is;

- 0.00 < α < 0.40 is not reliable,
- 0.40 < α < 0.60 is low reliability,
- 0.60 < α < 0.80 is quite reliable,

- 0.80 < α < 1.00 is highly reliable. Based on the results in the table, it was concluded that the Five Factor Personality Traits questionnaire is quite reliable and the Workplace Incivility scale is highly reliable.

Table 3. Mann Whitney U Test Results for Five Factor Personality Score and Workplace Incivility Score

Five Factor Personality Traits Test Value					Workplace Incivility Test Value		
Groups	Number	Row Mean.	U	p	Row Mean.	U	p
City Hospital	324	254,13	23772,5	0,045*	238,91	24757	0,173
Medline Hospital	165	227,08			256,96		
Total	489						
Male	266	253,39	27428,0	0,151	243,52	29266,0	0,749
Woman	223	235,00			246,76		
Total	489						
Married	265	230,28	25780,5	0,012*	254,95	27043,5	0,084
Single	224	262,41					
Total	489						

According to the results of the Mann Whitney U Test conducted to test whether there is a difference in the paired groups according to the Five Factor Personality Traits and Workplace Incivility Scores obtained from the applied surveys, there is a significant difference between the public and private hospitals in terms of the importance given to personality tra-

its ($p=0.045$). The personnel working in the public hospital give more importance to the five factor personality traits and feel the personality traits more in personnel practices. In addition, it can be said that the single personnel working in both hospitals are more sensitive to personality traits and behaviors ($p=0$). According to the results of Kruskal Wallis H

Table 4. Kruskal Wallis H Test Analysis Results for Five Factor Personality Score and Workplace Incivility Score

Five Factor Personality Traits Test Value					Workplace Incivility Test Value		
Groups	Number	Queue Ort.	Chi-Square	p	Row rows Ort.	Chi-Square	p
Physician	30	267,13	11,89	0,220	182,22	33,69	0,000*
Dentist	10	301,65			277,40		
Pharmacist	33	229,94			226,45		
Health Officer	51	237,25			262,99		
Health Administrator	17	264,26			214,26		
Responsible Nurse	30	311,92			172,28		
Nurse/Midwife	169	239,21			232,78		
Technician	37	217,03			258,50		
Other Health Per.	54	239,00			284,99		
Other Personnel	58	239,21			302,99		
Total	489						
18-24 years old	47	227,49	6,00	0,199	255,67	7,02	0,135
25-34 years	212	241,99			233,01		
35-44 years	153	237,52			242,87		
45-49 years	65	282,76			267,95		
50 years and older	12	257,63			317,79		
Total	489						
0-5 years	203	245,85	7,32	0,198	257,63	14,84	0,011*
6-10 years	98	222,62			215,86		
11-15 years	101	246,67			220,97		
16-20 years	40	293,93			265,29		
21-25 years	33	241,52			297,67		
26 years and above	14	245,71			257,11		
Total	489						
1600-2499	111	198,83	26,10	0,000*	277,76	17,72	0,001*
2500-3499	67	217,09			230,40		
3500-4499	61	243,70			238,93		
4500-5499	143	263,79			259,22		
5500 and above	107	286,00			204,61		
Total	489						

Test, which was conducted to test whether there is a difference in more than two group comparisons according to the Five Factor Personality Traits and Workplace Incivility Score averages obtained from the applied surveys, there is a significant difference in terms of workplace incivility scores for the occupational groups working in both hospitals ($p=0.000$). The difference is due to the fact that dentists and other healthcare personnel are more sensitive to

workplace incivility. As the working hours in the workplace increase, the sensitivity of the personnel to workplace incivility increases ($p=0.011$).

As the income level of the staff increases, the attention paid to the five factor personality traits increases ($p=0.000$), and at the same time, the importance given to workplace incivility by the staff with low income levels is higher than the other groups ($p=0.001$).

The Relationship of Five Factor Personality Characteristics and Workplace Incivility in Health Institutions: A City Hospital Example

Table 5. The Relationship Between Five Factor Personality Traits and Incivility

		SS	YB	NEV	DA	INEZ
Extroversion	r	.252	.168	.054	.017	-.034
	p	<.001	.002**	.336	.757	.539
Ownership of responsibility	r		.430	.287	.137	-.200
	p		<.001	<.001	.014*	<.001
Docility	r			.262	.200	-.109
	p			<.001	<.001	.051
Neuroticism	r				.425	-.076
	p				<.001	.170
Openness to experience	r					.048
	p					.388

SS: Being responsible; YB: Docility; NEV: Neuroticism; DA: Openness to Experience;

INEZ: Workplace Discourtesy; r: pearson correlation analysis coefficient; *:p<.05; **:p<.01

Low-level positive relationships were found between the participants' extroversion, responsibility (r: .252) and agreeableness (r: .168). A moderate positive relationship was found between their responsibility and agreeableness (r: .430). Positive low-level relationships were found with their conscientiousness and also with their neuroticism (r: .287) and openness to experience (r: .137). Positive, low-level relationships were found between their agreeableness and their neuroticism (r: .262) and openness to experience (r:

.200). A moderate positive relationship was found between their neuroticism and openness to experience (r: .425). In the correlation analysis, there is a significant relationship between workplace incivility and being responsible only, and the relationship is low-level and negative (r: -.200) (Table 2).

Comparison of the scores of the participants from the Five-Factor Personality test and the workplace incivility scale according to demographic variables is given in Table 3.

Table 6. Five Factor Personality and Workplace Incivility Intergroup Difference Analysis Results

Groups	n	Extroversion $\bar{x} \pm s$	Ownership of responsibility $\bar{x} \pm s$	Docility $\bar{x} \pm s$	Neuroticism $\bar{x} \pm s$	Openness to experience $\bar{x} \pm s$	Workplace Incivility $\bar{x} \pm s$
Female	157	2.9±0.69	3.5±0.93	3.58±0.91	3.55±0.96	3.55±1.17	8.88±11.13
Male	167	3.05±0.71	3.59±1.02	3.61±1.03	3.49±1.04	3.47±1.16	11.58±12.14
t (p)		-1.887 (0.060)	-0.799 (0.425)	-0.231 (0.818)	0.538 (0.591)	0.623 (0.534)	-2.084 (0.038*)
Connubial	181	3.01±0.75	3.44±0.96	3.52±0.93	3.44±0.97	3.42±1.07	10.28±10.05
Single	143	2.93±0.64	3.68±0.98	3.69±1.02	3.62±1.02	3.62±1.27	10.27±13.59
t (p)		0.987 (0.324)	-2.201 (0.028*)	-1.519 (0.130)	-1.639 (0.102)	-1.473 (0.142)	0.008 (0.994)
Doctor	14	2.93±0.92	4±1.09	3.86±1.13	3.54±1.13	3.11±1.35	4.93±12.33
Dentist	4	2.88±0.63	2.88±0.95	3.00±0.41	3.5±0.58	2.88±0.25	9.50±11.70
Pharmacist	22	2.91±0.63	3.66±1.16	3.3±1.07	3.43±1.09	3.52±1.07	7.00±12.31
Medical Officer	34	2.97±0.56	3.57±0.94	3.85±0.91	3.71±0.96	3.62±1.14	12.47±13.12
Health Administrator	9	3.28±0.87	3.94±0.68	4.06±0.77	3.11±0.89	3.22±1.66	7.78±11.45
Charge Nurse	19	2.97±0.66	3.89±1.02	4.03±0.82	3.84±0.88	3.82±1.28	3.89±6.88
Nurse/Midwife	132	2.89±0.69	3.42±0.96	3.56±0.96	3.57±1.01	3.56±1.11	9.17±10.08

Technician	13	3.04±0.59	3.42±1.13	3.65±1.05	3.15±1.13	3.12±1.02	16.31±12.98
Auxiliary Health Personnel	19	3.05±0.86	3.82±1.02	3.61±1.04	3.37±1.00	3.18±1.27	9.26±9.34
Other Personnel	58	3.13±0.73	3.47±0.87	3.39±0.96	3.4±0.95	3.59±1.19	15.53±13.54
F (p)		0.763 (0.651)	1.508 (0.144)	1.766 (0.074)	0.919 (0.509)	0.945 (0.489)	3.353 (0.001**)
Ph							h,j>a,c,f,g d>a,f
18-24 age		2.83±0.47	3.28±0.77	3.46±1.01	3.67±1.28	3.74±1.24	14.87±13.68
25-34 age		2.94±0.7	3.59±0.99	3.57±0.96	3.54±0.92	3.56±1.13	9.78±11.52
35-44 age		3±0.82	3.49±1.03	3.57±0.99	3.43±1.06	3.38±1.19	9.68±11.57
45-49 age		3.12±0.54	3.64±0.89	3.79±0.98	3.64±0.97	3.52±1.19	9.26±10.21
50 age and above		3.05±0.5	3.6±0.94	3.7±0.89	3.1±0.74	3.3±1.23	17.2±14.9
F (p)		0.852 (0.493)	0.659 (0.621)	0.579 (0.678)	0.936 (0.443)	0.695 (0.596)	1.990 (0.096)
0-5 year		2.99±0.7	3.48±1.04	3.53±1.01	3.56±1.04	3.66±1.16	12.68±13.46
6-10 year		2.8±0.47	3.63±0.77	3.52±0.82	3.45±0.81	3.35±1.1	6.6±9.13
11-15 year		2.99±0.91	3.66±0.98	3.72±1.01	3.51±1.06	3.35±1.18	7.56±9.67
16-20 year		3.17±0.64	3.69±1.05	3.72±1.01	3.47±1.08	3.33±1.3	9.34±11.23
21-25 year		3.05±0.44	3.03±0.59	3.61±0.97	3.45±0.91	3.63±1.21	13.58±9.08
26 year and above		2.9±0.52	3.75±1.23	3.65±0.94	3.55±0.9	3.45±0.72	10.6±7.72
F (p)		1.215 (0.302)	1.696 (0.135)	0.518 (0.763)	0.131 (0.985)	1.161 (0.328)	3.453 (0.005**)
Ph							a,e>b,c
My expenses are more than my income		3.26±0.55	3.60±0.97	3.29±1.11	3.30±0.93	3.41±1.05	11.42±10.67
Income-expense equal		2.92±0.68	3.45±0.92	3.58±0.95	3.62±0.98	3.56±1.14	10.19±1.14
My income is more than my expenses		2.89±0.65	3.89±1.05	3.77±0.99	3.51±1.01	3.46±1.19	5.48±9.45
F (p)		3.562 (0.030*)	5.240 (0.006**)	2.638 (0.073)	1.346 (0.262)	0.303 (0.739)	5.737 (0.004**)
Ph		a>b,c	c>a,b				a,b>c

Ph: Post-hoc; *:p<0.05; **:p<0.01; ***:p<0.001; F: one-way analysis of variance statistical value;

t: independent samples t test statistical value

A significant difference was found in the participants' personality levels of being responsible in terms of their marital status (t: -2.201; p = 0.028 < 0.05). Singles have higher levels of responsibility personality. A significant difference was found according to gender in terms of workplace incivility

(t: -2.084; p = 0.038 < 0.05). Men have a higher rate of workplace incivility. A significant difference was found in workplace incivilities depending on their job duties (F: 3.353;p=0.001<0.05). Technicians and other staff have been found to have higher rates of workplace incivility than people in other roles. A sig-

nificant difference was found in workplace incivility in terms of working hours ($F:3.453; p=0.005<0.05$). Those who have worked for 0-5 years and 21-25 years have higher levels of workplace incivility than those who work for 6-15 years. In terms of income, significant differences were found in extroversion ($F:3.562; p=0.030<0.05$), conscientiousness ($F:5.240; p=0.006<0.05$), and workplace incivility ($F:5.737; p=0.004<0.05$). Those whose expenses are more than their income have higher extroversion than those whose expenses are equal and those who have more income. Those whose income is more than their expenses have a more responsible personality than those whose expenses are more than their income and those whose expenses are equal. Those whose expenses are more than their income and those who are equal have higher levels of workplace incivility than those whose income is more than their expenses (Table 3).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Although studies on workplace incivility have increased in recent years, there are very few studies investigating how individual differences are decisive in the perception of incivility or what relationship there may be between personality types and incivility. For this reason, in the study, whether personality types could be related to workplace incivility was examined within the scope of healthcare professionals, and a negative relationship was determined between workplace incivility and the level of responsibility personality type. Batista and Reio (2019) stated in their research that provocative incivility not only affects the intention to quit at work, but also is related to personality types. In their research, Arshad and Ismail (2018) investigated workplace empowerment efforts, incivility and burnout within the scope of personality types for nurse recruitment. They stated that neuroticism is an important variable among personality types that causes incivility (Arshad and Ismail, 2018). However, in our study, no relationship was determined between neuroticism and workplace incivility. Similar studies have been examined in the literature, but it has been determined that studies that directly explain or correlate personality type with incivility are very limited. Therefore, it was thought that studies on the causes should be increased. Burch et al. (2023) found that there was a moderate (0.43) relationship between negative emotions and workplace incivility. In their research conducted in 13 different hospitals in China, Qiu and Zhang (2022) found that there was a moderate relationship between nurses' workplace incivility and psychological distress. Nawaz et al. (2022) state in their study that workplace incivility is correlated with emotional burnout. In their study on intensive care nurses, Jang et al. (2023) found that narcissistic vulnerability, mentalization and perfectionist self-presentati-

on behaviors are personality-based behaviors that explain workplace incivility. When these studies are considered in general terms, they give an idea that there may be personality types that explain workplace incivility, and therefore it is thought that it would be appropriate to increase the studies conducted.

In their research on nurses, Zhang et al. (2022) determined a positive correlation between fatigue level and workplace incivility. Accordingly, it comes to the fore that the fatigue level of people working under more difficult conditions and those who have been working in the same way for a long time may affect workplace incivility. In this study, workplace incivility was found to be higher among employees who worked for 21-25 years and those who worked for 0-5 years. At this point, it may be recommended that new hires be given a better orientation process and that work be carried out to increase the motivation of long-term employees. On the other hand, it would be beneficial to increase employment opportunities that will reduce the workload of technicians and auxiliary health personnel and to identify their problems. De Clercq et al. (2020) found in their research that the level of education has a reducing effect on workplace incivility. Based on this, it is thought that training to reduce workplace incivility may be beneficial, especially for employees with low education levels.

In their research on healthcare workers, Çoban and Deniz (2022) found that business relations skills did not vary according to gender. In their research conducted by Smith et al. (2021) in a public institution, they determined that race and gender were effective in incivility and that women were more likely to engage in incivility. The fact that men engage in workplace incivility more than women in our study indicates that there are many different results in the literature. For this reason, it is recommended to increase the studies to be carried out and to better determine the differences according to the sector.

In their study, Hutto and Gates (2008) determined that as workplace incivility increased, the service productivity of healthcare workers, such as nurses and physicians working in patient care, decreased. In his study, Alquwez (2023) linked poor patient safety culture with workplace incivility. In this study, the low workplace incivility of physicians and responsible nurses can be considered as a positive result. However, from a holistic perspective, efforts need to be made to reduce general workplace incivility among healthcare personnel.

In their study on five-star hotel employees in Jordan, Megeirhi et al. (2020) investigated the explanation of workplace incivility by cynicism and income level, and found that employees strengthened cynical beliefs about workplace incivility and increased their job search behavior, while they found that income was an indirect explainer. In this study, it was deter-

mined that workplace incivility was less in the group with higher income levels. However, it seems that studies examining income level as a determining variable are very few in the literature. In his research on nurses, Çetin (2021) determined that workplace incivility was higher in those whose total working years were less than 10 years. In this study, it was found that workplace incivility was high in those between 0-5 years of age. Accordingly, the perception and learning of young and new people starting their working lives about workplace courtesy should be strengthened. In their research, Çelik and Gül (2022) found a relationship between organizational culture and workplace incivility, and determined that the strengthening of organizational culture had a reducing effect on workplace incivility. These findings shed light on the fact that workplace incivility can be reduced with efforts to instill a strong organizational culture, especially among young and new employees. In their study of healthcare workers, Yilmaz and Söyük (2024) found that absence from work was positively associated with burnout and negatively associated with happiness at work. Younger workers tended to be more present than their older counterparts; the same was true for those working nine hours or more per day.

This study is important in order to define the concepts in question correctly and to emphasize the relationship of negative problems with the behavioral consequences of employees, as well as to find a solution to which personality trait this problem is related to. Research on five-factor personality traits and workplace incivility has been conducted in Turkey, but the two variables have not been examined together. As a result of the study, the negative relationship between being responsible, which is perhaps the most important personality type for healthcare professionals, and workplace incivility can be considered as a critical finding. Keeping healthcare professionals away from incivility, especially in the workplace, and reducing conflicts may be a factor that increases their motivation to be responsible. However, in this study, only the relationship between them was examined. This result can be investigated from different aspects in future studies. Another issue is that, although there are many studies on topics such as mobbing (intimidation), it has been noticed that the number of studies relating to the concept of workplace incivility is limited. Based on these justifications, it is thought that this research will contribute to healthcare professionals and the literature on the subject, both due to its theoretical framework and the results it may produce. Even outside the high-stress sector, which has its own characteristics such as health, they expect a safe, happy, comfortable working environment and colleagues throughout their working hours within the organization. Therefore, the main factor that increases motivation and increases work efficiency may be the high

level of peace of employees in the workplace. Institutional management has important duties in providing such an environment, and health managers should take into account the factors that negatively affect their employees and work accordingly.

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Research Article

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Waste-Free Kitchen Practices of Michelin Guide Starred Restaurants: The Case of Türkiye¹

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Abstract

Waste-free kitchen means keeping the waste materials that may occur at production, service and consumption points in the application units under control without threatening human health and the environment. The aim of this study is to investigate the studies on waste-free kitchen practices of Michelin Guide starred restaurant establishments in Türkiye and to develop recommendations for food and beverage establishments. The study group of the research consists of the establishments in Türkiye that have received a Michelin Star in the Michelin Guide 2024 selection. The sample consists of six participants determined by purposive sampling, one of the non-probability based sampling types. In the study, in which qualitative research method was used, data were obtained through online interviews with semi-structured interview technique. The data were analyzed with MAXQDA computer-aided qu-

alitative data analysis system. In addition, common practices and differences between restaurants were examined in depth through thematic analysis. As a result of the findings obtained from the analyses, deficiencies in waste-free kitchen practices such as waste-free menu, reuse of organic waste, not preferring disposable materials, on-the-job training of personnel and cooperation with suppliers were identified. The results obtained from this study and the suggestions developed for various segments in the light of the results offer a new perspective by making a unique contribution to the literature.

Keywords: Waste-Free Kitchen, Michelin Stars, Michelin Guide, Environmentally Friendly, Waste Management.

JEL Codes: Z32, L83, Q01, D12

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1. Introduction

The sustainability of life on earth depends on the continuation of the ecological cycles of components such as nutrients, water, oxygen, nitrogen and moisture. Any negative change in the components that make up the ecosystem creates a risk that threatens the living organism (Akin, 2014). It is essential to protect natural life in order not to endanger living life and to maintain the vital cycle that forms the ecosystem. However, the radical changes caused by globalization, the increase in the population population and the differentiation in consumption habits have led to an undesirable process in the use of resources and brought the concept of food waste and food waste to the agenda. Global population growth and increasing consumption habits necessitate the sustainable use of natural resources. In this context, environmentally conscious businesses adopt sustainability principles in their operations and develop waste management strategies accordingly (Gunningham & Sinclair, 1999).

Waste-free kitchen management represents an innovative approach that aims to minimize the environmental impact of businesses operating in the food sector. This approach is based on the basic principles of preventing food waste, reusing and recycling waste, increasing energy efficiency and managing natural resources effectively (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). Waste-free kitchen management not only supports environmental sustainability but also provides economic advantages to businesses. Costs are important for businesses to ensure the continuity of their commercial activities. Reducing food waste reduces operating costs and increases efficiency in businesses (Gustavsson et al., 2011). In addition, improving waste management processes reduces the environmental footprint of businesses such as carbon and water footprints and contributes to achieving corporate social responsibility goals (Wheeler & Elkington, 2001). Waste generation in kitchens brings an additional cost to businesses and also causes environmental footprints (Kayış, 2023).

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, 18 million tons of organic products such as vegetables and fruits are thrown away annually, and the economic size of the total food waste caused by these discarded products is 5.137 billion euro (TUIK, 2018). In terms of food sustainability, Türkiye ranks 20th among 25 countries in the "Sustainable Food Index" (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, 2019). In this context, waste-free kitchen management is critical for sustainable food production and consumption. These factors are especially important for businesses that are included in the Michelin Guide. Environmental awareness, sustainability, waste management and renewable energy are important themes in the Michelin Guide criteria, especially in terms of receiving Green stars (Michelin Guide, 2023).

Michelin-starred restaurants are recognized for their high quality standards and superior gastronomic experiences. These establishments stand out not only for their food quality, but also for their practices in sustainability and environmental awareness. In recent years, Michelin-starred restaurants have taken important steps in waste-free kitchen management and started to lead the industry. The main purpose of these initiatives is to minimize food waste, reduce environmental impacts and develop a sustainable gastronomy approach (Michelin Guide, 2023). This research aims to examine the waste-free kitchen management practices of Michelin Guide starred restaurant establishments in Türkiye and analyze the economic, environmental and social impacts of these practices on the businesses. The study aims to reveal the innovative approaches adopted by elite restaurants in the context of minimizing food waste, increasing resource efficiency and developing sustainable kitchen management strategies.

The main focus of the research is to examine the role of waste-free kitchen management on the competitive advantage of businesses and to propose policies for the dissemination of these practices in the gastronomy sector. The findings to be obtained through qualitative methods will contribute to the development of sustainable business models and operational improvement strategies for other food and beverage businesses in the sector. In addition, this study aims to contribute to the academic and industrial literature on issues such as preventing food waste, integrating circular economy principles into kitchen operations and raising consumer awareness. The analysis of these practices led by Michelin-starred restaurants aims to provide a model for gastronomy sustainability in Türkiye and guide future policy recommendations. The unique value of this research is that there has not been much in-depth research on the waste management of Michelin-starred establishments, as the establishments in which the research was conducted are included in a new evaluation system in Türkiye.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Waste Management

For many years, the concept of waste has been regarded as undesirable materials that are no longer wanted and expressed as rubbish and cause negative effects on the environment. Thanks to the new ecological policies, the importance of wastes, which have ceased to be unused materials and goods, has started with the process of 'income generating and productive utilisation' (Akdoğan & Güleç, 2005). Food loss refers to losses that occur during the production, harvesting, transport, storage and processing stages from harvest to the consumer. This is a problem caused by infrastructure and logistics inadequacies, especially in developing countries. Food

waste refers to food discarded by retailers, restaurants and consumers when it is still edible. Food waste is more prevalent in developed countries and is mainly due to unconscious consumption habits (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2019).

Due to all the developments in daily life and unconscious consumption behaviours around the world, the concepts of waste and food loss remain on the agenda. According to the statements of Çetinoğlu and Ünlüönen (2020), it was stated that 13 million tonnes of food is thrown away as garbage every day in the world, five million litres of water is flowed unconsciously and 1.5 million tonnes of greenhouse gases are released into the atmosphere as a result. Abiad and Meho (2018) explained food loss and waste as risks that threaten food security and cause serious damage to economic and environmental conditions.

The amount of food waste and loss varies quantitatively according to conditions and situations. The major reasons for these differences include factors such as income level, urbanisation and economic growth (Chalak et al., 2016). In underdeveloped countries, food waste and loss occurs mainly after harvest and during processing (Gustavsson et al., 2011), and food waste and loss in these processes accounts for about 44 per cent of global loss rates (Lipinski et al., 2013).

2.2. Waste Reuse and Recycling

Reuse and recycling in waste management are critical to achieving sustainability goals. Reuse aims to reduce resource consumption and the amount of waste by extending the life of a product or material. Recycling is the process of collecting, processing and utilising waste materials in the production of new products. These two methods provide economic and social benefits while supporting environmental sustainability (Ghisellini et al., 2016).

Reuse is recognised as a priority strategy in waste management. This strategy aims to extend the life of products, especially consumer durables, packaging and construction materials. For example, reuse of glass and plastic bottles saves energy and reduces the use of raw materials. Moreover, reuse of food waste increases soil fertility and reduces the amount of organic waste through practices such as composting (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014).

Recycling in gastronomy is an approach that aims to reuse food waste and by-products in line with sustainability principles. This approach is considered as an important strategy to reduce waste and minimise environmental impacts in food production processes (Zanella, 2020). In particular, restaurants and food businesses recycle kitchen waste in various ways, providing both economic gain and contribu-

ting to the sustainable food chain (Gössling & Hall, 2021).

2.3. Waste Free Kitchen

Food is the basic need for living things to sustain their lives and is defined as solid and liquid nutrients that are essential for the body to continue its development, gain energy, repair cells and tissues, and for the organs to function regularly (Bender, 2006). However, these nutrients become waste in some situations and conditions and cannot be used appropriately. For years, the concept of waste has been seen as unwanted garbage and substances that cause negative impacts on the environment. Food loss refers to the losses that occur during the production, harvesting, transportation, storage and processing stages from harvest to the consumer. This is a problem caused by infrastructure and logistics inadequacies, especially in developing countries. Food waste includes food discarded by retailers, restaurants and consumers when it is still edible. Food waste is more prevalent in developed countries and is mainly due to unconscious consumption habits (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2019). A reduction in malnutrition rates is predicted when food waste and loss worldwide is properly assessed. Studies by Gustavsson et al. (2011) reveal that about one-eighth of the world's population faces the problem of malnutrition. This shows how critical it is to develop sustainable solutions for reducing food waste and efficient use of resources. In this context, the Zero Waste approach stands out as an effective strategy for solving solid waste problems.

The concept of Zero Waste was first used in the mid-1970s by chemist Dr. Paul Palmer within the Zero Waste Systems Inc (ZWS) company established in California (Demir, 2019). Palmer developed this concept specifically for the recycling and reuse of chemical waste, thus laying the foundations for a new perspective in waste management. Over time, this approach was not limited to industrial processes and spread to many areas, including the food sector. Zero Waste generally means managing waste generated as a result of production and consumption activities in a way that does not threaten the environment and human health (Bilgili, 2021). This principle is embodied in zero-waste kitchen practices, especially in the food sector. A zero-waste kitchen involves minimizing the wastes that may occur during food production, service and consumption stages, using resources efficiently and utilizing wastes through methods such as recycling or composting (Akay et al., 2023).

Waste-free kitchen practices include strategies such as preventing food waste, composting organic waste, recycling and reuse. In recent years, the concept of zero waste has been on the agenda frequently.

This concept, which is among the elements of sustainability, means preventing or minimizing waste generation as much as possible, preventing waste, collecting the wastes separately according to their sources and including them in the recycling process (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014).

2.4. Michelin Guide

The Michelin Guide has been recognized as a quality standard for the evaluation of restaurants and hotels worldwide since it was first published by the Michelin company founded in France in 1900. Initially created to guide drivers on their journeys, the guide has become a prestigious resource that objectively evaluates the quality of restaurants and hotels (Michelin Guide, 2023). The guide has come to represent a very important incentive for the tourism sector. Restaurants with top stars have the capacity to attract new customers, promote gastronomy tourism and project a positive image and brand of the country (Bakova, 2013). Having a Michelin Star is a great prestige for both restaurants and restaurant chefs (Kuday & Yazıcı Ayyıldız, 2023).

The Michelin Guide holds a prestigious place in the world of gastronomy and the Michelin stars awarded to outstanding restaurants give them a great international reputation. Restaurants with Michelin stars are places that meet certain quality standards and offer unique gastronomic experiences. The characteristics of these restaurants are based on criteria such as high quality, creativity, service excellence and sustainability (Lane, 2014). These characteristics enable Michelin-starred restaurants to offer unique and unforgettable gastronomic experiences to their guests. These restaurants, which operate in accordance with the criteria of the Michelin Guide, are among the prestigious venues preferred by gastronomy lovers around the world.

The Michelin star system evaluates restaurants according to certain criteria and awards them 1, 2 or 3 stars. Michelin's core mission is to promote high culinary standards, support sustainable gastronomy and offer consumers experiences of consistent quality. Michelin stars are awarded based on factors such as culinary quality, choice of ingredients, technical skill, flavor harmony, chef's personal touch and consistency. The main differences according to the number of stars are as follows:

1 Michelin Star: Restaurants "worth a visit if you happen to be in the area". Superior quality of food, remarkable technical skill and consistency. Freshness of ingredients and seasonality are important.

2 Michelin Stars: Restaurants "worth going out of your way for". Exceptional creativity, sophisticated techniques and harmonious flavor profiles. The quality of the wine to accompany the meal is also assessed.

3 Michelin Stars: Restaurants "worthy of a special trip". The pinnacle of culinary art, an unforgettable experience. Perfection is sought from ingredient selection to presentation.

In recent years, the Michelin Guide has placed increasing emphasis on environmental sustainability and waste management. In particular, by adding the "Green Star" category from 2020, it has highlighted restaurants with sustainable practices. Waste-free kitchen practices in Michelin-starred restaurants are expected as follows:

Minimizing Food Waste: Full use of all ingredients (nose-to-tail, root-to-stem approach). Waste prevention in menu planning (portion control, excess stock management). Use of recyclable or compostable materials.

Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Supply Chain: Working with local and organic producers. Efficient use of water and energy (low energy equipment, water recycling systems). Reducing the use of plastics (reusable alternatives to single-use products).

Circular Economy Principles: Use of food waste for animal feed or biogas production. Composting kitchen waste to be used as a soil amendment. Providing delivery/pick-up services with reusable packaging.

Social Responsibility and Guest Awareness: Raising consumer awareness about food waste (e.g. donating leftovers). Sharing surplus food with food banks (Michelin Guide, 2025).

Europe has historically had the highest concentration of Michelin stars. For example, France (632 starred restaurants according to 2023 data) and Spain (260 starred restaurants) stand out with establishments that combine traditional culinary techniques with modern approaches (Michelin Guide, 2023). The Michelin Guide started to be published in Türkiye in 2022. İstanbul became the first Turkish city to be included in the Michelin Guide. This development has increased Türkiye's importance in the world of gastronomy and contributed to the international recognition of Turkish cuisine. The introduction of the Michelin Guide in Türkiye has created a great source of prestige for local chefs and restaurants and encouraged fine dining experiences. The Michelin Guide in Türkiye was published for the second time in 2023 for restaurants in İstanbul, during which time new restaurants were added to the list and some restaurants maintained or increased their number of stars. This demonstrated the continuous development of the gastronomy scene in Türkiye and its capacity to provide services at international standards (Michelin Guide, 2023). There was a significant increase in the number of restaurants included in the Michelin Guide in Türkiye in 2024 and 2025. In 2024, restaurants in İstanbul, İzmir and Bodrum were included in the evaluation and a total of 103 restau-

rants were included in the Michelin Guide. In 2025, the Muğla region was also included in the evaluation and the number of restaurants receiving a Michelin Star increased to 14 (Michelin Guide, 2025).

2.5. Waste-Free Kitchen Practices In Michelin Guide Restaurants

Waste-free kitchen practices are one of the most important elements of sustainability and eco-friendly initiatives in the gastronomy sector. Restaurants included in the Michelin Guide are leading the way in this area, minimizing their environmental impact and developing waste management strategies. In particular, food waste prevention, recycling and composting are used to reduce damage to nature. These efforts lead to an increased awareness of sustainability in the world of gastronomy and the spread of environmentally friendly practices. In a study by DeFries and Scheepens (2019), the waste management strategies of Michelin-starred restaurants were examined and it was stated that these restaurants achieved significant waste reduction in their kitchen operations. The study emphasized that restaurants take waste minimization into account from the menu planning stage, turn to sustainable sources in material procurement processes, and use environmentally friendly solutions such as composting and biogas production by effectively utilizing food scraps. In this context, restaurants included in the Michelin Guide demonstrate not only their gastronomic excellence but also their environmental responsibility with their waste-free kitchen practices (DeFries & Scheepens, 2019).

Waste-free kitchen management offers a model that supports environmental sustainability while increasing operational efficiency (Filimonau & De Coteau, 2019). Waste-free kitchen management is considered as a strategic approach that both supports environmental sustainability and increases operational efficiency in today's food sector. This management approach offers a holistic model that includes prevention of food waste, efficient use of resources, cost control and environmentally friendly production processes (Zhang et al., 2020). This research on Michelin-starred restaurants in Türkiye is expected to contribute to the literature at both national and international level and pave the way for the development of new recommendations in this field.

3. Methodology

In this study, interview technique, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was preferred to examine waste-free kitchen management practices in starred restaurants in the Michelin Guide in Türkiye. Qualitative research methods are widely used espe-

cially in social sciences and provide the researcher with the opportunity to understand the subject of investigation in depth and analyse it from a contextual perspective (Creswell, 2013).

This chapter explains how the research was designed and how the data collection and analysis process was conducted. The research focuses on analysing waste-free kitchen management practices in Michelin-starred restaurants in Türkiye. This technique was utilised to gain an in-depth understanding of how practices such as waste-free kitchen management are perceived and implemented by stakeholders such as restaurant owners, chefs and kitchen staff. For this purpose, qualitative research method was adopted and MAXQDA software was used to analyse the data. In addition, common practices and differences between restaurants were examined in depth through thematic analysis. The interviews were conducted online with chefs working in Michelin Guide starred restaurants in Türkiye. The interviews were conducted online with chefs working in Michelin Guide starred restaurants in Türkiye. The main reason for choosing Türkiye for the study is that the Michelin Guide has just started to play a role in Türkiye. The interview questions focused on waste management strategies, sustainable kitchen practices, recyclable products, the status of staff and suppliers, renewable energy, and how restaurants are associated with Michelin criteria in this process. The views of the participants were voluntarily video recorded with their permission and then transcribed and made ready for analysis.

The research was conducted between April 2024 and September 2024, reaching six out of a total of 12 star establishments in İstanbul, İzmir and Muğla provinces across Türkiye. In the qualitative research, semi-structured interview technique was used as a data collection tool. This type of interview involves asking predetermined questions and addressing some specific issues. Interviewers can deepen the answers they receive to the structured questions they have prepared (Berg & Lune, 2015). The data were obtained using purposive sampling method, one of the non-probability based sampling types. In this method, the sample consists of people who the researcher believes will find answers to the research problem (Altunışık et al., 2007). Purposive sampling method increases the efficiency of the research by identifying the participants with the most appropriate information for the research questions. In this study, Michelin-starred restaurants were preferred because these establishments stand out as industry leaders in waste-free kitchen management and attach high importance to sustainability practices. Thus, it was ensured to reach people who are suitable for the purpose of the research and who can answer the questions correctly (Altunışık et al., 2007).

3.1. Validity and Reliability

The steps taken to ensure validity can be listed as follows:

Data collection tools were prepared based on the literature, thus ensuring consistency between the data collection tool and the literature. In qualitative research methods, the interview form was evaluated by six experts working on gastronomy and zero waste, and the interview form was revised in line with the feedback given. After the pilot study applied to eight local restaurants, the questions were reorganised and the final version of the interview form was created. Purposive sampling method was preferred in the study. Thus, it was ensured to reach people who are suitable for the purpose of the research and who can answer the questions correctly (Altunışık et al., 2007). The data were collected in detail and in depth by making an appointment in advance from the enterprises where the participants were located and by conducting online interviews. The interviews were video-recorded after obtaining the verbal consent of the individuals. Individuals were allowed to share their different opinions and experiences during the interview and no intervention was made.

The steps taken to ensure reliability can be listed as follows:

The researcher clearly stated his/her role in the research process and the difficulties he/she experienced. The descriptive information of the enterprises where the participants work is coded in the method

section. The data collection and analysis method is explained in detail. The data obtained from the interviews and explained in the findings are presented primarily without comment. At least two data sources were utilised when interpreting the results on a particular subject. Codes and categories were confirmed by an independent expert in checking and analysing the data. The results of the research were compared with similar studies, supported by the literature and explained in the findings section. The data were written objectively and read twice continuously and 7-8 times intermittently before the analysis to understand the structure of the events and phenomena. The evidence of each finding and conclusion was supported by quotations from the participants' perspectives and objective results were tried to be reached as much as possible. All data collection tools obtained within the scope of the research, written documents and files created during the coding processes were recorded and stored (Yıldırım & Şimşek 2013).

The research establishments are restaurant establishments in Türkiye that have been awarded with a Michelin star in the Michelin Guide 2024 selection, and the chefs and sous chefs of the aforementioned establishments constitute the sample of the study. The list of stakeholders interviewed is shown in Table 1 (for the confidentiality of the businesses where the participants work, their names, surnames and the organizations they work for are not specified in the table).

Table 1. Participant List and Profile

Code	Title	Education Status	Number of Stars	Recorded Call Times	Organization Location
P1	Executive Chef	Associate Degree	One Star: High Quality Kitchen	18:44 min	Bodrum
P2	Executive Chef	Undergraduate	One Star: High Quality Kitchen	17:14 min	İstanbul
P3	Executive Chef	Postgraduate	One Star: High Quality Kitchen	16:07 min	İstanbul
P4	Executive Chef	Undergraduate	One Star: High Quality Kitchen	15:05 min	İstanbul
P5	Executive Chef	Postgraduate	One Star: High Quality Kitchen	25:11 min	Urla
P6	Head Chef	Associate Degree	Two Stars: Excellent Kitchen	13:53 min	İstanbul

Five different descriptive questions were asked to determine the characteristics that define the Michelin-starred restaurant establishments participating in the research. The statements given to these questions were processed in the descriptive information section of the MAXQDA qualitative analysis

program. All enterprises are indicated with the codes "P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 and P6" within the scope of confidentiality of private information. The findings related to the answers given by the chefs are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Information of Enterprises

	Kitchen Concept	Customer Capacity	Number of Staff	Number of Michelin Stars	Activity Duration
P1	Luxury Restaurant (Fine-dining)	150	75	1	48
P2	Modern Kitchen	125	34	1	19
P3	Luxury Restaurant (Fine-dining)	35	16	1	10
P4	Modern Kitchen- Ethnic Kitchen	24	-	1	1
P5	Innovative Kitchen	30	30	1	4
P6	Modern Kitchen (Fine-dining)	36	26	2	5

Participants were coded to avoid confusion during the data analysis phase. In the interviews with the participants, in order to obtain the demographic information of the businesses in which the participant was working, relevant questions were asked to determine the concept of the business, customer capacity, number of employees, number of Michelin stars and duration of operation.

The interview questions were prepared by taking the opinions of three academics specialized in the field of tourism and gastronomy in Türkiye. The prepared questions were then submitted to the opinions of six academicians who are also experts in the field of tourism and gastronomy in Türkiye, and the interview form was finalized with the feedback received from the relevant academicians. The statements directed in the interview form are as follows;

Table 3. Interview Questions

No.	Questions
1	Which types of waste are more common in the kitchen? (Product, packaging, energy, etc.)
2	At what stages does waste production intensify? (Production, storage, cooking, etc.)
3	If you separate waste by type in the kitchen, what method do you follow?
4	Which materials would you define as recyclable?
5	What can be done to create a waste-free kitchen during the menu planning phase?
6	How can you minimize the use of disposable materials?
7	What kind of trainings are provided in your organization on waste-free kitchen management?
8	How do you evaluate your choice of kitchen tools and utensils in terms of sustainability?
9	Do you cooperate with your suppliers on recyclable packaging?
10	What do you do to save energy and water in kitchen processes?
11	What steps do you take to use renewable energy sources within the scope of environmental awareness?

These interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview method, and it was stated that the interviewees could express their thoughts on the subject in the form of questions and answers if they wished, or they could express their thoughts on the subject as they wished. Participants whose mother tongue was different were told that they could express

their opinions in English if they wished and that the researcher could translate it into Turkish at the end of the interview, and if they wished, an interview could be conducted in English in a conversational atmosphere. The interviewees were left completely free to express their thoughts in the way they wanted and to achieve the purpose of obtaining in-depth

opinions, which is the nature of the interview, in the best way possible. The interviews were first audio recorded and then transcribed on computer. The data obtained were analysed with MAXQDA computer-aided qualitative data analysis system.

4. Findings

Themes and sub-codes were created in line with the information obtained as a result of the literature review and the answers received from the participants. Analyses were made through these themes and codes. Figure 1 shows the code hierarchy:

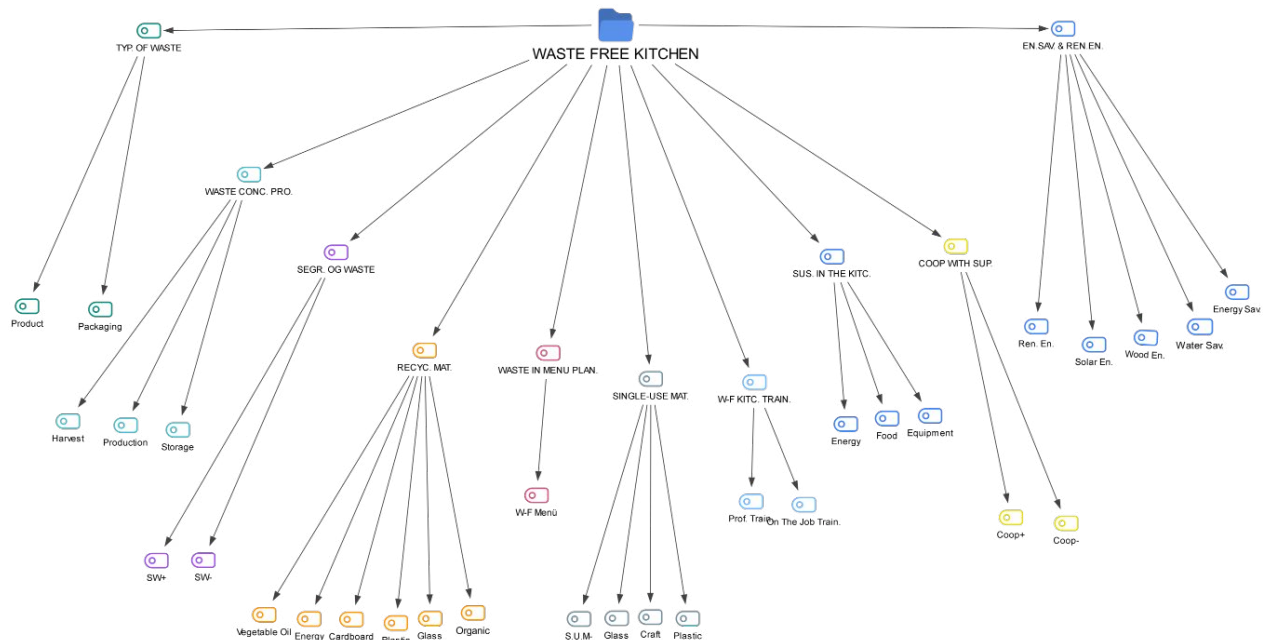


Figure 1. Code Hierarchy of the Research

The hierarchical structure of the codes is given in the figure. Themes and sub-codes are listed in Table 4 as a whole with their explanations.

Table 4. Coding Hierarchy of the Research

1. Typ. of Waste	2. Waste Conc. Pro.	3. Segr. of Waste	4. Recyc. Mat.	5. Waste in Menu Plan
1.1. Product	2.1. Production	3.1. SW+	4.1. Organic	5.1. W-F Menu
1.2. Packaging	2.2. Harvest	3.2. SW-	4.2. Cardboard	
	2.3. Storage		4.3. Glass	
			4.4. Vegetable Oil	
			4.5. Plastic	
			4.6. Energy	
6. Single-Use Mat.	7. W-F Kitc. Train.	8. Sust. in the Kitc.	9. Coop. with Sup.	10. En. Sav. & Ren. En.
6.1. S.U.M-	7.1. On the Job Train.	8.1. Food	9.1. Coop+	10.1. Energy Sav.
6.2. Glass	7.2. Prof. Train.	8.2. Energy	9.2. Coop-	10.2. Water Sav.
6.3. Plastic		8.3. Equipment		10.3. Solar En.
6.4. Craft				10.4. Ren. En.-
				10.5. Wood En.

The main themes given in Figure 1 and Table 4 and some of the sub-codes forming the themes were created using abbreviations. The abbreviations writ-

ten in the themes and their full text versions are as follows:

1. Types of Waste	Typ. of Waste
2. Waste Concentration Processes	Waste Conc. Pro.
3. Segregation of Waste	Segr. of Waste
4. Recyclable Materials	Recyc. Mat.
5. Waste in Menu Planning	Waste in Menu Plan.
6. Single-Use Material	Single-Use Mat.
7. Waste-Free Kitchen Trainings	W-F Kitc. Train.
8. Sustainability in the Kitchen	Sust. in the Kitc.
9. Cooperation with Suppliers	Coop. with Sup.
10. Energy Saving & Renewable Energy	En. Sav. & Ren. En.

In the sub-codes, "+" indicates positive and "-" indicates negative opinions. In order to avoid confusion, the sub-codes of the required codes were started with the abbreviation of that code and "+" and "-" symbols were added to indicate positivity or negativity. For example; "Segr. of Waste" theme sub-code 'SW-' was used to code that waste is not separated in kitchens. "Single-Use Mat." theme's sub-code 'S.U.M-' indicates that disposable materials are not used. "En. Sav. & Ren. En." theme, the subcodes "Energy Sav., Water Sav., Solar En., Ren. En. and Wood En." sub-codes indicate energy saving, water saving, solar energy, renewable energy and wood energy.

The most emphasized code in the theme of "Typ. of Waste" was "Packaging", the most emphasized code in the theme of "Segr. of Waste" was "SW+", and the most emphasized code in the theme of "Waste Conc. Pro." was "Production". In the theme of "W-F Kitc. Train.", the most emphasized code was "On the Job Train.", in the theme of "En. Sav. & Ren. En.", the most emphasized codes were "Energy Sav." and "Water Sav.", and in the theme of "Recyc. Mat.", the most emphasized code was "Organic". In addition, the only emphasized code in the theme "Waste in Menu Plan." was the code "W-F Menu". In the theme of "Sust. in the Kitc.", the most emphasized codes were "Energy" and "Equipment" respectively, and in the theme of "Coop. with Sup.", the codes "Coop+" and "Coop-" were expressed with the same emphasis with an equal statistical result. In

the "Single-Use Mat." theme, the most emphasized code was "S.U.M-".

When the statistics of the sub-codes are analyzed in detail, it is seen that packaging waste is generally generated as waste in Michelin Guide starred restaurants and organic waste is very little waste. As a result of the analysis, it has been determined that wastes are generally generated during the production phase, the wastes generated are separated, waste-free menus are preferred, personnel are trained with on-the-job training, attention is paid to energy and water saving, sustainable energy and equipment use is important, and disposable materials are not included too much. This data proves that the waste-free kitchen concept is feasible in Michelin-starred restaurants.

Table 5 shows the 50 words most emphasized by the chefs in the word frequency analysis combined in the interview interviews. Before the word frequency analysis was created, some words were removed. The omitted words are conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, numbers, etc. that would not make any sense when added to the word frequency. Words such as "Waste", "Products", "Energy", "Enterprises" shown in the word frequency are the words with the highest number of hits. The frequency of words is proportional to the number of strokes they receive. Some words are also combined. For example; words such as "waste", "waste", "of waste", "to waste" were added to the word "Waste".

Table 5. Frequency Analysis of Combined Words in Interview Interviews-50 Words

	Word	Word Length	Frequency	%		Word	Word Length	Frequency	%
1	Waste	4	61	2,40	26	Steel	5	7	0,28
2	Products	7	53	2,08	27	Trainings	9	7	0,28
3	Energy	6	30	1,18	28	Sources	10	7	0,28
4	Businesses	10	19	0,75	29	Guests	10	7	0,28
5	Water	2	19	0,75	30	Savings	8	7	0,28

6	Sustainability	17	19	0,75	31	Oil	4	7	0,28
7	Transformation	7	14	0,55	32	Convertible	16	6	0,24
8	Sun	5	14	0,55	33	Economic	8	6	0,24
9	Organic	7	14	0,55	34	Electricity	8	6	0,24
10	Rubbish	3	12	0,47	35	Coal	6	6	0,24
11	Wood	4	12	0,47	36	Wind	6	6	0,24
12	Paper	5	11	0,43	37	Bottles	8	6	0,24
13	Kitchen	6	11	0,43	38	To the producer	9	6	0,24
14	Waste Free	7	10	0,39	39	Food	4	5	0,20
15	Decomposition	10	10	0,39	40	Preparation	8	5	0,20
16	Carbon	6	10	0,39	41	Minimise	8	5	0,20
17	Material	7	10	0,39	42	Care	4	5	0,20
18	Single	3	10	0,39	43	Disposable	9	4	0,16
19	Cam	3	9	0,35	44	Service	6	4	0,16
20	Menu	4	9	0,35	45	Plate	5	4	0,16
21	Michelin	8	9	0,35	46	Again	7	4	0,16
22	Staff	8	9	0,35	47	Loss	4	4	0,16
23	Plastic	7	8	0,31	48	Fire	4	3	0,12
24	Food	5	8	0,31	49	Animals	10	3	0,12
25	Packaging	7	7	0,28	50	Compost	7	3	0,12

Word clouds were created from the most frequently used and emphasized words in the interviews. A one-word word cloud created by combining some

words and removing meaningless words is given in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Word Cloud Created in Interviews According to Participants' Responses-50 Words.

The word cloud given in Figure 2 consists of the 50 most emphasized words. Some words were removed before creating the word cloud. The omitted words are conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, numbers, etc. that would not make any sense when added to the word cloud. "Waste", 'Sustainability' and 'Products', which are in the center of the word cloud and are shown as larger than other words, are the words that receive the most hits. The size of the words is proportional to the strokes they receive. Some words are also combined. For example, words such as "product", "in product", "products" were added to the word "Products". When the word cloud is analyzed in detail, it is seen that the words are related to the themes of waste and sustainability.

When we look at the word frequency and word cloud created from the most frequently used words; it is an expected result that the words "Waste", "Products" and "Sustainability" are among the words with the

highest number of hits. In addition, other words carry clues to reveal the common views of the interview participants. For example, it is understood from the word cloud that the participants mentioned sustainability a lot. This reveals that chefs have a high awareness of sustainability. In addition to this, the fact that the words organic, segregation and recycling are emphasized a lot shows how much importance Michelin starred establishments attach to waste and recycling.

Table 6 shows 30 expressions from the most emphasized word groups by the chefs in the frequency analysis of word combinations combined in the interviews. In the word combinations frequency analysis, word groups such as "Carbon Foot", "Renewable Energy" and "Waste-Free Kitchen" are the binary combinations with the highest number of strokes. The frequency size of the words is proportional to the strokes they receive.

Table 6. Frequency Analysis of Word Combinations-30 Words

	Word Combination	Frequency	%		Word Combination	Frequency	%
1	Carbon footprint	8	20,51	16	Glass waste	2	5,13
2	Renewable energy	8	20,51	17	Energy saving	2	5,13
3	Waste-free kitchen	7	17,95	18	We can benefit	2	5,13
4	Solar energy	7	17,95	19	In the sunlight	2	5,13
5	Charcoal	6	15,38	20	In the compost machine	2	5,13
6	Organic waste	6	15,38	21	Menu planning	2	5,13
7	Wind energy	5	12,82	22	Our focus	2	5,13
8	Packaging waste	4	10,26	23	In a wood oven	2	5,13
9	Glass bottles	3	7,69	24	Takeaway service	2	5,13
10	Energy sources	3	7,69	25	Stainless steel	2	5,13
11	Michelin star	3	7,69	26	Slow food	2	5,13
12	Tasting menu	3	7,69	27	Water resources	2	5,13
13	Reusable	3	7,69	28	Chicken skin	2	5,13
14	Waste generation	2	5,13	29	Ministry of Tourism	2	5,13
15	Waste oil	2	5,13	30	Renewable energy sources	2	5,13

In the frequency analysis of word combinations, "Waste-Free Kitchen" is among the most repeated answers. The combinations of "Carbon Foot" and "Renewable Energy" received a value above 20% in the frequency analysis. The frequency analysis reveals a result in direct proportion with the content of the research.

Binary word combinations were created from the most frequently used words in the interviews. The word cloud created from binary words is given in Figure 3.

The word cloud shown in Figure 3 consists of the 30 most emphasized word combinations. Before creating the word cloud, some words were removed.



Figure 3. Word Cloud Combinations Generated According to Participants' Answers

The omitted words are conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, numbers, etc. that would not make any sense when added to the word cloud. "Waste-Free Kitchen", 'Renewable Energy' and 'Carbon Footprint', which are in the center of the word cloud and are shown as larger than other words, are the word groups that receive the most hits. The size of the words is proportional to the strokes they receive. When the word cloud is analyzed in detail, it is seen

that the words are related to the themes of waste-free kitchen and renewable energy.

The single case model obtained as a result of the answers given by the participants to the questions posed in the interviews is given in Figure 4 in a holistic structure. In the model, the sub-codes that make up the themes are indicated by clusters. Presenting the model in a holistic structure is important for the comprehensibility of the research.

SINGLE-CASE MODEL

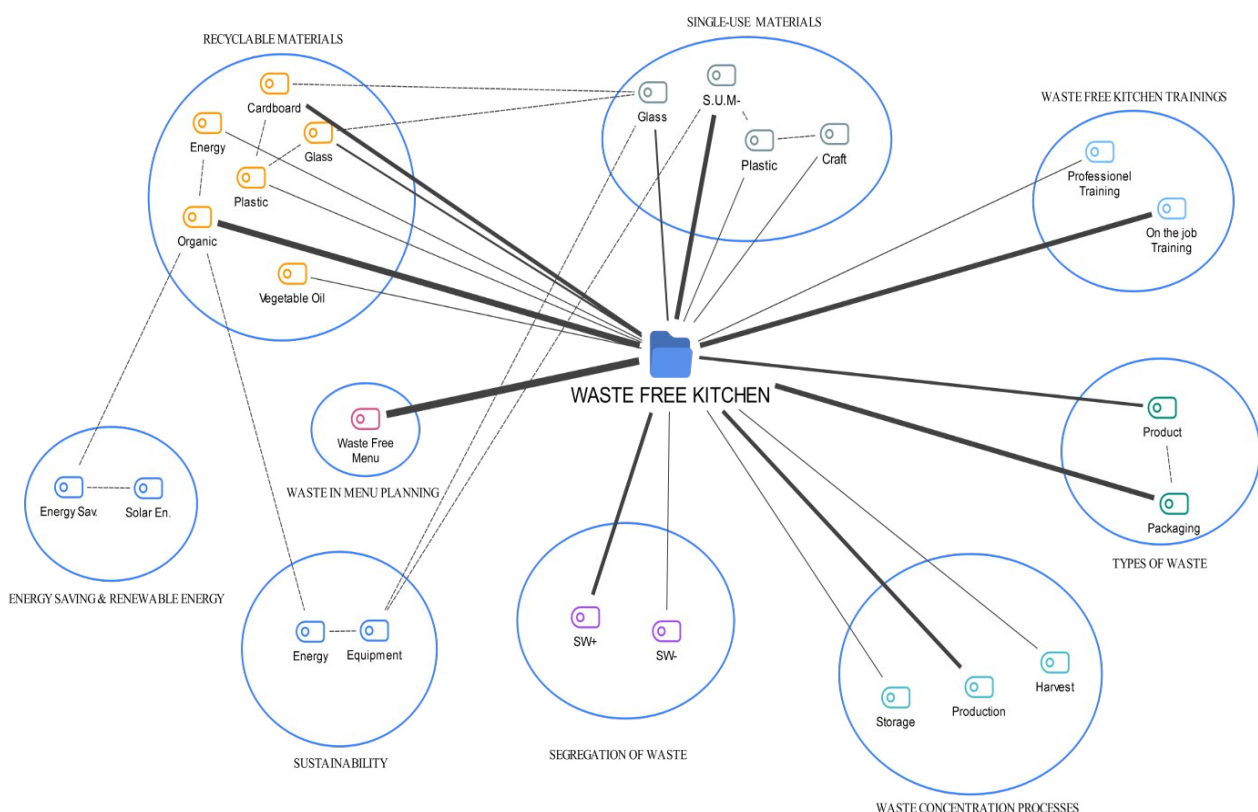


Figure 4. Waste-Free Kitchen Management in Enterprises: Single-Case Model - Holistic View

In Figure 4, the relationships between themes and codes are presented holistically. The interrelationships between them are explained with drawn lines. Direct lines indicate direct reciprocal relationships, while dashed lines indicate indirect relationships. The thickness of the lines indicates the severity of the relationship. Codes under the same theme are circled and the theme name is indicated. In this way, it was aimed to prevent confusion by looking at the relationships between the codes as a whole. Looking at this relationship map created at the end of the analysis of the interviews with the participants; it is thought that the statements of the participants regarding waste-free kitchen practices are intensely related to each other.

In Figure 4, the central phrase “waste-free kitchen” is in a relationship with all themes and codes. The thick lines in the model clearly show that there is a very strong direct relationship between the “Waste-Free Kitchen” theme and the “Waste-Free Menu” code. Creating waste-free menus is among the biggest activities that can prevent waste generation in kitchens. As stated by the chefs, the more waste-free the menu is designed, the less waste is generated in the enterprises.

According to the views of the participants, in the theme of recyclable materials, the codes “Organic” and “Cardboard” have a strong relationship with waste-free kitchen. At the same time, the code “Organic” has an indirect strong relationship with the code “Energy Saving”. The “Equipment” code in the theme of sustainability in kitchens is not directly related to waste-free kitchen. However, the “Equipment” code has an indirect relationship with the “S.U.M-” and “Glass” codes. The important conclusion that can be drawn from this is that disposable materials are not preferred in the selection of equipment.

When the figure is analyzed in detail, it is seen that the code “SW+” in the theme of “Waste Separation” is strongly associated with waste-free kitchen, while the code “SW-” is associated with waste-free kitchen with a thinner line. Waste separation is one of the most important issues emphasized for these

enterprises. However, the fact that there are enterprises that cannot separate waste is not related to themselves, but to the private sector and public institutions.

In the theme of the processes where waste is concentrated, it is seen that the “Production” code is expressed strongly, while the lines in the “Storage” and “Harvesting” codes are thinner. In these Michelin-starred establishments, it is stated that waste is generated mostly in production, but waste is also generated in storage and harvesting processes. It is stated in the statements of the chefs that the wastes generated in production are composted and reused, used in different areas in kitchens and sent as feed to animals.

The fact that the lines connected to the “Packaging” waste code in the waste types theme are thick and direct indicates that packaging waste is more common in these enterprises compared to other waste types. In this theme, not only packaging waste but also product waste stands out. In the food and beverage sector, products and the packaging in which they are packaged constitute a very large percentage of waste.

Waste-Free Kitchen Management in Businesses: In the Single-Case Model - Holistic View, the lines of the codes “W-F Menu”, “Organic”, “On the Job Train.”, “Packaging” and “S.U.M-” are thicker than the lines of the other sub-codes. These thick lines reveal that in waste-free kitchen practices, attention is paid to waste generation in menu selection, organic waste is generated but these waste types are utilized, on the job training is provided to employees about waste, packaging waste is unfortunately the most common type of waste, and finally, disposable materials are not preferred.

Two case models were created as a result of the answers given by the participants to the questions posed in the interviews. Figure 5 shows the two case models comparing the starred city and seaside establishments in the Michelin Guide. The codes showing similarities or differences are clearly seen in the model.

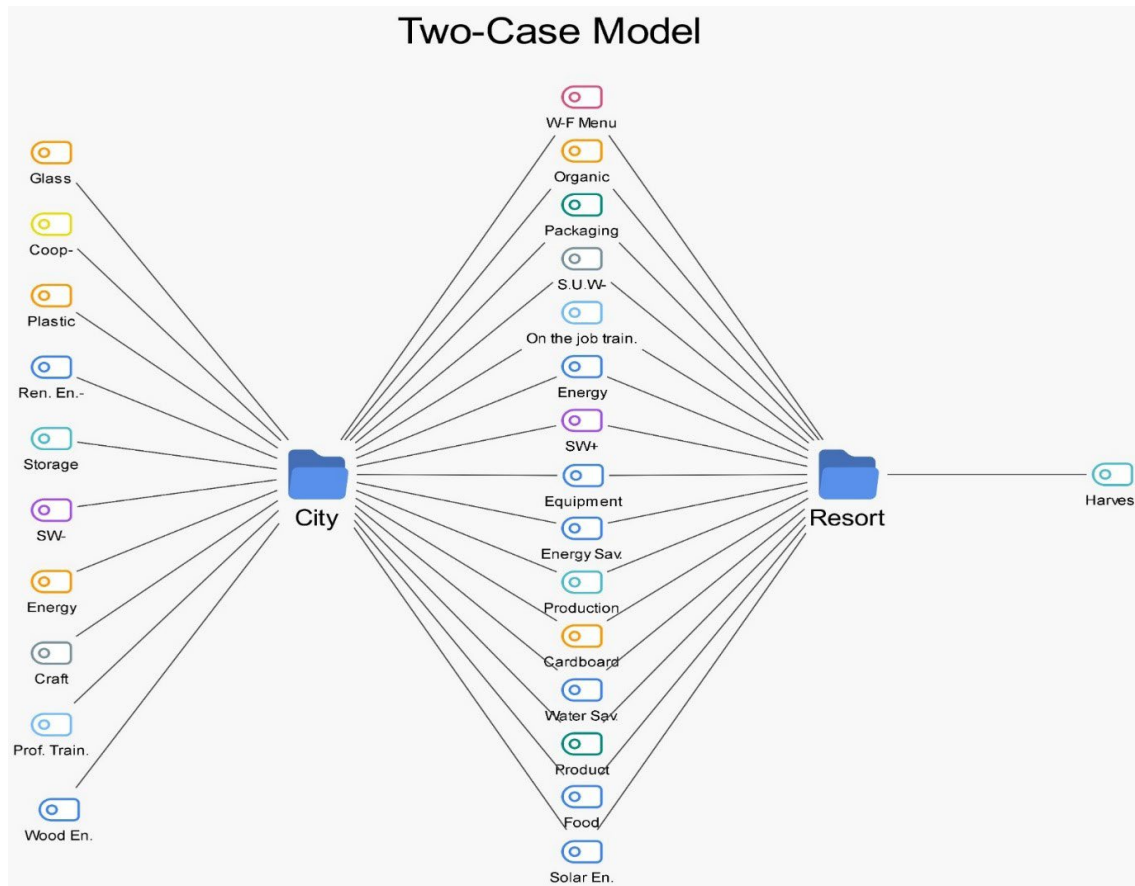


Figure 5. Two Case Models Comparing City and Beach Restaurants

The codes on the left and right in the figure represent the points of divergence between city and coastal enterprises. The codes in the middle show the common thoughts of the enterprises classified in two different types. When the figure is analyzed in detail; one of the most striking issues in city enterprises is the use of renewable energy. It is more difficult to use solar energy or wind energy turbines in these enterprises located in city centers. However, coastal enterprises are more advantageous in terms of using solar energy in terms of both location and surface area. Beach businesses, also called summer businesses, can use solar energy in summer and winter.

As seen in the two case models, city restaurants differ from beach restaurants in terms of implementing professional training. The reason for this may be the higher accessibility to training in city centers. On the job training seems to be more possible in coastal restaurants. In addition, the use of wood energy in city restaurants differs from coastal restaurants. In addition, it is seen that cooperation with suppliers is not possible in city restaurants. Sustainable co-operation with suppliers in urban restaurants is becoming more difficult due to logistical challenges, cost pressures and supply chain fluctuations (Çetin, 2022; Food Logistics Association Report, 2021).

In Figure 5, the common codes of both business types are waste-free menu, organic, packaging, no disposable materials, on-the-job training, energy,

waste separation, equipment, energy saving, production, cardboard, water saving, product, food and solar energy. The commonality of these codes is indicated in the common field in the two case models. At this point, the most striking situation is the preference for waste-free menus in menu planning in both types of businesses. With the increase in environmentally friendly practices in recent years, it is seen that menu planning to reduce waste production has come to the fore in beach and city restaurants (Zhang et al., 2020). In addition to this, it is seen that both business types have the same opinion on the preference of disposable materials, and they do not prefer them in their businesses.

Finally, the only difference that distinguishes beachfront establishments from city restaurants is the harvest code. Because coastal establishments can grow their own products, they observe waste generation during the harvest phase. Organic production is more difficult in city hotels. For this reason, the processes where waste is concentrated in city hotels are generally the production and storage stages.

5. Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

The Michelin Guide is recognised in the gastronomy world as the most established and reliable guide on a global scale (Subakti, 2013). The guide is recogni-

sed as a source of information that is respected and consulted by both chefs and customers, especially in Europe, as it evaluates and recommends places in a professional manner (Johnson et al., 2005). This is one of the main reasons for selecting the establishments in the Michelin Guide. This research aims to analyse the waste-free kitchen management strategies and sustainable kitchen management practices of starred restaurants in the Michelin Guide in Türkiye. As a result of the analysis of the data obtained, it was determined that these restaurants have a significant awareness of sustainability and waste-free kitchen management.

According to the results obtained from the research, the idea of zero waste is of great importance in the waste management policies in the kitchens of businesses awarded with a star in the Michelin Guide. However, it was determined that the main goal of these prestigious businesses subject to the research is customer satisfaction, and in some conditions, they do not consider food waste for customer satisfaction. In the study, the most important reasons for waste generation in kitchens can be listed as the uneducated perspective of kitchen staff, lack of awareness of suppliers and lack of training in suppliers, insufficient policies of public institutions in recycling, deficiencies in sustainable product range, energy waste and inadequacies in renewable energy production.

As a result of the interviews conducted by the researcher within the scope of the study and the answers given by the chefs who participated in the interview, it was concluded that the businesses that make up the sample are generally restaurants that serve their customers with modern presentations in the luxury category. In line with the data obtained, although the instant customer capacity of these businesses is low compared to ordinary (casual) businesses such as artisan restaurants, the number of employees is high. One of the most important factors in low waste generation in these businesses is low production and high number of employees. Because these businesses usually offer high quality menus to their guests with tasting menus.

According to the criteria in the Michelin Guide, sustainability and waste management are among the key elements to be considered. The managers and staff of these enterprises have demonstrated an environmentally sensitive and nature-protecting approach throughout their years of operation. Regardless of whether it is a newly opened business or a half-century-old business, all starred businesses adopt environmentally friendly practices. In the conclusion part of the research, the following statements were reached within the scope of the explanations of the chefs who voluntarily participated in the interview:

Michelin-starred establishments offer luxury service with a modern kitchen concept and generally work

with a reservation system. Thanks to this structure, production planning is more controlled and waste rates are quite low. They are more committed to zero waste philosophy compared to open buffet and catering establishments. These businesses, which have an innovative production approach, operate on the axis of sustainability by valuing all resources such as water, soil, nature, food, guests and employees. The commitment of chefs to their ethnic origins and local values increases the use of local products in menus, which brings along an environmentally friendly approach within the scope of the '0 km movement' that reduces the carbon footprint. In waste-free kitchen practices, dishes prepared with creative techniques based on roots, geography and values attract attention, while the use of quality ingredients is prioritised and food is not allowed to be wasted. The limited customer capacity also minimises waste generation in production and storage processes. The almost equal number of guests and employees provides a controlled and planned working environment at every stage of the kitchen. Some establishments provide only evening service, which limits production and reduces the amount of waste. The long or short operating period of the establishment does not stand out as a determining factor in terms of waste-free kitchen practices.

During the Covid-19 pandemic process, these businesses, like all sectors, were negatively affected. The fact that disposable products have become mandatory within the scope of hygiene measures has led to an increase in the waste population. Data analyses showed that the highest amount of packaging waste was generated, followed by food waste. However, most of the organic food waste was utilised as animal feed, composted or used in the preparation of new products. In menu planning, all establishments make serious efforts to create a 'waste-free menu', especially those using a tasting menu adhere to this strategy. It was stated that public institutions, NGOs and private sector representatives are insufficient in recycling processes. When compared to the practices in Europe, it is emphasised that recycling awareness in Turkey is not yet at the desired level. For this reason, it is stated that recycling should become a philosophy of life for individuals. It has been determined that the enterprises that produce their own agricultural production produce less waste and store surplus products with traditional methods. In addition, those who have recycling areas and composting equipment within the enterprise have an advantage in this process. However, many chefs complain about the inadequacy of existing recycling systems and the lack of legal regulations.

According to the sub-codes, the most common recycling material is organic waste, while energy waste is mentioned at the lowest rate. Since energy use is an important cost item for all enterprises, water and energy waste is avoided and especially solar ener-

gy is preferred. In some enterprises, the use of wood-powered systems such as stone ovens provides an advantage in terms of energy saving. Nevertheless, the use of renewable energy is generally low in the sector due to lack of infrastructure and insufficient incentives. The most common areas where food waste is generated are production and harvesting processes. Unconscious production, primitive harvesting techniques and open buffet systems cause food loss from the field to the table. It was observed that most of the trainings on sustainability and waste management in kitchens took place on the job, and only one establishment received professional training. In the sustainability policies of Michelin starred establishments, after energy, equipment and food sustainability are ranked in order of importance. Another noteworthy element is the cooperation with suppliers. Half of the interviewed enterprises stated that suppliers are not in sufficient co-operation on recycling. It has been observed that suppliers acting with commercial concerns are insensitive in this regard.

These enterprises, which avoid disposable products, prefer steel, glass, polycarbonate and similar washable, reusable equipment. Disposable products are not preferred except for the pandemic. In some large enterprises, leftovers from the buffet system that do not threaten food safety are utilised in the staff cafeteria, thus preventing food waste. Organic food waste is utilised on plates by creative chefs using different techniques to minimise waste. Recycled waste water is used in garden landscaping, and drought-resistant plants are preferred. As for the recycling of vegetable waste oil, some businesses are in favour of this practice due to the small economic support. On social media channels, comments of customers who are not knowledgeable or expert in gastronomic experience are shared and these comments also affect prospective customers who want to get opinions. In this respect, it is important not only for the gastronomic experience, but also for general media literacy for conscious consumers to pass the reality levels of the comments they read through their own filters and make decisions accordingly (Olaru, 2023). Finally, thanks to environmentally friendly practices such as the Michelin Guide, Slow Food, Protect Your Food and Orange Flag, awareness of waste-free kitchens is raised and both producers and consumers are made aware. It is emphasised that this understanding should be generalised throughout the sector.

The data obtained in the interviews were coded and analysed in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants' identities and to act in accordance with the rules of scientific ethics. In this way, the identities of the participants were prevented from being disclosed.

The results that the researcher inferred as a result of the interviews are as follows;

As a result of the interviews, it was observed that product and packaging waste is high in restaurant businesses, and energy waste is also one of the cost items. When the concept of waste is analysed in depth, it is determined that product waste occurs in all processes from harvesting, production, storage and cooking of products. It has been concluded that waste separation activities in kitchens are not sufficient and that municipalities and public institutions have a great job in this regard. The majority of the participants commonly mentioned organic, cardboard, glass and plastic wastes as recyclable materials. However, it was determined that organic food waste is composted and utilised in different products in kitchens. It was determined that all Michelin starred establishments pay attention to zero waste in menu planning. It was stated that disposable products are not used too much in terms of the use of disposable materials. Waste-free kitchen trainings are generally carried out as on-the-job training. The rate of professional training was found to be low. Kitchen tools and equipment are generally preferred from sustainable products. It has been observed that the biggest complaints are the deficiencies experienced in cooperation with suppliers on zero waste. All businesses are especially keen to save energy and water. It is concluded that coastal enterprises are more advantageous in terms of renewable energy thanks to the number of sunny days and the land area of the enterprise.

All these results are explained in line with the data obtained from one-to-one interviews with the chefs of Michelin Guide establishments. Based on the results obtained from the study, some suggestions are offered to related food and beverage businesses and researchers.

5.1. Recommendations for Food and Beverage Businesses;

Food waste is a major problem for businesses. Sending these wastes to landfills not only causes many environmental problems, but also means destroying the soil, which is a valuable treasure. By recycling food waste, it is possible both to prevent environmental pollution and to add the necessary nutrients for plants to the soil. Composting food waste allows for a 90% reduction in volume. In addition, the efficiency it provides to the soil as fertilizer is more efficient and healthier compared to artificial fertilizers. This is an important gain for the environment. Thanks to on-site composting of food waste, businesses will gain many economic, social and health benefits such as preventing environmental pollution, reducing carbon footprints, reducing waste going

to landfills, and using composted organic waste in green areas. It is known that untrained and inexperienced personnel in kitchens cause waste and food waste. The high staff turnover rate in the business and the fact that employees work in different businesses at the end of the season affect the amount of food waste in the kitchen. Since it takes time for a new staff to get used to and get to know the business, mistakes in preparation, cooking and storage areas can be high in this process. It will be important within the scope of the sustainability policy of the business that the chefs working in senior positions in the kitchen prefer people with high education level, conscious about waste, protecting the environment and nature, valuing food and having experience in the selection of personnel.

All personnel working in the enterprise should sensitively know the value of the products. Positive discrimination should be given to the personnel who receive zero waste and sustainability-themed training. In this way, employees will strive to take part in the system in line with their own wishes. The fact that individuals working in the sector have more vision with overseas trainings will provide them with the opportunity to find jobs in prestigious and quality businesses. In this way, the motivation of employees working in the food and beverage sector will increase. Motivating employees with competitions, sweepstakes, prizes and small gifts is thought to be effective in terms of job and business satisfaction and therefore in terms of reducing waste, creating a teamwork will be effective in the formation of waste and waste. One of the most important reasons for waste generation is that kitchen staff is faced with work beyond their capacity. The work intensity should be prepared by the kitchen chef and the purchasing unit within the planning. In this way, staff work peace will be ensured. The high motivation of each employee will allow him/her to internalize the business and believe that he/she is a part of that business. Thus, waste generation will cause discomfort in every working individual.

It has been determined in the literature that food and packaging wastes are high in consumption patterns such as open buffet, table d'hôte and take-away. Instead of such concepts, especially restaurant businesses should be supported to adopt a "tasting menu" approach. When creating recipes in menu planning, products with the possibility of zero waste should be preferred whenever possible. In businesses, there may be some decrease in the self-sacrificing behavior of the personnel who are professionally dissatisfied and demotivated. It is thought that keeping the organizational commitment and job satisfaction of the personnel high with activities such as promotions, raises, personnel nights, personnel of the month, personnel of the year, special birthday celebrations for the personnel by the business authorities and administrative management will be ef-

fective in the work quality and food waste reduction efforts to be expected from the personnel.

5.2. Recommendations for Researchers;

This research covers the establishments in the Michelin Guide in Türkiye. In future studies, the differences between the starred establishments in Türkiye and the establishments abroad on waste can be investigated. Thus, common areas and differentiating codes in the two case models can be identified. In this study, an interview technique was conducted with business chefs. In future studies, the perceptions, attitudes and reasons for preference of guests who prefer Michelin-starred establishments on waste can be investigated. There were some limitations in reaching the enterprises in the research. In future studies, the universe can be expanded by receiving more support from public institutions and the private sector.

Scientists who will conduct research can travel to Michelin-starred enterprises abroad with the support programs of the government and look at waste management from a different perspective. Similar and different sustainable practices between environmentally friendly hotels affiliated to the Ministry of Tourism and Michelin-starred restaurants can be one of the areas of study for new researchers. Waste management practices in the kitchens of Michelin Guide starred restaurants and green starred restaurants can be compared. Thus, the effects of green practices on waste can be revealed. Researchers who will study the restaurants in the Michelin Guide can be recommended to work in the restaurants, provided that the restaurants accept. In this way, on-site observations can be made.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Some important limitations were encountered in the research, especially in the data collection process. The most determining factor in the emergence of limitations is the scope of the research. The fact that the research covers the restaurants that have been awarded a star in the Michelin Guide across Türkiye has made the data collection process difficult and has led to the emergence of some distance-related constraints and limitations. In addition, due to this scope, as in many academic researches, there were some limitations due to time, distance and cost. Despite these limitations, a significant effort was made to complete the research with maximum data and minimum errors. Another important constraint in the data collection process and for the entire research in general is the fact that the businesses in this luxury category take their place in the sector at a busy business tempo every period. In order to obtain in-depth information more easily, it was aimed to collect all data face-to-face.

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The study was conducted with participants and they live in İstanbul, İzmir and Muğla. In addition, purposive sampling method was used in the sample. The fact that only 12 restaurant establishments in Türkiye have Michelin Stars limits the population of the study. For future research, Michelin Starred establishments not only in Türkiye but also in a few different countries can be included in the population. However, spending certain periods of time in the enterprises in the study can be presented as a suggestion for future researchers.

The ethics committee report on the interview questions prepared at the point of achieving the objectives was received from Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University on 30.05.2024 with the number number 2024.06.113 of the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee.

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The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Job Satisfaction and Work Value: A Study in İstanbul's Hospitality Sector

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Abstract

Operational methodologies, performance metrics, and organizational cultural paradigms in the business world shape the modern work ecosystem. Corporate executives govern human resources through their knowledge and experience, influencing human capital positively or negatively. This interaction impacts the speed or stability of achieving corporate objectives. Multidisciplinary corporate structures implement systematic organizational behavior paradigms affecting stakeholders and human resources. Leadership characteristics play a pivotal role in balancing these effects, influencing sustainable growth and organizational continuity.

The leadership approach's impact on job satisfaction and human capital's value perception is a key determinant in this process. This phenomenon is particularly evident in labor-intensive sectors like tourism, where leadership typology significantly affects employees' motivation, commitment, and satisfaction. Accommodation establishments, as a major component of the tourism industry, offer a valuable context

for examining these dynamics.

This research aims to analyze the effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction and work value in five-star hospitality establishments in İstanbul. Data were collected in 2024 via surveys administered to employees. To evaluate the findings, quantitative analysis methods were employed, including tests for normality, validity and reliability assessments, regression analysis, ANOVA and t-tests.

Empirical results reveal that transformational leadership positively and moderately influences employees' job satisfaction and work values. A significant and strong correlation was also identified between these variables, highlighting the critical role of transformational leadership in enhancing employee outcomes and organizational success.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Work Value, Tourism

JEL Codes: L8, Z3

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1. Introduction

The multidisciplinary effects of globalization have precipitated economic, technological, and social transformations, compelling organizational structures to develop innovative strategies for sustainable success. In this context, it is imperative for institutions to systematically implement innovative approaches, facilitate employee adaptation processes, maximize job satisfaction, and enhance value creation potential for the optimization of organizational change and development processes. In this paradigm shift, the critical importance of the leadership function becomes evident. Leaders possess a dominant role in the realization of organizational objectives. In today's hypercompetitive national and global business ecosystem, leaders must motivate employees with heterogeneous mindsets, optimize job satisfaction, and establish collective synergy to achieve corporate goals. Within the scope of this research, transactional leadership which is a traditional management paradigm based on performance-reward correlation that meets employees' basic needs and transformational leadership is a modern approach that influences employees through charismatic and behavioral characteristics, instills strategic vision, embraces authority delegation, and establishes relationships based on ethical principles have been analyzed. The concept of transformational leadership can be conceptualized as a transformational leadership paradigm that aims to transform organizational structure from a static formation to a dynamic, synergistic, and interactive configuration by making change and innovation an integral part of corporate culture. Particularly, the continuous change and innovation dynamics characteristic of our century have significantly intensified organizations' need for such a leadership approach.

A review of recent literature reveals that the concept of leadership has been comprehensively examined across various sectors, with diverse leadership paradigms being analyzed, particularly noting the prominence of transformational and transactional leadership approaches in academic discourse. Given that human resources constitute the fundamental basis of enterprises and production factors, the necessity for organizational structuring becomes evident (Erdöğruca, 2011). In this context, organizational requirements make the presence of leadership and leader figures indispensable. Within the framework of the information society paradigm triggered by the globalization process, the adoption of situational leadership approaches has become imperative. In determining leadership styles, corporate objectives and managerial focal points emerge as decisive factors (McColl-Kennedy and Anderson, 2002). Academic literature suggests that transformational leaders catalyze sustainability, change management, and innovation processes by optimizing employee motivation (Jung, Chow, and Wu, 2003; Keller, 1992; Shin

and Zhou, 2003). Transformational leadership theorists argue that this leadership model is more effective in optimizing follower performance compared to transactional, passive, and directive leadership models. Researchers referenced by Berson and Avolio (2004) support the effectiveness of transformational leadership with empirical findings. It has been determined that transformational leaders' capacity to perceive and shape environmental factors and disseminate strategic objectives optimizes followers' goal orientation (Berson and Avolio, 2004). Researchers emphasize that leaders' visionary approaches and supportive attitudes enhance employee motivation (Shin and Zhou, 2003). However, alternative approaches focus on utilitarian leadership models that prioritize the pragmatic utilization of employees' capacities in operational project management. From this perspective, Mumford and colleagues (Mumford et al., 2007) emphasize the critical role of technical competencies and skills (such as problem identification) in innovation and change management.

Well-established hospitality enterprises, which demonstrate sustainable growth by expanding their operational domains in transformational business environments, exhibit distinctive management paradigms in their organizational structures and incorporate multi-layered leadership positions. Within this complex framework, the optimization of employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment levels emerges as a critical necessity. This research, considering the interactive nature of enterprises in the hospitality sector, centers on the transformational leadership paradigm and aims to make an original contribution to the literature. The study is structured within a systematic methodology comprising four main sections: In the first section, leadership theories and the transformational leadership paradigm are comprehensively examined. The second section investigates employees' perception of work value and their position within organizational dynamics. The third section analyzes the historical development of the job satisfaction concept and its place in organizational behavior literature. In the fourth section, empirical data collected from 393 personnel employed in hospitality establishments specifically in İstanbul province is analyzed within the context of the aforementioned three theoretical frameworks. The research concludes with an evaluation of the findings and presents recommendations for future studies.

2. Leadership and Transformational Leadership Concepts: A Theoretical Framework

When individuals recognize specific needs and objectives that exceed their capacities, they tend to develop collective interaction mechanisms. This phenomenon is conceptualized as the socialization

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process. Socialization is defined as a multidimensional process encompassing an individual's social integration from birth. The characteristic feature of socialization is the individual's capacity to develop mutual solidarity and cooperation mechanisms with other members of society. In social organization, primitive division of labor has evolved into professional specialization over time. During this transformation process, occupational categories assuming different functional roles emerged, and this diversification contributed to the sustainability of the social system by increasing the complexity of social structure. Technological innovations facilitated the emergence of a technical division of labor by elevating the level

of specialization (Erkal, 1987). Within this organizational context, the leadership terminology leader, to lead, and leadership derived etymologically from the Anglo-Saxon word "lead" (path/direction) has gained significance. The origin of the word "lead" is rooted in "leaden" (to travel/to go). Anglo-Saxons, due to their maritime traditions, also utilized this term in the context of navigation. Conceptually, a leader is defined as an actor who determines direction. Terminologically, it carries an equivalent meaning with "dux" (path/journey) in Latin and "hemegeon" in Ancient Greek (Saruhan et al., 2013). The concept of leadership has been subject to multiple definitions in the literature.

Table 1. Leadership Definitions and Historical Evolution (Adigüzel, 2022)

Source and Date	Definition
Cooley, 1902	The ability to manage social movements.
Mumford, 1906	The emergence of an individual from within a social movement who assumes responsibility and takes a leadership position.
Bogardus, 1934	It refers to the period during which an individual, whose insights are sought not only for group and personality dynamics but also for intellectual exchange, remains influential.
Kilbourne, 1935	The capacity to demonstrate possession of numerous admired personality characteristics.
Knickerbocker, 1948	It is the relationship between possessing and effectively managing all resources necessary to meet the needs of all members within an established group.
Koontz ve O'Donnel, 1955	The ability to influence individuals toward a predetermined objective.
Hempfill ve Cons, 1957	It encompasses all behaviors exhibited by an individual who has assumed responsibility for directing group behaviors toward a specified goal.
Weschler ve Massarik, 1961	The facilitation of proper interaction among individuals directed toward a predetermined subject matter.
Lipham, 1964	Leadership is the initiation of a new structure and process to achieve organizational aims and objectives.
Stogdill, 1974	The establishment and maintenance of mutual behavioral consensus and ideological alignment within a structure created for a specific goal.
Dubrin, 1978	It is a process that adapts a goal-oriented group toward appropriate actions and serves as a problem-solving mechanism for challenges they encounter.
Katz ve Kahn, 1978	The ability to create a significant impact on group members' performance levels.
Rauch ve Behling, 1984	The activities of influencing the behaviors of a group assembled to accomplish a specific purpose toward their intended objectives.

The concept of leadership constitutes a focal point of ongoing academic research and scientific investigations. One of the fundamental reasons for the lack of consensus regarding the leadership phenomenon stems from its multidimensional structure and the complex nature of its content. Another factor is the global dynamics that organizations face and the consequent continuous evolution of the leadership paradigm. In the literature, the common ground between leadership and management concepts is defined as the necessity to direct group dy-

namics toward specific objectives and the utilization of authority in this process (Eraslan, 2004). Transformational leadership theories have undergone a paradigmatic transformation since 1978 through the pioneering works of J.M. Burns and B.M. Bass. This theoretical framework has contributed new perspectives to leadership literature. These approaches are categorized as transformational leadership, transactional leadership, charismatic leadership, strategic leadership, and servant leadership (Bektaş, 2016). Within the theoretical framework of this research,

the transformational leadership model, one of the transformational leadership approaches, will be examined in detail.

The concept of transformational leadership is a terminology employed to describe a broad spectrum of leaders operating across various domains. This concept elicits polarized societal perceptions, garnering appreciation from some individuals while being subject to critical evaluation by others (Berber, 2000). The theoretical framework of the present research is positioned within the transformational leadership paradigm, encompassing follower integration into the leadership process and the leader's visionary development. The emergence of transformational leadership theory in the 1970s is associated with changes in economic, sociological, and geopolitical dynamics. These transformations stem from technological innovations, intensified competitive conditions due to global economic development, and demographic structural changes that emerged following the 25 years of stability after World War II (Simic, 1998).

Burns (1978) conceptualizes transformational leadership as a process of mobilizing followers through the utilization of economic and political power mechanisms to achieve collective or individual objectives. According to Luthans (2011), within the transformational leadership paradigm, the leader acts as a catalyst facilitating transformational change in followers' needs, beliefs, and value systems. The fundamental characteristic of transformational leaders is their propensity to question existing structural and operational paradigms to optimize organizational development. In this context, the transformational leader assumes a catalytic role by providing intellectual stimulation to followers, seeking to integrate individual interests with organizational and societal benefits. The primary objective of the transformational leadership model is the maximization of self-awareness. In this model, vision represents the process of achieving collectively determined objectives. As emphasized by Airaksinen-Aminoff (2018), this transformational process necessitates active participation not only from the leader but also from the followers.

Bass developed a psychometric instrument called the "Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)" that operationalizes transformational and transactional leadership paradigms. Subsequently, through collaborative efforts between Bass and Bruce J. Avolio, methodological revisions were implemented in the MLQ. These modifications contributed significantly to the epistemological development of transformational leadership theory. Empirical findings in the literature indicate that creative personnel's performance is maximized when their intrinsic motivation mechanisms, cognitive styles, and capacities are optimized (Amabile, 1996). The MLQ has been utilized with methodological adaptations in

various studies examining the transformational leadership phenomenon (Bryman, 1992; Bycio, Hackett, and Allen, 1995; Podsakoff et al., 1994; Hunt, 1999). Furthermore, empirical research demonstrates that transformational leaders generate statistically significant positive correlations in organizational parameters such as job satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and performance, leading to superior organizational outcomes (Masi and Cooke, 2000; Dasborough and Ashkanasy, 2002; Pirola-Merlo et al., 2002).

2.1. The Concept of Job Satisfaction

The concept of job satisfaction is extensively studied in the literature as one of the fundamental determinants of work motivation (Sweeney, Hohenshil, and Fortune, 2002). This concept attracts significant attention from both employees in organizational structures and academic researchers (Lu, While, and Barriball, 2005). The phenomenon of job satisfaction holds a central position in human resources management and organizational behavior literature. Within the conceptual framework, job satisfaction is conceptualized as the totality of positive emotional reactions stemming from an individual's professional, socio-cultural, and interpersonal interactions. Although various definitions have been proposed from different theoretical perspectives in the literature, they fundamentally represent employees' positive or negative evaluations of their profession (Froese and Xiao, 2011). Among the operational definitions of job satisfaction are: a positive emotional state created by professional experiences (Kayabasi, 2019), expectation-realization congruence (Oksay, 2011), level of psycho-social needs fulfillment (Hos and Oksay, 2015), attitudinal tendencies toward work (Aşan and Özyer, 2008), expectation-perception differential (Tengilimoğlu, 2005), aggregation of attitudes related to professional dimensions (Carikci, 2000), and employees' cognitive-affective evaluations of work (Yuksel, 1990). From an epistemological perspective, job satisfaction can be conceptualized as a general attitudinal orientation toward the profession or professional elements (Oshagbemi, 2000). Historically, a rich literature has developed on job satisfaction, and it has been examined from a multidisciplinary perspective including nursing, psychology, sociology, organizational behavior, and management science (Speroff, 1955; Locke, 1969; Naumann, 1993; Oshagbemi, 2000; Carikci, 2000; Tengilimoğlu, 2005; Asik, 2010).

In the literature definitions of job satisfaction, individual professional adaptation, and subjective contentment emerge as common denominators. In this context, job satisfaction can be conceptualized as a positive psychological state that emerges when an individual's professional expectations, goals, and interests converge with the organizational structure in a harmonious foundation. Employees derive posi-

ve outcomes from their experiences of satisfaction in the work environment. An individual's emotional state in daily life affects their professional performance, and similarly, their work experiences permeate into their private life. Moreover, individuals spend more time working hours than in their home environment. In this regard, negative conditions and dissatisfaction in the workplace generate adverse implications for the organizational structure (Kallerberg, 1977). The significance of job satisfaction has been examined at individual, managerial, and institutional levels. Meeting employees' professional expectations facilitates an increase in satisfaction levels. This phenomenon is significant at the individual level as it elevates employee commitment and motivation. Additionally, job satisfaction has the potential to positively influence employee-manager relations. This effect contributes to organizational success by supporting the achievement of organizational objectives (Özpehlivan, 2018). Job satisfaction is influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors comprise intrinsic rewards related to work. Recognition, achievement, assumption of responsibility, and personal development can be evaluated in this category. External factors, however, stem from the extrinsic nature of environmental rewards. Service protocols, commercial relations, working conditions, and managerial practices can be considered within the scope of external factors (Abouraia and Othman, 2017).

Job satisfaction is a complex phenomenon that emerges from the interaction of various factors. Different approaches exist in the literature regarding the classification of these factors. Mullins (2010) systematically categorized the factors affecting job satisfaction from a comprehensive perspective into five categories: individual, social, cultural, organizational, and environmental factors. Each category encompasses specific variables within itself. In an alternative approach, factors influencing job satisfaction have been examined from a more holistic perspective, categorized into two fundamental groups: individual and organizational factors (Erdogan, 1996). According to Bayrak Kok (2006), while individual factors comprise elements encompassing one's emotions, thoughts, expectations, and physical, psychological, and security needs; organizational factors consist of parameters affecting the physical and psychological conditions of work and their alignment with individual expectations. In a recent study conducted by Ozpehlivan (2018), individual factors affecting job satisfaction were categorized as gender, age, organizational tenure, marital status, educational level, professional experience, status, personality characteristics, position and hierarchical level, work attitude, sociocultural environment, intellectual capacity, competencies, and value judgments. Organizational factors were examined within the framework of variables such as physical working conditions, reward

systems, compensation policies, motivation mechanisms, job design, organizational structure, colleague relationships, hierarchical communication, work-related stress, mentoring practices, social interaction, leadership approach, career development opportunities, participation in decision-making processes, corporate communication, recognition mechanisms, organizational culture, technological infrastructure, and job monotony.

2.2. The Concept of Work Value

The concept of value is comprehensively examined through a multidisciplinary approach across various behavioral and social sciences, including philosophy, theology, anthropology, political science, sociology, economics, and psychology. However, due to divergent approaches in its epistemological and ontological dimensions, as with many other concepts in social sciences, a consensus on the concept of "value" has not been achieved (Silah, 2000). An individual's value system constitutes fundamental elements that shape their life perspective, worldview, and existential philosophy. In this context, values play a crucial role in personality formation and development. The personality structure of an individual is directly correlated with the choices made within this value system. The hierarchical structuring of values not only determines the general framework of personality but also influences the reflection of this structure on professional life and the formation of work values within the affiliated professional group (Şentürk, 2010). The concept of work values is conceptualized as a phenomenon encompassing interpersonal relations and interactions within the work environment. This concept involves systematically analyzing individuals' priorities in their professional lives and their expectations regarding work life. The responses to questions emerging during an employee's self-evaluation process, such as "What is my work motivation?", "What are my professional expectations?", "Do current working conditions and institutional rights meet my expectations?" constitute the individual's work values system (Avcı, 2011).

The concept of work values has been examined from various perspectives by different scholars in the literature. According to Super's theoretical framework, work values constitute the qualitative characteristics and satisfaction elements that individuals seek in their professional activities, and are considered a subset of an individual's general value system (Ferk, 1998). Zytowsky (1970) conceptualized work values as a construct expressing the correlation between need level and degree of satisfaction. Vos, et al. (2005) define work values as relatively stable sets of objectives that individuals aim to achieve in their professional lives. In Elizur's approach, work values are conceptualized as "the degree of importance

an individual attributes to specific outcomes in their professional life." An alternative theoretical perspective considers values as "behavioral norms based on an individual's intrinsic motivations." Work values can also be evaluated as an analytical perspective for comprehending, developing, and modifying occupational roles. In this context, work values function as normative standards that guide behavioral tendencies, judgments, and situational assessments (Altaş, 2004). The concept of work values has been subject to various classifications in academic literature. A prominent example of these taxonomies is the seven-category classification system developed by Meglino et al. (1991). In this systematic approach, work values are examined within the framework of desired behavioral patterns and are categorized as follows (George and Jones, 1997): performance optimization, social interaction, ethical behavior, work discipline, positive outcome orientation, social responsibility, and integrity.

The literature on work values reflects a comprehensive body of research. The primary reason for the intensive study of this field compared to other social sciences is that work-life has multidimensional effects beyond economic returns, including social integration, social status, consumption patterns, health status, and family dynamics (Roe and Ester, 1999).

Empirical studies have examined the relationships between work values and demographic variables. Miller's (2006) research in the hospitality sector found no statistically significant correlation between work values and age variables. However, Eslinger (2000) analyzed work values from an intergenerational differences perspective and observed significant variations. These findings indicate that different age cohorts may exhibit heterogeneous structures in terms of work values. Research conducted by Fields (2002) revealed that Protestant work ethic demonstrates negative correlations with age, education level, and attitudes toward recreational activities. Additionally, an inverse relationship was identified between variables such as organizational commitment, professional dedication, job involvement, and the rejection of unethical behaviors. Lyons and colleagues (2006) conducted a comparative analysis of work values across sectors. Systematic differences were identified among employees in public, private, and quasi-public sectors. It was determined that quasi-public sector employees attributed greater importance to socially beneficial work compared to public sector employees, while public sector employees demonstrated higher sensitivity in this dimension compared to private sector employees. Three fundamental research paradigms emerge in the work values literature: (1) research based on identifying structural components of work values and hypothesis testing, (2) Correlational studies examining the interaction of work values with individual, social, and organizational variables, (3) Cross-cultural comparative research

analyzing the impact of national culture on work values (Sagie et al., 1996).

3. Methodology

3.1. Significance and Objectives of the Research

The primary objective of this research is to examine, through scientific methodologies, the effects of transformational leadership behaviors exhibited by managerial staff in hospitality establishments on employees' job satisfaction and work value perceptions. Within the scope of subsidiary objectives, the study aims to conduct a structural analysis of transformational leadership practices implemented in Turkish hospitality establishments and evaluate the parameters of employee work value and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the research seeks to statistically determine the differentiation of these variables within the context of employees' demographic characteristics (generation, gender, educational level, and income level).

The research is anticipated to make methodological and theoretical contributions to the relevant academic literature, while also providing scientifically based recommendations for sector stakeholders regarding the optimization of their operational processes. Within this framework, the empirical findings are expected to hold paradigmatic significance in both academic platforms and practical applications.

3.2. Research Methodology

In this study, quantitative research methodology was employed, and accordingly, the study was designed using a causal research model. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to identify appropriate measurement scales. The decision was made to utilize previously designed and validated scales for the implementation of the study. Three distinct scales were employed for testing the desired variables. Different scales were utilized for the measurement of leadership, work value, and job satisfaction. To assess transformational leadership, a 20-item subscale from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire developed by Bass (1985), as referenced in Kahya's (2013) doctoral dissertation, was employed. For measuring work value, the 25-item scale developed by Gursoy, Chi, and Karadag (2013) was implemented. To determine job satisfaction levels, the 13-item scale constructed by Calisan and Koroglu (2024) was administered.

The survey utilized in this research consists of four sections. The first section contains statements designed to measure transformational leadership characteristics. The second section encompasses items intended to assess work value. The third section comprises statements aimed at measuring job satisfaction. The fourth section consists of questions

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designed to determine the demographic characteristics of participants. The scale items employed in the study were designed using a 5-point Likert-type scale format. This scale is graded as follows: 1 (Strongly disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neither agree nor disagree), 4 (Agree), and 5 (Strongly agree).

Due to temporal and financial constraints, it was deemed appropriate to conduct the research on a specific sample. In the implementation of the research and sample determination, a non-probability sampling method known as "convenience sampling" was employed. The scale was administered online between 2024 and 2025 in five-star hotels located in Kuşadası. All five-star hotels in the region were invited to participate in the survey; however, only employees from four five-star hotels that responded to the invitation took part in the study. The population of the study consisted of employees aged 18 and above working in five-star accommodation establishments located in Kuşadası. These establishments were selected due to their prominent role in the region's tourism sector and their ability

to provide a representative environment for examining organizational dynamics within the hospitality industry. The scale was applied on a voluntary basis to employees aged 18 and above who were working at the accommodation establishments. Analyses were conducted using data obtained from 406 participants. A sample size of 406 participants was deemed sufficient based on the principles of statistical representativeness and previous studies in similar tourism research contexts. According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table, for a population of several thousand, a sample size of approximately 384 is considered adequate at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. Thus, the inclusion of 406 valid responses not only meets but exceeds this threshold, enhancing the reliability and generalizability of the findings within the scope of the study. The required ethics committee approval for data collection was obtained from Dogus University with the protocol number E-42435178-050.06.04-47679. The conceptual framework of the research and the hypotheses to be tested are detailed below.

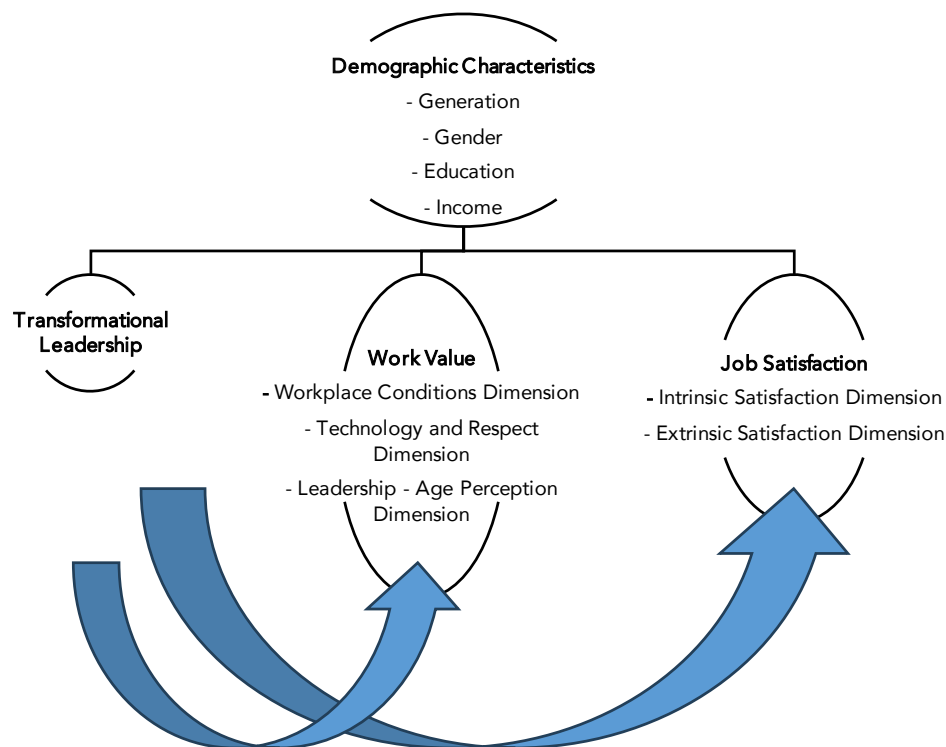


Figure 1: Research Model

Main Hypothesis H1: Employees' transformational leadership perception positively influences their work value states.

Sub-Hypotheses:

- Sub-Hypothesis H1a: Employees' transformational leadership perception positively influences work value states provided by workplace conditions. (Work Value Factor Dimension Impact Analysis)
- Sub-Hypothesis H1b: Employees' transformational leadership perception positively influences work value states provided by technology and respect. (Work Value Factor Dimension Impact Analysis)
- Sub-Hypothesis H1c: Employees' transformational leadership perception positively influences work value states provided by leadership and age perception. (Work Value Factor Dimension Impact Analysis)

Main Hypothesis H2: Employees' transformational leadership perception positively influences their job satisfaction levels.

Sub-Hypotheses:

- Sub-Hypothesis H2a: Employees' perception of transformational leadership positively influences their intrinsic job satisfaction levels. (Analysis of Job Satisfaction Factor Dimension Impact)
- Sub-Hypothesis H2b: Employees' perception of transformational leadership positively influences their extrinsic job satisfaction levels. (Analysis of Job Satisfaction Factor Dimension Impact)

Main Hypothesis H3: Employees' transformational leadership perception differs according to their demographic characteristics

Sub-Hypotheses:

- H3a: Employees' transformational leadership perception differs according to their generational cohort.
- H3b: Employees' transformational leadership perception differs according to their gender.
- H3c: Employees' transformational leadership perception differs according to their educational level.
- H3d: Employees' transformational leadership perception differs according to their income level.

Main Hypothesis H4: Employees' work value attitudes differ according to their demographic characteristics.

Sub-Hypotheses:

- H4a: Employees' work value attitudes differ according to their generational cohort.
- H4b: Employees' work value attitudes differ according to their gender.
- H4c: Employees' work value attitudes differ according to their educational level.
- H4d: Employees' work value attitudes differ according to their income level.

Main Hypothesis H5: Employees' job satisfaction levels demonstrate significant variation according to their demographic characteristics.

Sub-hypotheses:

- H5a: Employees' job satisfaction levels exhibit significant differences based on their generational cohort.
- H5b: Employees' job satisfaction levels demonstrate significant variation according to their gender.

- H5c: Employees' job satisfaction levels show significant differences based on their educational attainment.
- H5d: Employees' job satisfaction levels vary significantly according to their income levels.

3.3. Data Analysis

For the analysis of data obtained from the study, normality tests were initially conducted, followed by validity and reliability tests. Upon confirmation of dataset suitability, regression analysis, T-test, ANOVA, and frequency analyses were performed. All aforementioned statistical analyses were executed using the IBM SPSS statistical package software.

3.4. Normality Distribution, Reliability and Validity Analyses

In the normal distribution analysis of the scale applied to evaluate transformational leadership attitudes of accommodation establishment employees, the arithmetic mean (3.6962) and median (3.9500) values were found to be convergent. Furthermore, it was observed that the skewness coefficient (-0.758) and kurtosis coefficient (-0.165) fell within the acceptable range (+1.5 / -1.5). Regarding the work value scale analyses, the arithmetic mean (3.4809) and median (3.7200) values showed similarity; the skewness (-0.839) and kurtosis (-0.244) coefficients were determined to be within the parameters prescribed in the literature (+1.5 / -1.5). For the job satisfaction scale, the arithmetic mean (3.4715) and median (3.7692) values were found to be consistent; the skewness (0.624) and kurtosis (-1.094) coefficients were again observed to be within acceptable limits (+1.5 / -1.5). As indicated by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), one of the most significant indicators of normal distribution is the presence of skewness and kurtosis values within the range of +1.50 to -1.50. The fact that the values obtained in this research meet these criteria has enabled the utilization of parametric analysis methods in hypothesis testing.

The reliability analysis of the data collected within the scope of the research was conducted by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the scale items. According to the widely accepted approach in the literature, a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient exceeding the threshold value of 0.70 is considered sufficient to meet the reliability criterion of the scale (Büyüköztürk vd., 2013; Nunnally, 1978). As presented in detail in Tables 2, 3, and 4, the calculated Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each scale utilized in the study exceeded 0.70, thus demonstrating that the scales met the internal consistency criterion.

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Table 2. Reliability Analysis of Transformational Leadership Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Scale Items
,984	20

Table 3. Reliability Analysis of Work Value Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Scale Items
,59	25

Table 4. Reliability Analysis of Job Satisfaction Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Scale Items
,928	13

In the analysis of data obtained within the scope of the research, factor analysis was employed to test structural validity, and Varimax was preferred as the rotation method. The analysis revealed that the item distributions in the dimensions of transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and work value scales differed from their original structures. Upon exami-

nation of the variance explanation ratios and eigenvalue coefficients of the scales, it was determined that the factorial structures exhibited remarkably high levels of explanatory power. The relevant factor analysis findings are presented in detail in Tables 5, 6, and 7.

Table 5. Factor Analysis Results of Transformational Leadership Scale

Scale Items	Transformational Leadership
DL8	,910
DL14	,909
DL3	,899
DL13	,899
DL19	,897
DL7	,892
DL9	,890
DL2	,883
DL16	,882
DL4	,882
DL15	,881
DL12	,874
DL6	,868
DL20	,867
DL11	,866
DL5	,857
DL1	,855
DL17	,852
DL18	,844
DL10	,835
Kaiser- Mayer- Olkin Sample: ,977 Variance Explained Ratio %76,974.	

Table 6. Factor Analysis Results of Work Value Scale

Scale Items	Workplace Conditions Dimension	Technology and Respect Dimension	Leadership - Age Perception Dimension
iD10	,847		
iD9	,841		
iD11	,829		
iD8	,807		
iD7	,774		
iD5	,712		
iD2	,706		
iD4	,703		
iD1	,703		
iD13	,686		
iD3	,663		
iD15	,568		
iD25		,820	
iD17		,798	
iD14		,788	
iD16		,745	
iD19		,741	
iD18		,619	
iD22			,910
iD23			,891
iD24			,881
iD21			,819
iD20			,761
iD6			,602
iD12			,573
Kaiser- Mayer- Olkin Sample: ,956 Variance Explained Ratio %75,268			

Table 7. Factor Analysis Results of Job Satisfaction Scale

Scale Items	Extrinsic Satisfaction	Intrinsic Satisfaction
iSTAT7	,885	
iSTAT6	,878	
iSTAT9	,862	
iSTAT8	,859	
iSTAT10	,858	
iSTAT4	,694	
iSTAT11	,578	
iSTAT12		,819
iSTAT13		,797
iSTAT3		,744

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İSTAT1	,702
İSTAT5	,657
İSTAT2	,541
Kaiser- Mayer- Olkin Sample: ,904 Variance Explained Ratio % 68,356	

Upon examination of the findings obtained from Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity; the KMO value was determined to be 0.977 for the transformational leadership scale, 0.956 for the work value needs scale, and 0.904 for the job satisfaction scale. The significance level of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was found to be $p < 0.001$ for all scales. These results indicate that the dataset is suitable for factor analysis and the sample size is adequate.

This section presents the statistical analyses and findings of the data obtained within the methodological framework of the research. The primary objective of this study is to examine the effects of social desirability and need for approval variables on individuals' motivations to share their travel experiences on social media platforms, as well as to investigate the correlation between these variables. Furthermore, these variables will be analyzed within the context of demographic parameters.

The analysis and interpretation of hypotheses in the following tables are presented below.

3.5. Analysis of Research Data and Findings

Table 8. Regression Model of the Impact of Employees' Transformational Leadership Perception on Work Value States

Regression Model					
Model	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Squares	F	P
	277,425	1	277,425	1243,146	,000
Regression Residual Total	90,158	404	,223		
	367,583	405			
Regression Model Coefficients					
Model	Regression Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	P
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
Mean	,056	,105		,533	,594
	1,041	,030	,869	35,258	,000
Impact Assessment					
Model	R	R Square	R Square (Adjusted)		
1	,869	,755	,754		

According to the regression analysis, a correlation coefficient of 0.869 (86%) was observed between employees' transformational leadership perception and work value attitudes. The impact of transforma-

tional leadership perception on work value attitudes was determined to be 0.755 (75%). Consequently, hypothesis H1 was accepted.

Table 9. Regression Tests for the Impact of Employees' Transformational Leadership Perception on Work Value Dimensions

Transformational Leadership - Workplace Conditions Dimension (Analysis of Work Value Factor Dimension Impact)			
Model	R	R Square	R Square (Adjusted)
1	,917	,842	,841

Transformational Leadership - Technology and Respect Dimension (Analysis of Work Value Factor Dimension Impact)			
Model	R	R Square	R Square (Adjusted)
1	,852	,726	,725
Transformational Leadership - Leadership and Age Dimension (Analysis of Work Value Factor Dimension Impact)			
Model	R	R Square	R Square (Adjusted)
1	,320	,102	,100

In the regression analysis, the correlation between transformational leadership perception and workplace conditions dimension was found to be 0.917 (91%), between technology and respect dimension 0.852 (85%), and between leadership and age dimension 0.320 (32%). The impact of transformational leadership perception on workplace conditions

dimension was determined to be 0.842 (84%), on technology and respect dimension 0.726 (72%), and on leadership and age dimension 0.102 (10%). Accordingly, hypotheses H1a, H1b, and H1c were accepted. When examining correlation values, 0 indicates no relationship, while +1 indicates a complete relationship (Karakus et al., 2016).

Table 10. Regression Model of the Effect of Employees' Transformational Leadership Perception on Job Satisfaction States

Regression Model					
Model	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Squares	F	P
Regression Residual Total	187,051	1	187,051	418,589	,000
	180,532	404	,447		
	367,583	405			
Regression Model Coefficients					
Model	Regression Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient		P
	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	
Mean	,816	,143		5,707	,000
	,823	,040	,713	20,459	,000
Impact Assessment					
Model	R	R Square	R Square (Adjusted)		
1	,713	,509	,508		

The regression analysis revealed a correlation of 0.713 (71%) between employees' transformational leadership perception and job satisfaction levels. The impact of transformational leadership percep-

tion on job satisfaction conditions was determined to be 0.509 (50%). Accordingly, hypothesis H2 was accepted.

Table 11. Regression Tests for the Effect of Employees' Transformational Leadership Perception on Job Satisfaction Dimensions

Transformational Leadership - Intrinsic Satisfaction Dimension (Job Satisfaction Factor Dimension Impact Analysis)			
Model	R	R Square	R Square (Adjusted)
1	,776	,602	,601
Transformational Leadership - Extrinsic Satisfaction Dimension (Job Satisfaction Factor Dimension Impact Analysis)			
Model	R	R Square	R Square (Adjusted)
1	,490	,240	,238

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In the regression analysis, the correlation between transformational leadership perception and internal satisfaction dimension was found to be 0.776 (77%), while the correlation with external satisfaction dimension was 0.490 (49%). The impact of transforma-

tional leadership perception on internal satisfaction dimension was determined to be 0.602 (60%), and its impact on external satisfaction dimension was 0.240 (24%). Accordingly, hypotheses H2a, H2b, and H2c were accepted.

Table 12. ANOVA Analysis of Employees' Transformational Leadership Perception Differentiation Based on Generations

Levene	df1	df2	P		
5,705	2	403	,004		
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Significance Testing					
	Mean	df	Mean Squares	F	P
Bt. Gr.	4,651	2	2,325	2,582	,077
In. Gr.	362,932	403	,901		
Total	367,583	405			

The ANOVA homogeneity analysis was conducted based on the generational variable of employees, and the data was found to exhibit non-homogeneous distribution ($P = 0.004$). The significance value

obtained from the analysis ($P = 0.077$) did not meet the generally accepted significance threshold of $P < 0.05$ in social sciences. In light of these findings, the H2a hypothesis was not statistically supported.

Table 13. T-Test Analysis for the Differentiation of Transformational Leadership Perception of Employees According to Gender

	Gender	N	Mn.	Std. Dv.	Std. Err. Me.
Mean	Man	204	3,6809	1,02367	,07167
	Woman	202	3,6381	,87722	,06172
Significance T-Test Analysis					
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			T-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	4,474	,035	,452	404	,652

Upon examination of the t-test analysis, the Levene's value (0.035) was found to be inconsistent with the expected value for homogeneity ($P > 0.05$). In the

significance analysis, the Sig value ($P = 0.652$) did not meet the required coefficient ($P < 0.05$). Consequently, hypothesis H3b was not supported.

Table 14. ANOVA Analysis of the Differentiation in Transformational Leadership Perception According to Educational Status of Employees

Levene	df1	df2	P		
2,346	4	401	,054		
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Significance Testing					
	Mean	df	Mean Squares	F	P
Bt. Gr.	17,546	4	4,386	5,025	,001
In. Gr.	350,037	401	,873		
Total	367,583	405			

In the analyses conducted within the scope of the research, the homogeneity coefficient (0.054) obtained according to the educational status of the participants met the statistically significant homogeneity threshold ($p > 0.05$). In the analysis performed

to detect significance differences, the significance value ($p = 0.001$) was found to be below the critical threshold ($p < 0.05$). In light of these findings, hypothesis H3c was accepted. For detailed examination of intergroup differences, Tukey - Post Hoc analysis,

which is preferred in cases of homogeneous variance, was applied. The analysis results revealed a statistically significant and distinct difference between participants with associate degrees and those with

bachelor's and master's degrees. These individuals exhibited a higher perception of being influenced by transformational leadership compared to other individuals.

Table 15. ANOVA Analysis for the Differentiation of Employees' Transformational Leadership Perception According to Income Levels

Levene	df1	df2	P		
1,648	4	401	,161		
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Significance Testing					
	Mean	df	Mean Squares	F	P
Bt. Gr.	17,586	4	4,397	5,037	,001
In. Gr.	349,996	401	,873		
Total	367,583	405			

Based on the analyses conducted within the scope of the research, the homogeneity assumption was met in the assessment according to participants' income levels ($p = 0.161 > 0.05$). Moreover, when examining the significance level, the obtained value ($p = 0.001$) was observed to be above the generally accepted threshold value in social sciences ($p < 0.05$). In light of these findings, it was concluded that hypothesis H3d was supported. To examine intergroup

differences in detail, Tukey Post-Hoc analysis, which is preferred in cases of homogeneous variance, was applied. The analysis results revealed a statistically significant and distinct difference between participants who perceived themselves as having good income levels and those who considered their income levels as moderate, poor, or very poor. Individuals with good income levels demonstrated a higher degree of transformational leadership perception.

Table 16. ANOVA Analysis of Employee Work Value Perception Differentiation by Generation

Levene	df1	df2	P		
4,244	2	403	,015		
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Significance Testing					
	Mean	df	Mean Squares	F	P
Bt. Gr.	8,588	2	4,294	6,998	,001
In. Gr.	247,299	403	,614		
Total	255,887	405			

The ANOVA Homogeneity analysis was conducted based on the generational variable of employees, and it was determined that the data did not exhibit a homogeneous distribution ($P = 0.015$). The significance value obtained from the analysis ($P = 0.001$) was found to be consistent with the generally accepted significance threshold of $P < 0.05$ in social sciences. In light of these findings, hypothesis H4a

was statistically supported. To examine intergroup differences in detail, the Dunnett C - Post Hoc analysis, which is preferred in cases of heterogeneous variance, was applied. This analysis revealed that Generation Y individuals demonstrated significantly lower work value perception compared to other generations.

Table 17. T-Test Analysis of Work Value Perception Differences Based on Employee Gender

	Gender	N	Mn.	Std. Dv.	Std. Err. Me.
Mean	Man	204	3,4778	,87101	,06098
	Woman	202	3,4440	,71154	,05006
Significance T-Test Analysis					
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			T-test for Equality of Means		
Mean	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	9,558	,002	,429	404	,668

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Upon analysis of the t-test, the Levene's value (0.002) did not meet the expected threshold for homogeneity ($P > 0.05$). In the significance analysis, the Sig va-

lue ($P = 0.668$) did not meet the required coefficient ($P < 0.05$). Consequently, hypothesis H4b was not supported.

Table 18. ANOVA Analysis of Work Value Perception Differentiation Based on Employees' Educational Status

Levene	df1	df2	P		
3,407	4	401	,009		
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Significance Testing					
	Mean	df	Mean Squares	F	P
Bt. Gr.	10,180	4	2,545	4,154	,003
In. Gr.	245,706	401	,613		
Total	255,887	405			

In the analyses conducted within the scope of the research, the homogeneity coefficient (0.009) obtained according to participants' educational status did not meet the statistically significant homogeneity threshold ($p > 0.05$). The significance value ($p = 0.003$) obtained from the analysis performed to detect significance differences was found to be below the critical threshold ($p < 0.05$). In light of these findings, hypothesis H4c was accepted. To examine in-

tergroup differences in detail, Dunnett C - Post Hoc analysis, which is preferred in heterogeneous variance conditions, was applied. The analysis results revealed a statistically significant and distinct difference between participants with bachelor's degrees and those with associate's and doctoral degrees. These individuals exhibited a lower perception of job value impact compared to other individuals.

Table 19. ANOVA Analysis for the Differentiation of Employees' Job Value Perception According to Income Levels

Levene	df1	df2	P		
3,874	4	401	,004		
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Significance Testing					
	Mean	df	Mean Squares	F	P
Bt. Gr.	9,824	4	2,456	4,002	,003
In. Gr.	246,063	401	,614		
Total	255,887	405			

Based on the analyses conducted within the scope of the research, it was determined that the homogeneity assumption was not met in the assessment according to participants' income status ($p = 0.004 > 0.05$). Moreover, when examining the significance level, it was observed that the obtained value ($p = 0.003$) exceeded the generally accepted threshold value in social sciences ($p < 0.05$). In light of these findings, it was concluded that hypothesis H4d was supported. To examine the intergroup differences in

detail, Dunnett C - Post Hoc analysis, which is preferred in cases of heterogeneous variance, was applied. The analysis results revealed a statistically significant and distinct difference between participants who perceived themselves as having good income levels and those who considered their income levels as poor or moderate. Individuals with good income levels demonstrated a higher rate of this work value perception.

Table 20. ANOVA Analysis of Employee Job Satisfaction Perception Differentiation According to Generations

Levene	df1	df2	P		
1,168	2	403	,312		
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Significance Testing					
	Mean	df	Mean Squares	F	P
Bt. Gr.	2,507	2	1,254	1,845	,159
In. Gr.	273,893	403	,680		
Total	276,401	405			

The ANOVA homogeneity analysis was conducted based on the generational variable of employees, and the data demonstrated a homogeneous distribution ($P = 0.312$). The significance value obtained

from the analysis ($P = 0.159$) did not meet the generally accepted significance threshold of $P < 0.05$ in social sciences. In light of these findings, hypothesis H5a was statistically supported.

Table 21. T-Test Analysis of Employee Job Satisfaction Perception Differentiation Based on Gender

	Gender	N	Mn.	Std. Dv.	Std. Err. Me.
Mean	Man	204	3,4348	,91007	,06372
	Woman	202	3,4798	,73323	,05159
Significance T-Test Analysis					
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			T-test for Equality of Means		
Mean	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	14,742	,000	-,549	404	,583

According to the t-test analysis, the Levene's value (0.000) did not meet the expected threshold for homogeneity ($P > 0.05$). In the significance analysis, the

Sig value ($P = 0.583$) did not satisfy the required coefficient ($P < 0.05$). Consequently, hypothesis H5b was not supported.

Table 22. ANOVA Analysis for the Differentiation of Job Satisfaction Perception Based on Employees' Educational Status

Levene	df1	df2	P		
2,002	4	401	,094		
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Significance Testing					
	Mean	df	Mean Squares	F	P
Bt. Gr.	7,145	4	1,786	2,660	,032
In. Gr.	269,256	401	,671		
Total	276,401	405			

In the analyses conducted within the scope of the research, the homogeneity coefficient (0.094) obtained according to the educational status of the participants met the statistically significant homogeneity threshold ($p > 0.05$). As a result of the analysis performed to detect significance differences, the signi-

ficance value ($p = 0.032$) was found to be below the critical threshold ($p < 0.05$). In light of these findings, hypothesis H5c was accepted. For detailed examination of intergroup differences, Tukey - Post Hoc analysis, which is preferred in cases of homogeneous variance, was applied.

Table 23. ANOVA Analysis for the Differentiation of Employees' Job Satisfaction Perception According to Participants' Income Levels

Levene	df1	df2	P		
2,416	4	401	,048		
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Significance Testing					
	Mean	df	Mean Squares	F	P
Bt. Gr.	12,772	4	3,193	4,857	,001
In. Gr.	263,629	401	,657		
Total	276,401	405			

Based on the analyses conducted within the scope of the research, it was determined that the homogeneity assumption was not met in the assessment according to participants' income status ($p = 0.048 > 0.05$). Furthermore, when examining the significance level, it was observed that the obtained value ($p =$

0.001) exceeded the generally accepted threshold value in social sciences ($p < 0.05$). In light of these findings, it was concluded that hypothesis H4d was supported. To examine intergroup differences in detail, Dunnett C - Post Hoc analysis, which is preferred in cases of heterogeneous variance, was applied.

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The analysis results revealed a statistically significant and distinct difference between participants who perceived their income level as good and those who perceived it as poor or moderate. Individuals with good income levels demonstrated a higher level of job satisfaction perception.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

4.1. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the influence of transformational leadership practices on employees' job satisfaction and work value perceptions within the hospitality sector. The findings corroborate existing literature, confirming that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in shaping positive organizational outcomes by enhancing both job satisfaction and work values. These outcomes highlight the relevance of leadership style as a pivotal factor in hospitality management, where service quality and employee engagement are closely interconnected.

4.2. Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Work Value

The analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership and employees' perceptions of work value, particularly within the domains of workplace conditions and technological respect. Leaders who exhibit transformational qualities such as articulating a compelling vision, fostering intellectual stimulation, and offering individualized consideration serve as catalysts for enhancing employees' appreciation of their roles and responsibilities. This is in line with Avolio and Bass (1995), who emphasized the role of transformational leadership in fostering deeper organizational commitment and internalized work values. Moreover, contemporary studies (Ng, 2017; Wang et al., 2011) reinforce the idea that transformational leadership enhances psychological empowerment, leading employees to assign greater meaning and purpose to their work.

4.3. Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction

The findings also indicate a robust association between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction, with pronounced effects observed in the intrinsic satisfaction dimension. Transformational leaders, by recognizing individual contributions and nurturing personal development, facilitate a work environment that promotes autonomy, mastery, and purpose—all critical components of job satisfaction (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Previous meta-analyses, such as those by Judge and Piccolo (2004), support the conclusion that transformational leaders posi-

tively influence satisfaction by creating meaningful work experiences. Additionally, the results align with more recent findings (Tse and Chiu, 2014; Breevaart and Bakker, 2014) demonstrating that leader-member exchange quality and motivational climate mediate this relationship.

4.4. Impact of Demographic Factors

The study further investigated whether demographic factors such as gender, education, generation, and income level moderated the relationship between transformational leadership, work value, and job satisfaction. While gender did not yield significant differences, education level and income emerged as influential variables. Employees with higher educational attainment were more receptive to transformational leadership behaviors, suggesting that cognitive readiness and openness to developmental leadership styles may be more pronounced among highly educated individuals (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hetland et al., 2011). These findings emphasize the importance of tailoring leadership development efforts to the demographic characteristics of the workforce.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this study offer actionable insights for managers in the hospitality industry. By adopting a transformational leadership style marked by vision, encouragement, and support, managers can significantly enhance employees' job satisfaction and perception of work value. These findings suggest that leadership development programs should prioritize the cultivation of transformational behaviors to foster a motivated, engaged, and high-performing workforce.

Future research should extend this line of inquiry by examining transformational leadership in different service-oriented industries, as well as exploring its longitudinal effects on employee well-being, organizational commitment, and retention. Moreover, given the cultural context of leadership perception, cross-cultural studies are recommended to determine how cultural dimensions such as power distance, collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance influence the effectiveness of transformational leadership (Hofstede, 2001; Rockstuhl et al., 2012). A multi-level approach integrating organizational culture, employee personality traits, and leadership style may yield a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play.

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Cashless Tourism: Exploring Tourists' Intentions to Use Cryptocurrency in Food and Beverage Businesses¹

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Abstract

Due to the significant advantages of cryptocurrencies such as low transaction fees, fast money transfer and secure payment, their popularity has increased and they have started to be used in various sectors. However, there has not been enough research on the subject in food and beverage establishments, which is an important type of touristic service business. This study aims to investigate the intention to use cryptocurrencies as a new payment method in food and beverage businesses. Data were collected from 402 cryptocurrency users residing in Türkiye. The findings of this study, using both the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), reveal that facilitating conditions, social influence, performance expectancy, and attitude significantly impact

the intention to use cryptocurrencies. However, risk have no significant effect on attitude, and effort expectancy have no significant effect on intention to use cryptocurrency. Consumers demonstrate a willingness to use cryptocurrencies for payments in food and beverage establishments. In this context, it is thought that the use of cryptocurrencies in food and beverage businesses will provide significant advantages and opportunities to the business.

Keywords: Cryptocurrency, Food and Beverage Business, Intention, Extended Technology Acceptance Model.

JEL Codes: M30, D12

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1. Introduction

Recent technological advancements have also triggered transformations in financial systems and payment methods. Rising inequality, socioeconomic concerns, and environmental degradation anxieties are driving people towards adopting new technologies (Mora, et al., 2021). The inability of classical payment systems to fully meet people's needs and desires (Redshaw, 2017), coupled with the problems and high transaction fees encountered in the traditional economic system, have steered individuals towards other currencies that are cheaper and easier to transact with. People are increasingly drawn to a less risky, non-intermediated monetary system. This, in turn, has fueled the development of cryptocurrency systems (Hossain, 2021). Cryptocurrencies are seen as an excellent currency for making payments due to being fast and reliable (Antonopoulos, 2010), considered as a fast, inexpensive, and highly reliable payment method. They provide the service of payment and fund transfers 24/7 from any place in the world. The irreversibility of payments can also avoid fraud cases based on chargebacks, allowing businesses to securely accept cryptocurrency payments (Yahanpath & Wilton, 2014). Among the businesses accepting cryptocurrency payments are Microsoft, Paypal, Overstock, Whole Foods, Starbucks, Newegg, Rakuten, AT&T, PizzaHut, and Traval, which are significant and large companies (Tiwari, 2022; Binance, 2022).

The food and beverage industry is inherently dynamic, requiring businesses to embrace emerging technologies and stay attuned to evolving trends to sustain a competitive edge. As a result, innovative practices have become increasingly common within the sector. Despite this, a review of the current literature indicates that studies exploring the use of cryptocurrency in food and beverage operations remain limited. This research seeks to bridge this gap and offer a beneficial contribution to the existing body of academic knowledge. In Türkiye, some food and beverage establishments briefly experimented with accepting cryptocurrency payments, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this practice was halted following the enactment of a regulatory decision, as outlined in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye dated 16 April 2021, which restricted the use of cryptocurrency as a payment (resmigazete.gov.tr). According to data from Binance (2023), a major global cryptocurrency exchange, approximately 40% of the Turkish population is interested in cryptocurrencies. This is estimated to be approximately 20 million users. Despite the considerable size of the user base, the attitudes of tourists towards cryptocurrency payments remain unclear, and the studies in the literature on the subject are quite limited. This study seeks to explore the potential impact of cryptocurrency payment accep-

tance on tourist preferences in food and beverage establishments in Türkiye. In accordance with this objective, it is anticipated that the findings will make a significant contribution to the extant literature and offer valuable insights for both prospective cryptocurrency users and operators.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Cryptocurrency

Cryptocurrencies and crypto assets constitute a set of recent financial innovations. The emergence of cryptocurrencies as a medium of exchange has coincided with the rise of Industry 4.0, and it is suggested that crypto assets have increasingly been integrated into individuals' portfolios as a component of personal wealth (Muneeza et al., 2022). Cryptographic codes are utilised to facilitate transactions between individuals or institutions connected to P2P networks. These codes are regarded as the digital currency of the modern era (Chakravaram et al., 2021). Cryptocurrencies are used in electronic payment systems that do not require the intervention of a state approval or an intermediary like banks. Users of the system verify payments using protocols. Cryptocurrencies have brought about significant changes in the way people make payments. They have begun to replace payment mechanisms such as traditional money system (Trivedi & Malik, 2021). Cryptocurrencies are innovative FinTech technologies that enable financial transactions, facilitate money transfers, and reshape the world wide economic system (Albayati et al., 2021; Dabbous, et al., 2022). Since the development of the first cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, in 2009, various cryptocurrencies with different characteristics and serving different purposes have emerged (Joo, et al., 2020). Cryptocurrency payments can be used not only for commercial transactions but also for remittances and micropayments (Joo et al., 2020). When the reasons for the adoption of cryptocurrencies, which have gained popularity especially in recent years (Dziembowski et al., 2019), are examined, it is seen that they largely provide practicality and convenience, fast transaction time and simplicity of the payment process (Titov et al., 2021).

2.2. Perceived Benefit

Consumers' perceived benefit (PB) refers to the sense of achievement they feel when utilizing a service, and it is recognized as a key motivating factor influencing their decision to use such services (Yang & Lee, 2010). PB encompasses a functional but cognitive evaluation (Babin et al., 1994). PB is a dimension of benefit derived from functions executed by products or services (Voss et al., 2003). Benefit perception defined to the extent to which an user

expects that using the system will make task completion easier, faster, and quality, productive, and efficient way (Saadé & Bahli, 2005; López-Nicolás et al., 2008). In traditional electronic money storage and transfer transactions, there is a trusted intermediary third party. Intermediary costs increase transaction costs, thus limiting the smallest possible transaction amount (Nakamoto, 2008). Although credit cards have greatly increased transaction ease, their usage brings significant costs to businesses. Depending on the specific terms of the agreement, businesses are obligated to pay various fees, including but not limited to authorization, transaction, declaration, exchange, and customer service fees. It is evident that such fees exert a significant influence on the overall cost of conducting business (Brito & Castillo, 2013, p. 3). Additionally, the amount of money to be transferred through traditional banks may, in some cases, require specific security approvals, thus affecting the duration of the money transfer. On the other hand, the transfer of cryptocurrencies between wallets happens quite rapidly, providing significant advantages compared to the traditional banking system (Alzahrani & Daim, 2019). Almost instant transfer of financial resources to anywhere in the world is made possible (Wątopek et al., 2021). The ability to make cryptocurrency payments quickly over the internet and their low transaction costs make them particularly suitable for micro-payments, making cryptocurrencies more attractive for use in shopping (Grinberg, 2012; Blau, 2017). Another reason why cryptocurrencies are so appealing is that, in contrast to conventional currencies, stocks, and other assets that only trade on weekdays and unofficial holidays, cryptocurrencies allow for 24/7 trading (Yahanpath & Wilton, 2014; Yaya et al., 2019). Cryptocurrencies enable users to transfer money to anyone in the world and have more control over their money. Due to the higher speed and lower transaction costs compared to traditional financial systems, it can be said that users understand the benefits of cryptocurrencies and positively impact their intent to use them (Pandya et al., 2019). Hence, the subsequent hypothesis is developed.

H1: PB has a positive impact on IUC payment.

2.3. Perceived Ease of Use

With the advancement of technology, digital payments and applications are developing globally (Ong et al., 2023). As society gradually shifts toward becoming cashless, it is expected that future spending will increasingly occur through mobile payment methods. In fact, digital transactions have already begun to replace cash in certain markets (Patil et al., 2020). It can thus be concluded that the availability of organisational and infrastructural support, necessary in order to utilise a technology, is of critical importance (Ong et al., 2023). In the last decade, it

has been widely acknowledged that perceived ease of use (PEU) is a pivotal element in determining individuals' acceptance and utilisation of information technologies (Yoon & Kim, 2007). PEU defines the level of difficulty that a user perceives from the technology being used (Appavoo, 2019). The globalization and digital transformation of the travel and tourism industry have driven a growing demand for seamless and cost-effective international transaction and payment solutions. As a result, tourists are increasingly turning to cryptocurrencies, which facilitate cross-border transactions and help eliminate currency-related expenses (Treiblmaier et al., 2021). Cryptocurrencies, as a novel form of exchange enabled by the internet and lacking any physical form, have the potential to transform online payment systems within the evolving societal framework of future economic systems (Shahzad et al., 2018). Cryptocurrencies, in contrast to traditional cash, enable users to maintain sizable balances in their digital wallets, providing the flexibility to carry out financial transactions whenever they choose. This ability to store and manage considerable monetary value increases the practicality and attractiveness of cryptocurrencies for routine financial operations (Kahn & Rivadeneyra, 2020). Furthermore, the use of cryptocurrencies offers users conveniences such as free participation, rapid transfers, a user friendly interface, and integration to traditional currencies, which also impacts users' attitudes towards cryptocurrencies (Nuryyev et al., 2021). In this context, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: PEU has a positive impact on IUC payment

2.4. Risk

Risk is defined as the user's perception of possible adverse consequences associated with technology use. Users may hesitate to adopt a new system due to concerns about the compromise of their personal information (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Computer system security is crucial for cryptocurrencies. This is because cryptocurrencies have digital equivalence to physical cash, and once spent, lost, stolen, or incorrectly transacted, cryptocurrencies cannot be reversed due to their inherent properties, rendering them irretrievable. Therefore, security becomes a significant factor for cryptocurrencies (Folkinshteyn & Lennon, 2016). Due to cryptocurrencies being relatively new and in the developmental stage, existing legal principles are inadequate, and the system is subject only to very limited financial regulations (Enoksen et al., 2020). Additionally, it is believed that cryptocurrencies may face serious legal regulations due to significant risks and being perceived as a threat by some states (Hossain, 2021). Risk and security factors are seen as important determinants directly and indirectly influencing intention (Khalilzadeh et al., 2017). It is believed that the lower the customers'

perception of risk, the higher their attitude toward using the technology (Alzahrani & Daim, 2019; Ong et al., 2023). Thus, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H3: Risk has a positive impact on IUC payment

2.5. Trust

Trust, a psychological state (Lusher et al., 2012), is defined as the desire to trust something or someone assumed to be reliable. The term can be identified as the measure of confidence in the system's capacity to execute all designated operations in accordance with the specified parameters (Gupta et al., 2021). In this sense, trust refers to the degree of confidence and sense of security that consumers experience when interacting with technology (Albayati et al., 2020). In the contemporary era, financial systems accord paramount importance to the security of their systems, regarding it as a critical element of their operations. To this end, they employ the most advanced technologies to ensure the protection of their systems. A single breach has the potential to result in significant financial losses and the erosion of consumer trust. The imposition of increasingly stringent regulations and legal frameworks within the financial sector has prompted apprehensions about the privacy and safety of individuals. In light of these developments, cryptocurrencies have emerged as a more viable alternative (Alzahrani & Daim, 2019). Trust is imperative in the realm of cryptocurrencies. Notwithstanding the absence of intermediaries whose reliability can be relied upon, it is incumbent upon users to place their trust in the payment system in its entirety (Treiblmaier et al., 2021). Cryptocurrencies have the chance to engender a substantial degree of trust. The decentralised blockchain technology ensures secure and publicly visible transactions, thereby increasing trust between businesses and customers. Tourism industry's engagement with blockchain technology has been shown to have significant advantages, including the elimination of the need for intermediaries, which serves to minimise the risk of fraud and data manipulation. This makes blockchain a potentially attractive solution for a variety of applications in the tourism industry (Onder, 2023). Trust is a pivotal component in facilitating customer behaviour in the framework of blockchain technology. The adoption of this technology hinges on the presence of trust, which is deemed a fundamental element in sustaining customer relationships (Albayati et al., 2020). It has been demonstrated that consumers who exhibit a high level of trust are more likely to adopt new technology. This increased adoption can, in turn, increase customer expectations and motivate them to utilise applications based on blockchain technology (Li et al., 2023). It has been demonstrated that a positive experience has the capacity to increase

users' perceived trust, thereby exerting a favourable influence on their attitude towards cryptocurrencies (Treiblmaier et al., 2021). Based on this information, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Trust has a positive impact on IUC payment.

2.6. Facilitating Conditions

Facilitating conditions (FC) are defined as the degree to which individuals perceive that they have the essential resources and support required to successfully utilize a particular technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The availability and configuration of these conditions are instrumental in influencing individuals' behavioral intentions to embrace new technologies across a range of contexts, including social media, mobile learning, online banking, and information and communication systems (Almajali et al., 2022). When users perceive that adopting a new technology entails significant time, effort, or feasibility risks, they may be discouraged from using it (Lee et al., 2019). In the context of cryptocurrency, FC encompass the essential resources and fundamental skills required to perform a transaction (Jegerson et al., 2023), and are considered the most reliable indicators of users' intentions to adopt this payment method. Ensuring users have access to guiding procedures is thought to support the broader acceptance of cryptocurrency (Jegerson et al., 2023). Moreover, customer willingness to embrace cashless payments is likely to increase when they are offered adequate support and information, access to diverse financial services, and when processes are efficiently organized to incorporate all relevant facilitating elements (Ong et al., 2023). Research has consistently shown that the existence of FC contributes significantly to individuals' intention to use cryptocurrency for payments (Lee et al., 2019; Ji-Xi et al., 2021; Almajali et al., 2022; Jegerson et al., 2023). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: FC has a positive impact on IUC payment.

2.7. Social Influence

People tend to regulate their beliefs according to the group they belong to, and individuals are often influenced by the majority. When a significant portion of a person's reference social group holds a certain attitude, it is believed that the individual will also adopt that attitude (Nistor, 2013). Social impact can be defined as the degree to which a user believes that the people they value should use technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Ong et al., 2023). The influence of the social environment can explain the impact of SI on shaping a person's behavior (Widyanto et al., 2021). It is believed that social factors increasingly influence people's lives and behaviors (Albayati et al., 2020). Especially with the emergence

of social media and increased connectivity and interaction among people, behaviors can be altered. This influence is particularly noticeable in environments where peer interaction is prevalent (Dickinger et al., 2008). The utilisation of digital payment technology by acquaintances or family members, or its endorsement by a person's significant other, is hypothesised to engender a strong inclination among the users to employ said technology (Ong et al., 2023). Given the social and psychological nature of money, it is anticipated that the introduction of cryptocurrency will elicit a mixture of positive and negative emotions among the general public. These emotions can influence individuals' adoption behaviours, particularly through the influence of family members and friends (Yeong et al., 2022). In nations where the utilisation of cryptocurrency for financial transactions is in its nascent stage, the advantages inherent in such transactions are distributed amongst the populace, thereby exerting a substantial influence on consumers' propensity to employ cryptocurrency, via the societal impact of end-users (Radic et al., 2022). In this context, social impact reduces perceived risk (Koenig-Lewis et al., 2015) while significantly affecting behavioral intention (Al-Saedi et al., 2020). In fact, SI is seen as the very important factor in convincing people to use cryptocurrency (Tamphakdiphanit & Laokulrach, 2020). Based on this information, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H6: SI has a positive impact on IUC payment.

2.8. Performance Expectancy

Performance expectancy (PE) refers to the gains and benefits that can be obtained from the system performance as a result of using a different system. The focus of PE is on the successful completion of the task at hand, and it can be defined as the level to which a user believes that using technology will help them achieve their goals (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The degree to which a user anticipates profitability from using a certain technology is characterized as performance expectation. When a particular system gives a person the perception that adoption of the technology will naturally boost their performance, the adoption of it becomes an inevitable situation (Gupta et al., 2021). From a global and cross-border access perspective, managers consider the speed and simplicity of cryptocurrencies as significant arguments for their adoption. While some business operators consider SEPA a failure, others think Western Union is good but criticize its high costs. It is said that cryptocurrencies are the ideal currency in the financial field because there is no intervention from any government or company (Baur et al., 2015). The elimination of the problem of carrying cash, the ability to make payments with a single click, the abi-

lity to make small expenditures, and the opportunity to make payments anywhere 24/7 are among the advantages that can be gained with cryptocurrencies (Sobti, 2019). In fact, using cryptocurrencies as payment methods could make it more possible for users to achieve their fundamental goals and improvements in living standards could be observed (Li et al., 2023). In light of this information, especially when examining the literature related to cryptocurrencies and blockchain, it is seen that PE has a significant effect in directing a person to use cryptocurrency (Yeong et al., 2022). PE is observed to be a significant positive determinant of the intention to use and the resolution of complaints (Patil et al., 2020). Therefore, the hypothesis is established as follows;

H7: PE has a positive impact on IUC payment.

2.9. Effort Expectancy

Although it is known that technological advancements will progress rapidly, it is uncertain whether individual users will adopt and use new technological products at the same pace (Karahanna & Straub, 1999). This term refers to the degree to which customers feel that a technology is comfortable and easy to adopt (Qasim & Abu-Shanab, 2016). In other words, it can be called the effort that an individual will need or show to learn a technological development, determined by the complexity of any method or procedure (Gupta et al., 2021). It has been demonstrated that individuals who anticipate a straightforward and effortless utilisation of a system are predisposed to a greater inclination towards technology (Ong et al., 2023).

The utilisation of cryptocurrencies as a medium of transactional necessitates that customers possess a certain degree of knowledge and proficiency. Moreover, the use of these channels demands that customers execute the task autonomously and without external assistance (Ji-Xi et al., 2021). The present study hypothesises that EE exerts a significant impact on the IUC (Ghaisani et al., 2022). It is observed that cryptocurrency users intend to use cryptocurrencies for travel expenses because they can easily make transactions using their mobile phones. Tourists who use cryptocurrency payments through mobile phones can even establish decentralized connections with the world's poorest communities they visit at various tourist destinations (Radic et al., 2022). Studies show that communities prone to using emerging technologies and people who can easily adapt to new technology do not enter into effort expectancy due to the rapid adaptation process and consider this factor insignificant (Jung et al., 2018; Radic et al., 2022; Yeong et al., 2022). Therefore, the following hypothesis has been established:

H8: EE has a positive impact on IUC payment.

2.10. Attitude

Attitude, as defined by Ajzen (1991), is the degree to which a person has a positive or negative evaluation of the said behavior, and is seen as the user's general disposition towards using technology. For example, a user may exhibit a positive attitude towards using a new social media platform because they believe it will help them stay connected with friends and family (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Attitude shows the information, feelings, and intended action towards the given stimulus (Khan, 2006). The attitude towards technology use can be expressed as the extent to which an individual experiences positive emotions such as interest and pleasure in using a technology (Adov et al., 2017). Attitude, a significant output of the TAM, shows the extent to which consumers react positively or negatively to a technology used (Quan et al., 2023a). That is, behavioral intention can be evaluated by attitude (Radic et al., 2022). Moreover, attitude is seen as a crucial element in predicting individual technology adoption (Patil et al., 2020). In this context, it can be said that the availability of a payment system also increases the actual use of such a system (Patil et al., 2020). When considering the use of cryptocurrencies, it is thought that especially the legal regulations made by governments regarding cryptocurrencies will positively affect people's attitudes towards cryptocurrencies and positive

changes may occur in individuals' intentions to utilize cryptocurrencies (Mashatan et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). In light of this information, the following hypothesis has been established:

H9: Attitude has a positive impact on IUC payment.

2.11. Intention to Use Cryptocurrency

Intentions are presumed to capture the motivational bases of behavior; they are predictors of the effort individuals are likely to exert and the degree of effort they intend to put forth in executing a behavior. In general, the more one intends to perform a behavior, the better the performance is likely to be (Ajzen, 1991).

Studies show that intention is a key determinant of the adoption and use of a technology. Although different factors are used in the studies, factors such as A, FC, R, SI, S, EE and PE are frequently used to measure intention and are seen as important determinants in measuring intention (Sobti, 2019; Daryaei et al., 2020; Manrai & Gupta, 2020; Ji-Xi et al., 2021; Manrai et al., 2021; Nuryyev et al., 2021; Wei et al., 2021; Mensah & Mwakapesa, 2022; Radic et al., 2022; Schaupp et al., 2022; Cankül et al., 2023; Quan et al., 2023a). Figure 1 shows the conceptual model established in line with the literature.

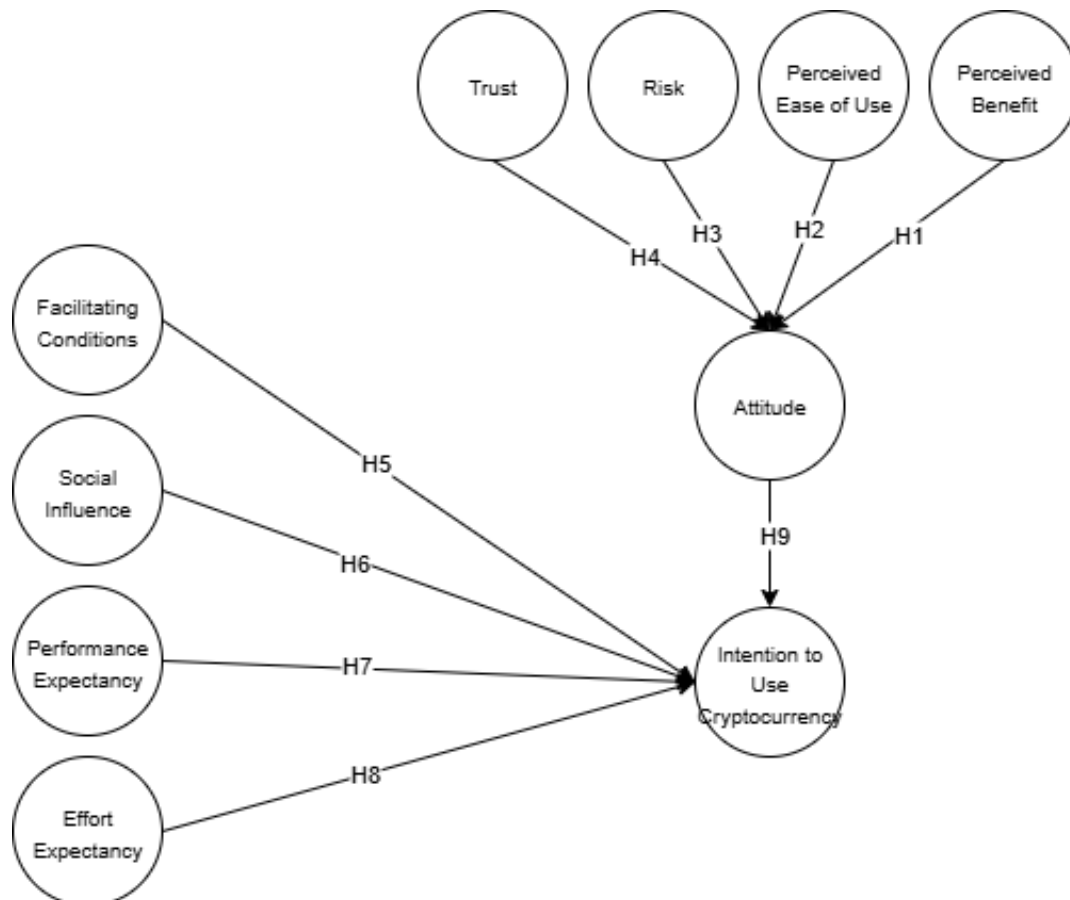


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

3. Methodology

The objective of this study is to explore the factors that influence tourists' attitudes and intentions regarding the utilisation of cryptocurrency in food and beverage establishments. The factors under consideration include PB, PEU, R, and T, as well as FC, SI, PE, EE and A variables. The data for the study were collected through an online survey using a quantitative approach. The model and questionnaire have heretofore been utilised by various researchers (Khalilzadeh et al., 2017; Patil et al., 2020; Ponsree & Naruetharadhol, 2025; Zaidi et al., 2025), and was adapted to the tourism context by Radic et al. (2022), were translated into Turkish and implemented accordingly. The study obtained Ethical Approval from the "Scientific Ethics and Evaluation Committee of Eskişehir Osmangazi University", with the letter numbered 2023-10 and dated 14.06.2023. The first section of the questionnaire focused on gathering demographic information from the participants, whereas the subsequent section comprised a 31-item scale aimed at assessing the study variables across ten different dimensions. All questions were measured on a scale from '1: Strongly Disagree' to '5: Strongly Agree'. The research data was collected from Turkish cryptocurrency users between July 2023 and December 2023. More specifically, the data were collected on a voluntary basis by reaching the online communities established by cryptocurrency users on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Telegram. In this context, two control questions were asked to the survey participants. The first question was about whether they had paid with cryptocurrency before, and the second question was about whether they would like to pay with cryptocurrency in food and beverage businesses in their future holiday plans if it is legal. The analysis included the 402 participants who responded affirmatively to both questions.

3.1. Data Analysis

The study's data analysis was conducted using the responses of 402 participants who completed the survey, with SPSS 25 and SmartPLS software employed for the analytical procedures. Initially, skewness and kurtosis values were examined to assess the normality of the data distribution, with the results

falling within the acceptable range of -1.5 to +1.5. The consistency of the measurement instrument was verified by calculating Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a value of 0.798, indicating good reliability. Subsequent reliability and validity analyses verified that the data met the requirements for the applied statistical procedures. In the next phase, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to evaluate the consistency and dimensional structure of the measurement variables, including R, S, PB, PEU, FC, SI, PE, EE, A and IUC. In the final stage, structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to assess the overall model fit and test the proposed hypotheses.

4. Findings and Interpretations

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

Based on the findings of the research, an analysis of the participants' demographic characteristics reveals the following insights. It is observed that 15.2% of the participants are female (n=61), while 84.8% are male (n=341). Regarding the age distribution the participants, 50.7% within the 18-25 age range (n=204), 27.4% are aged between 26-35 (n=110). In terms of education, the majority of participants, constituting 56.7%, have a bachelor's degree (n=228), followed by 17.4% with a postgraduate degree (n=70). When examining the income status of the participants, it is found that 22.1% earn 8506 TL or less monthly (n=89) and 39% earn above 20501 TL. Regarding the duration of owning cryptocurrency, 26.1% have owned it for less than 1 year (n=105), 12.9% have owned it for 1-2 years (n=52), 30.3% have owned it for 2-3 years (n=122), 14.4% have owned it for 3-4 years (n=58), 4.2% have owned it for 4-5 years (n=17), and 11.9% have owned it for more than 5 years (n=48).

4.2. Factor Analysis

To identify the factor structures within the scope of the research, the collected data were analyzed using both EFA. Prior to conducting the EFA, the KMO measure and Bartlett's test results were examined (KMO: 0.767 / Bartlett's: 0.00 and p<0.01). It was observed that both values were suitable for exploratory factor analysis.

Table 1. Findings from Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factors	Factor Loadings	Explained Variance	Eigen Value	C.R.	A.V.E.
Risk		8,409	2,607	0,94	0,86
R1	0,913				
R2	0,940				
R3	0,931				
Trust		6,834	2,119	0,88	0,72
T1	0,821				
T2	0,870				

T3	0,848				
Perceived Benefit		10,132	3,141	0,95	0,88
Pb1	0,921				
Pb2	0,918				
Pb3	0,933				
Perceived Ease of Use		7,225	2,240	0,92	0,80
Peu1	0,885				
Peu2	0,855				
Peu3	0,876				
Attitude		5,206	1,614	0,87	0,69
A1	0,819				
A2	0,813				
A3	0,807				
Performance Expectancy		4,749	1,472	0,84	0,65
Pe1	0,800				
Pe2.	0,806				
Pe3	0,773				
Effort Expectancy		7,987	2,476	0,94	0,84
Ee1	0,889				
Ee2	0,918				
Ee3	0,924				
Social Influence		5,656	1,753	0,88	0,71
Si1	0,827				
Si2	0,846				
Si3	0,819				
Facilitating Conditions		16,488	5,111	0,93	0,78
Fc1	0,892				
Fc2	0,895				
Fc3.	0,886				
Fc4	0,840				
Intention of Use Cryptocurrency		4,993	1,548	0,86	0,67
Iuc1	0,800				
Iuc2	0,806				
Iuc3	0,791				
Total Explained Variance		77.680			

As presented in Table 1, the findings of the exploratory factor analysis revealed a ten-factor structure accounting for 77.680% of the total variance. This structure was subsequently labeled in accordance with the research objectives and relevant literature, comprising the following dimensions: R, FC, S, PB, EE, PEU, A, PE, SI and IUC. To validate this factor structure, CFA was conducted. The CFA results were then assessed using the most widely accepted mo-

del fit indices reported in the literature.

The reliability analysis of the scales was conducted by means of composite reliability (CR) calculation. As demonstrated in Table 1, the CR values ranged from 0.84 to 0.95. These findings indicated an acceptable measurement reliability for the model under investigation. Moreover, all AVE values exceed 0.50, demonstrating a strong level of convergent validity.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity (Latent Variable Correlation And Square Root Of AVE)

	A	EE	FC	IU	PB	PE	PEU	R	SI	T
A	0,835									
EE	0,208	0,921								
FC	0,101	0,090	0,888							
IU	0,235	0,144	0,220	0,824						
PB	0,174	0,208	0,010	0,131	0,941					
PE	0,221	0,103	0,080	0,236	0,134	0,807				
PEU	0,166	0,186	0,212	0,199	0,205	0,224	0,894			
R	-0,064	-0,088	0,006	-0,050	-0,072	-0,077	-0,052	0,928		
SI	0,191	0,066	0,098	0,195	0,047	0,201	0,087	-0,090	0,843	
T	0,139	0,103	0,088	0,077	0,155	0,067	0,002	-0,105	0,033	0,851

Discriminant validity is deemed established as the square roots of the AVE values exceed the correlations between constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

4.3. SEM and Hypotheses Testing

Figure 2 displays the results obtained through SEM,

which was utilized to ensure the validity of the proposed model and to empirically test the hypotheses set forth in the study. The analysis outcomes indicate that the research model demonstrates a good level of validity. Finally, the structural reliability of the model and the explained variance values were examined using SmartPLS, alongside the evaluation of the hypothesized relationships..

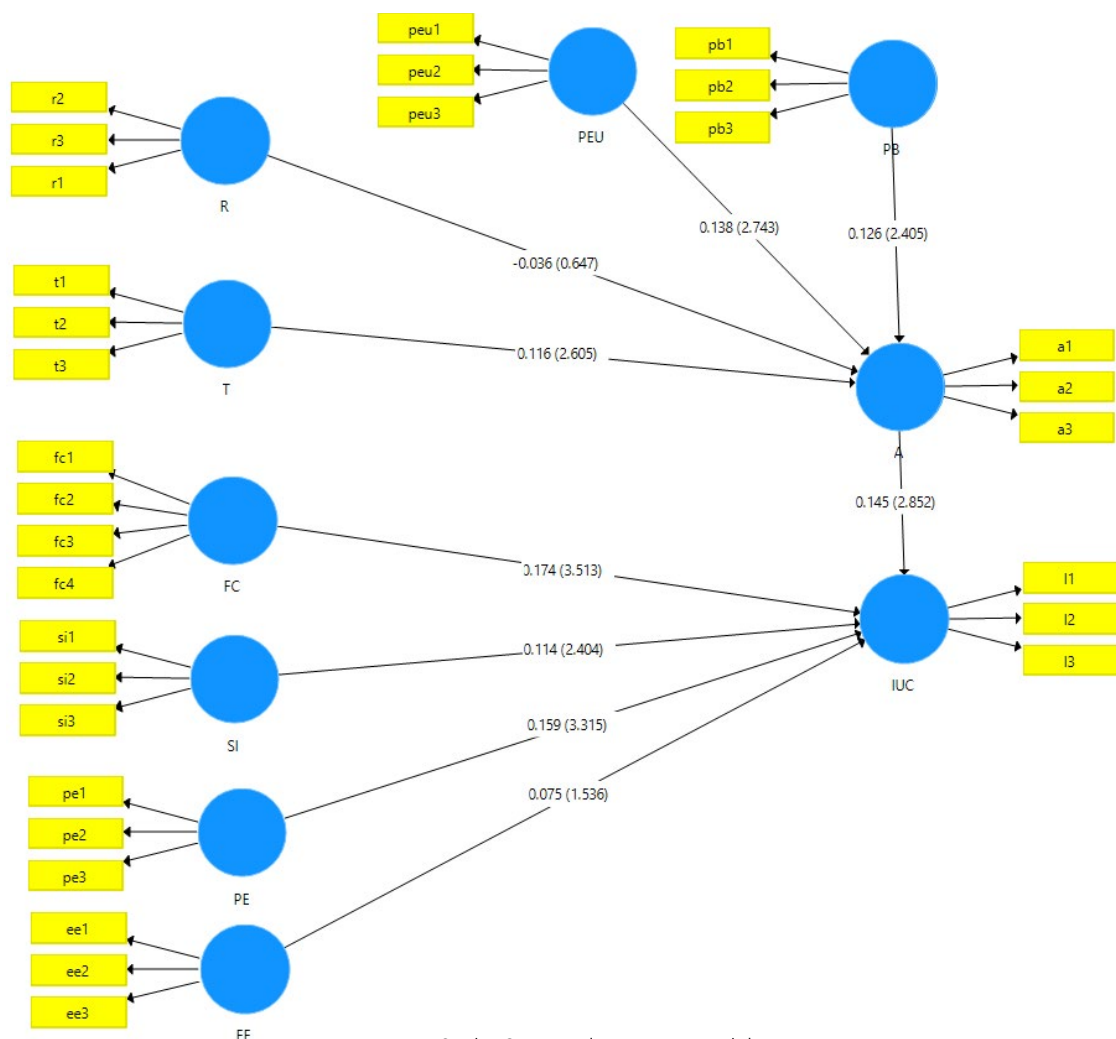


Figure 2. The Structural Equation Model

As shown in Figure 2, based on the SEM analysis conducted, the examination of the constructs used in the study reveals a statistically significant relationship between $PB \rightarrow A$ ($\beta = 0,126$, $t = 2,405$, $p < 0,05$), thus supporting H1. As tourists' PB of using cryptocurrency increase, their attitudes toward using cryptocurrency are positively influenced. Subsequently, the relationships between $PEU \rightarrow A$ and $T \rightarrow A$ were examined ($\beta = 0,138$, $t = 2,743$, $p < 0,05$; $\beta = 0,116$, $t = 2,605$, $p < 0,05$), and both hypotheses H2 and H4 were supported. These findings show that when tourists trust cryptocurrencies and find them easy to use, their attitudes towards paying with cryptocurrency in food and beverage businesses are positively affected. However, when the risk perceived by users regarding cryptocurrencies increases, it is seen that their attitudes towards cryptocurrency payments are negatively affected ($\beta = -0,036$, $t = 0,647$, $p > 0,10$) and H3 were not significant. Furthermore, the relationships $FC \rightarrow IUC$ ($\beta = 0,174$, $t = 3,513$, $p < 0,001$) H5 is supported. Tourists are willing to use this payment method if food and beverage establishments have enough facilitating conditions for paying with cryptocurrency. $SI \rightarrow IUC$ founded to be significant ($\beta = 0,114$, $t = 2,404$, $p < 0,05$) supporting H6. When tourists perceive that their social environment holds a positive view toward making payments with cryptocurrency in food and beverage establishments, their intention to use this payment method is positively influenced. The relationship $PE \rightarrow IUC$ ($\beta = 0,159$, $t = 3,315$, $p < 0,001$) supporting H7. When tourists recognize the performance advantages associated with making payments via cryptocurrency, their intention to use this payment method is positively influenced. The relationship $EE \rightarrow IUC$ ($\beta = 0,075$, $t = 1,536$, $p > 0,10$) and H8 not supported. Finally, the relationship $A \rightarrow IUC$ ($\beta = 0,145$, $t = 2,852$, $p < 0,05$) was found to be statistically significant indicating that H8 is supported. When tourists exhibit a positive attitude toward making payments with cryptocurrency in food and beverage establishments, their intention to use this payment method increases accordingly.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

Technology has become an indispensable part of daily life. Different types of technologies are developing in many fields, and in parallel with this, people's daily lives and routines are becoming easier. Blockchain technology, one of these technological innovations, and cryptocurrencies that have developed in parallel are used for different purposes today. With the payment possibility, which is one of these purposes, users can benefit from many advantages offered by cryptocurrencies by making payments with cryptocurrencies in different sectors. According to Sridharan et al. (2023), companies operating almost all over the world, such as Microsoft, Starbucks, Amazon, and Twitch, accept payments with cryptocurren-

cies and pay their employees with cryptocurrencies in some countries, especially in the USA. As cryptocurrencies become more popular and their use increases, it becomes quite important to learn about individuals' behavior of using cryptocurrencies and spending with cryptocurrencies.

According to the results obtained from the research, it is observed that the findings support the statistically significant and positive influence of PB and PEU on cryptocurrency usage attitude. Upon examining the results, similar findings to other studies in the literature are obtained (Namahoot & Rattanawibonsom, 2022; Radic et al., 2022; Quan et al., 2023a; Quan et al., 2023b).

When examining the influence of the risk factor on the cryptocurrency usage attitude, it is observed that there is no statistically significant effect. Although this result may seem surprising, similar results have been obtained in studies on cryptocurrency use (Radic et al., 2022; Quan et al., 2023a; Quan et al., 2023b). In other words, there is no relationship between the potential risks of the system and the cryptocurrency attitude. It is evident that cryptocurrency users are more receptive to the integration of innovative payment systems within the tourism sector. They do not perceive potential uncertainties as a hindrance to this integration. This scenario presents significant opportunities, particularly for tourist groups with a keen interest in new technologies.

Regarding the influence of the trust factor on the cryptocurrency usage attitude, parallelism is observed with the findings obtained from the research, indicating that trust affects the cryptocurrency usage attitude (Radic et al., 2022; Quan et al., 2023a; Quan et al., 2023b).

When the relationship between FC, PE, and the IUC is examined, the results indicate that parallelism with previous studies. FC and PE have a statistically significant and positive effect on the IUC (Novendra & Gunawan, 2017; Ji-Xi et al., 2021; Ebizie et al., 2022; Farhana & Muthaiyah, 2022; Radic et al., 2022; Mishra et al., 2023). However, unlike in this study, EE are found to have a not significant effect on the IUC.

Although certain studies report no statistically significant relationship between SI and the IUC (Ji-Xi et al., 2021; Ebizie et al., 2022), the results from our research indicate that SI affects the IUC. These results also show parallelism with some studies (Nuryyev et al., 2020; Farhana & Muthaiyah, 2022; Mishra et al., 2023). This indicates that especially the perspective of individuals in one's social environment and the motivating effect of recommendations from individuals known as cryptocurrency phenomena play a role in people's intention to own cryptocurrencies. Consequently, businesses that accept cryptocurrency payments should emphasise these features in their digital channels, particularly for digital natives and the young tourist segment.

Drawing on the findings relationship between individuals' attitudes and their IUC are in line with the results of prior research in the existing literature (Mazambani & Mutambara, 2020; Namahoot & Rattanawiboonsom, 2022; Radic et al., 2022; Quan et al., 2023a; Quan et al., 2023b).

The study makes significant contributions to the fields of digital transformation and consumer behavior in tourism, examining tourists' attitudes towards cryptocurrency as a payment method in food and beverage establishments. This is particularly pertinent when considering the requirements of travelers for secure and efficient payment methods across various countries. The positive attitudes exhibited towards cryptocurrency utilisation are indicative of the potential inherent within this sector.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study offer several important theoretical implications for technology acceptance and adoption research, particularly within the domain of financial innovations such as cryptocurrency. By integrating constructs from the TAM and UTAUT, this study not only validates existing theoretical assumptions but also extends them within the context of decentralized and high-volatility financial technologies.

First, the strong and significant impact of PEOU on attitude supports and reinforces the core proposition of the TAM that usability perceptions are foundational to the formation of positive attitudes toward technology. However, in the context of cryptocurrency a domain characterized by technical complexity and a steep learning curve this finding broadens the traditional TAM by illustrating that ease of use is not merely a functional concern but also a psychological enabler in uncertain environments. This reinforces the notion that simplicity in system design is a critical antecedent for attitudinal development, particularly in disruptive technological ecosystems.

Second, the significant influence of PR on attitude provides empirical validation for extending TAM and UTAUT frameworks by integrating risk-based evaluative dimensions. While classical adoption models often underemphasize risk as a determinant of attitude, this study highlights that in contexts involving financial uncertainty and lack of institutional guarantees, risk perception becomes a central cognitive filter through which all other constructs are interpreted. This supports recent calls in the literature to revise and extend technology acceptance models to include context-specific risk factors especially in fintech environments.

Third, the empirical finding that trust significantly predicts attitude contributes to an evolving theoretical understanding of trust as a pivotal construct in digital adoption. While trust has been introduced

in several extended models of TAM and UTAUT, it often remains peripheral. This study positions trust not as a secondary enabler, but as a central cognitive mechanism in shaping user attitudes especially when institutional credibility is lacking, as in the case of decentralized currencies. Thus, the study suggests the need for trust-centered theoretical frameworks in technology adoption literature, particularly within domains where traditional governance is absent.

Fourth, the observed influence of PB on attitude offers a theoretical contribution by bridging elements from Value-Based Adoption Models and TAM. While PE is a commonly used predictor of behavioral intention, this study's emphasis on perceived benefit suggests a broader utility appraisal that encompasses not only productivity but also perceived economic, social, and psychological advantages. This supports the call for a more multidimensional conceptualization of benefit perception in future theoretical models, particularly in the context of emerging financial technologies.

Moreover, the significance of SI and PE on Behavioral Intention is aligned with UTAUT, but the strength of these relationships in the cryptocurrency context suggests that peer validation and performance-related motivations remain salient even in domains with limited mainstream adoption. This implies that traditional UTAUT components retain their explanatory power but may need to be contextually recalibrated to reflect social diffusion mechanisms and financial expectations in emerging technological paradigms.

Furthermore, the strong impact of FC on Behavioral Intention supports UTAUT's assertion that external resources and infrastructure are critical for adoption. However, the magnitude of this effect in a cryptocurrency context indicates that access to technical resources, support systems, and enabling environments may be even more decisive in novel or non-institutionalized domains. Therefore, future theoretical work should consider an expanded definition of facilitating conditions that includes regulatory clarity, access to information, and digital literacy.

Finally, the relatively lower impact of EE on IUC compared to other constructs suggests that users may not prioritize effort as a major barrier once the perceived benefits, social influence, and infrastructural support are established. This nuances the role of effort expectancy in UTAUT, indicating it may be less theoretically central in high-reward, high-risk contexts like cryptocurrency, where motivation and risk-taking may override usability concerns. In future studies, investigating tourists' intention to use cryptocurrency based on tourist destinations and comparing tourists' intention to use different payment methods by comparing traditional payment methods with cryptocurrency payment methods are expected to significantly expand the literature and make important contributions.

5.2. Practical Implications

This study, applying the extended technology acceptance model, was conducted in Türkiye, a developing country. The findings of the research indicate that the majority of cryptocurrency users are in the 18-35 age range, and almost half of the participants have previously conducted transactions with cryptocurrency. Upon reviewing the results, it is observed that individuals consider using cryptocurrency as a payment method in food and beverage establishments as safe, beneficial in some aspects, easy to use rather than complex, and supported by their social circles, showing their willingness to use cryptocurrency in such establishments. In this context, it is believed that legal regulations by the government to tax and legalize cryptocurrency payments will have a positive impact on tourists' preference for establishments accepting payment via cryptocurrency. Particularly, it is thought that the younger population will be more inclined towards these establishments, and the spendable nature of cryptocurrencies, initially seen as an investment tool, can alter individuals' spending behavior. Utilizing such an innovative, easy-to-use, more convenient, faster, and secure payment method compared to traditional payment methods holds numerous benefits potential for both tourists and business owners, and leveraging this potential is expected to bring significant gains to both parties. Additionally, developing NFT and Metaverse applications in food and beverage establishments is thought to attract a broader customer base. For example, selling a food or beverage item of the establishment through NFTs could lead to offering discounts or various promotions for customers consuming the product in the establishment, thus fostering customer loyalty and providing an opportunity for businesses to gain a competitive advantage.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

This research has certain limitations that could impact the results. One such limitation is the relatively small number of crypto users, which may make it challenging to reach a diverse sample size. Additionally, using an online survey method to reach users through crypto phenomena might introduce biases. It is also significant to consider the perspectives of non-crypto users, as their attitudes towards crypto could provide valuable insights. Moreover, expanding the study to reach a broader audience and conducting similar research in other sectors of the tourism industry, not just limited to food and beverage establishments, could help broaden the scope and limitations of the study.

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Research Article

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Hedonic Benefit Perceptions, Brand Image, and Consumer Happiness in Smartphone Purchases

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Abstract

Today, the purchasing processes of technology products are shaped not only by functional utility but also by emotional and hedonic motivations. In the current age of consumption, many emotional purchasing experiences have shown that consumption is not based on rational decisions alone but is based on pleasure. Particularly in high-involvement products like smartphones, consumers associate happiness not just with technical features but also with experiential values (prestige, entertainment, aesthetics) offered by the product. However, multidisciplinary studies on how brand image mediates this relationship remain limited. The aim of this study was to determine the effect of hedonic value perception on consumer happiness and the mediating role of brand image in the smartphone preferences of consumers. The study was conducted with 396 participants living in Bursa. The convenience samp-

ling method was used within the non-probability sampling design, and data were collected using an online questionnaire. Simple Linear Regression was used in the analysis of the study hypotheses, and to test the hypothesis related to the mediating effect, Process Macro (Model 4), developed by Hayes, was applied. The findings obtained in the study demonstrated that the hedonic benefit perception had a positive effect on consumer happiness. Brand image was also found to have a mediating effect between hedonic benefit and consumer happiness.

Keywords: Marketing Happiness, Emotional Value, Smartphone Marketing, Statement of identity, Symbolic Consumption.

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1. Introduction

Due to the great changes and transformations currently being experienced in the field of technology, smartphones have become an inseparable part of modern life. According to the We Are Social 2023 data, mobile telephones are used by 5.44 billion people worldwide (Kempt, 2023). The need created by the digital world and the wish to experience innovations explain the importance of smartphone marketing. Mobile communication technology offers pleasure to consumers with continuously updating and developing features as a result of developments which could not have been predicted in technology. In the current age of consumption, many emotional purchasing experiences have shown that consumption is not based on rational decisions alone but is based on pleasure. In addition to facilitating communication with different brands and models, smartphones are selected because of other benefits such as colour, quality, price, aesthetics, ease-of-use, and even social life image perceptions (Hubert et al., 2017; Van Cleef et al., 2010). Therefore, some studies have drawn attention to the importance of the perceived benefit to consumers in their mobile telephone preferences (Hubert et al., 2017; Van Cleef et al., 2010).

Consumers seek hedonic benefits with visually pleasing features such as colour, size and brand, and cognitive benefits such as communication benefits, ergonomics, use, usefulness, and quality at a suitable price (Arruda Filho, 2012; Petruzzellis, 2010). In the perception of the benefit of consumer happiness, which is a term recently often used in the field of marketing, the experience of consumption is based on hedonic decisions of elements of pleasure such as colour, shape, brand, appearance, and symbolic value (Anderson et al., 2013; Gaston-Breto et al., 2020; Mingione, 2020). In some consumer studies it has been suggested that consumer happiness, explained as an important criteria of the consumption experience, affects general life happiness (Braxton and Lau-Gesk, 2020; Cuesta-Valiño et al., 2022; Niedermeier et al., 2019; Razmus et al., 2022; Thüridl et al., 2020).

In addition to the benefit perceived of a brand by consumers, all the perceptions and attitudes towards brand experiences constitute brand image (Keller, 2003). Therefore, it has been suggested that brand image is significantly associated with the emotional attitudes of consumers (Hennigs et al., 2013; Park et al., 1986). Moreover, consumers are happy buying brands especially because of the brand image created by mass prestige (Burhanudin, 2024; Kumar et al., 2021; Mansoor and Paul, 2022; Nobre et al., 2023; Schnebelen and Bruhn, 2018). In these studies, the use of mass-known brands was evaluated as having a positive effect on the subjective well-being of consumers. This suggests that hedonic benefit and

brand image factors may be associated with consumer happiness.

In recent years, there has been observed to be increasing interest in happiness, which is a central issue for individuals, in a broad area including the field of marketing. The concept of consumer happiness continues to develop and mature because of the involvement not only of researchers and consumers but also of businesses and practitioners. Having happy customers is important in respect of obtaining customer loyalty. The primary aim of this study was to determine the relationships between consumer happiness, hedonic benefit and brand image in the mobile telephone preferences of consumers.

The mobile telephone brand image and the hedonic benefit perceptions of smartphone users were investigated in this study. The effect on consumer happiness of hedonic benefit and the preferred brand image as a mediating variable was also investigated. Finally, the results of the hypothesis tests were discussed. There are previous studies in the literature that have examined consumer happiness and hedonic benefit and have shown a relationship between these (Gaston-Breto et al., 2020; Kaul, 2007; Kousi et al., 2023; Okada, 2005; Seva et al., 2005). Despite the increasing number of studies focusing on consumer happiness and hedonic value in various product categories, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding how brand image mediates this relationship specifically in the context of smartphone purchasing. Smartphones are not only communication tools but also status symbols that embody both functional and emotional value. In particular, few studies have explored how consumers' perceived brand image can strengthen or reshape the effect of hedonic benefits on their happiness derived from consumption. Moreover, while consumer happiness has been studied in relation to general consumption experiences, limited empirical research has been conducted that directly addresses the smartphone market, which is rapidly evolving and deeply integrated into daily life. This study aims to address this gap by examining the mediating role of brand image between hedonic benefit perceptions and consumer happiness in the context of mobile phone purchasing intentions.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

2.1. The Relationship Between Hedonic Benefit and Consumer Development

Hedonism is a lifestyle focused only on pleasure and enjoyment. Classically defined as pure happiness, what gives the individual pleasure and other negative aspects of life are not important, but to feel pleasure as a part of life, whatever the cost, is sufficient to be happy in life (Brülde, 2007). According to

Freud, "happiness" is the feeling of pleasure. The "pleasure principle" is something that determines the aim of human life (Freud, 2015). The ancient Greek philosopher, Aristippus, explained happiness as hedonism, and evaluated happiness as a set of sensual and pleasurable, but temporary, emotions (Gaston-Breto et al., 2020). Therefore, happiness is seen as a concept usually associated with hedonism. Explaining hedonism in consumer behaviours, Hirschmann and Holbrook (1982) stated that the hedonistic aspect of consumers was determined by the consumption of multiple emotional and fantastic experiences related to products. Happiness, or in other words, subjective well-being, occurs from the elements of various personal experiences such as life satisfaction and hedonic pleasures (Anderson et al., 2013). In one sense, hedonic consumption exposes the strong role of stimulated feelings in the purchasing decision. Consumption is based on emotion rather than reason, is experience-focused rather than problem-solving, emotional rather than cognitive, and is directed to products loaded with symbolic meaning rather than cognitive evaluation (Kaul, 2007).

In this situation, placing hedonism as a central value of life and internalisation form the most important component of hedonic consumption (Davis, 2010). Babin et al. (1994) described hedonic shopping as both a dark and enjoyable aspect of consumption. In studies by Zhong and Mitchell (2010), the understanding of the enjoyable aspect of hedonic consumption is the perceived understanding of life as an entertainment activity and the feeling of life satisfaction was determined to have a direct effect on consumer happiness. According to research by Okada (2005), in a favourable environment people will show a tendency to have a life of entertainment, and this indulgence in entertainment is reflected in consumption, legitimising hedonic consumption. The dark aspect of hedonic consumption is explained as the momentary pleasure and satisfaction in the perceived hedonic consumption benefit. This can cause compulsive, unwilling, irrational shopping behaviours, and even unnecessary debt (Dittmar, 2005; Mueller et al., 2011). The evaluation adopted in consumer happiness is generally hedonic and directed towards entertainment and pleasure-seeking (Gaston-Breto et al., 2020). Compared with brands which put functional features at the forefront, hedonic consumption creates a stronger emotional desire in consumers (Mingione, 2020:217). For consumers who want to obtain pleasure and happiness, the feeling of pleasure as a personal value and the greatest and single motivation in life will direct them to pleasure-seeking activities (Tarka and Harnish, 2023). The presence of this enjoyment and satisfaction in consumption is reflected as hedonistic well-being (Anderson et al., 2013).

Therefore, happy customers are more interested in hedonic services, have a more positive perception of service quality, and brand loyalty is formed as a result of satisfaction (Hellén and Sääksjärvi, 2011). In a study of mobile telephone purchases, Hubert et al. (2017) determined that in addition to ease-of-use when buying smartphones, consumers also approached it with hedonic motivation. Van Kleef et al. (2010) stated that smartphone purchasers preferred products because of the social, personal, and hedonic benefits. Taking the research questions and findings in literature into consideration, the following hypothesis was formed:

H1: Hedonic benefit has a linear, positive effect on consumer happiness.

2.2. The Relationship Between Hedonic Benefit and Brand Image

The concept of happiness, which is the most basic component of human desire, has always been evaluated as a means of adding meaning to life, with viewpoints weighted towards subjective opinions such as positive feelings formed towards any object or any goal desired to be reached. Although scientists, researchers, and philosophers have always debated happiness and different meanings of the concept of happiness have been used, no common definition has been reached. Companies wishing to have a say in the markets have introduced the new concept of "consumer happiness" into marketing as a result of wanting to attract the interest of consumers with strategies promising happiness.

Happiness started to enter marketing literature for the first time with the realisation that emotions are a guiding force in consumer behaviours (Cuesta-Valino et al., 2023). Due to the emotional satisfaction and formation of strong desires in the consumer by brands, a new and important area of research entered the field of marketing, named as the concept of consumer happiness. The satisfaction formed during purchasing goes beyond satisfaction and by the satisfaction in the period after the purchase going beyond happiness and satisfaction, marketing creates consumer happiness (Dhiman and Kumar, 2023).

Schnebelen and Bruhn (2018) defined consumer happiness as "a momentary emotional experience of consumers with brands in which satisfaction is felt by contact with different forms such as purchasing, consumption, and advertising". If the happiness felt directly by consumers related to the purchase of a product converts to general happiness, it is seen as an indispensable component of consumer happiness (Schellong et al., 2019). Desmeules (2002) stated that hedonic, experiential, and rational purchasing preferences affecting happiness first have an effect on life satisfaction and then on general life happiness.

Negative experiences with a product or brand are known to cause anger and disappointment in consumers. As people wish to have a pleasant and enjoyable experience, consumption is related to happiness. Previous studies have stated that emotional consumer behaviours when shopping are directly affected by many different emotions such as, primarily happiness, and hope, pride, gratification, excitement, relaxation, and enjoyment. Some studies explaining consumer happiness as positive emotions accept emotions as a significant criteria in consumer preference (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Mogilner et al., 2012; Richins, 1997; Laros ve Steenkamp, 2005). Mogilner et al. (2012) stated that consumer happiness occurred from positive emotions, and the tendencies of happy consumers to seek experiential marketing showed a difference according to their personal characteristics of excitement and calmness. Hellén ve Sääksjärvi (2011) claimed that consumer happiness was an external reflection of internal composure of the consumer. Accordingly, a happy consumer is described as a consumer with a tendency to be happy from products and services focussing on the beautiful aspect of life. Many products and services offer a happiness value to consumers, such as the perceived value of services such as travel, entertainment, eating drinking, and gourmet experiences (Howell and Hill, 2009; Nicolao et al., 2009; Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003; Weingarten and Goodman, 2021), the happiness offered to ethical consumers showing environmentally friendly and socio-economic-focused consumer behaviour (Cachero-Martínez et al., 2024; Ramos-Hidalgo et al., 2022; Ruo-Fei, et al., 2022), the happiness of a healthy lifestyle offered by healthcare products and services (Block et al., 2011; Cornil and Chandon, 2016; Renner et al., 2012), and the happiness offered to consumers in digital markets (Dhiman and Kumar, 2020; Lin and Windasari, 2019). In addition, societal happiness is affected by the services provided to consumers in education, healthcare, and public sector economic and social areas (Anderson et al., 2013).

Taking the research questions and findings in literature into consideration, the following hypothesis was formed:

H2: Hedonic benefit has a linear, positive effect on brand image.

2.3. The Relationship Between Brand Image and Consumer Happiness

As brands are visible in every area of current life, they have become of great importance globally and have become a strategy for some companies to maintain their presence. The concept of brand image is the total of the emotional and cognitive impressions formed by the product in the target mass. This is formed from all the positive or negative evaluations

obtained as a result of the customer experiences related to the brand (Tekin and Öztürk, 2010). Brand image essentially refers to the whole combination of everything a person associates with the brand.

As a result of the importance of brand image, researchers in the marketing world have suggested that brand image is a vital component for brand value (Phau and Lau, 2001). When the marketing process becomes more complex, consumers base their purchasing decisions on their impressions of the brand. In this respect, brand image constitutes an important element of brand value. High value brands provide the company not only with status but also competitive advantages (Aaker, 1996). This image of the brand formed in the eyes of the consumer can distinguish the brand from other brands.

At the stage of placing the product in the marketing planning, the stage of product differentiation forms the basis for the strategic decisions taken (Lee et al., 2014). Kapferer (2013) stated that brand image was the most effective means of communicating with the consumer, thereby showing the importance of brand image. Park et al., (1986) suggested that the success of the brand in the market depended on selection of brand identity, correct use of the image, and correct transfer of the image by the company to consumers. Therefore, a strong brand should be transferred to the target market with a rich and clear identity, because if the brand image is not compatible with consumer expectations this opens opportunities for competitors.

Taking the research questions and findings in literature into consideration, the following hypothesis was formed:

H3: Brand image has a linear positive effect on consumer happiness

2.4. The Mediating Role of Brand in the Relationship Between Hedonic Benefit and Consumer Happiness

In most modern marketing activities, brands implicitly offer a happiness value to the consumer with brand image by creating the image, especially with advertising, that consumption will make the consumer happy. Dobni and Zinkhan (1990) described the brand image perceptions of consumers as the impressions and experiences related to functional, emotional, and symbolic benefits of the brand. Park et al., (1986) explained that in addition to the emotional and functional benefits of the brand, the experience satisfaction benefit was also important. Brand happiness offering benefits beyond satisfaction created through brand image is not a new term in marketing. A study by Aaker, accepted as one of the pioneering studies of branding, stated ten basic principles which should be applied on the road to success for brand strategies. Within the first ten work principles in the

recommendations for brands, Aaker recommended that businesses should go beyond the functional benefits of the products and services offered, and develop sustainable customer relationships with more emotional benefits that can be better described by the consumers themselves (Kotler and Keller, 2018). In this context, positive emotional attachment, which is a valuable emotion like happiness, came to the forefront and emotions have been reported to have a positive effect on the attitudes and evaluations of consumers towards brand image (Adaval, 2003; Howard and Barry, 1994).

It has recently been stated that the prestige of a brand perceived by the consumer affects emotional attachment to the brand and consumers who are strongly attached to brands are happier (Nobre et al. 2023). The search for happiness, which is reflected in every area of life has an effect on consumer choices. It has been reported that buying and experiencing products because of mass prestige and image makes consumers happy (Burhanudin, 2024; Kumar et al., 2021; Mansoor and Paul, 2022; Nobre et al., 2023; Schnebelen and Bruhn, 2018). From the mobile telephones of Samsung, Apple iPhone, and Huawei, which have a known brand image, some consumers who aim to reach their ideal self-identity have been observed to much prefer iPhone because of the perceived prestige (Nobre et al., 2023). It has been previously determined that brand image increases consumer happiness and there is an increase in purchasing frequency as a result of consumer happiness (Yoshida et al., 2021). Stating the importance

of brand image in smartphone selection, Petruzzellis (2010) emphasized that the perceived image of the brand was imprinted in the mind of the consumer. Therefore, it was concluded that the benefits expected were expectations rather than the concrete benefits of the brand. These findings suggest that brand image could have a mediating role in the relationship between hedonic benefit and consumer happiness.

Taking the research questions and findings in literature into consideration, the following hypothesis was formed:

H4: Brand image has a mediating role in the relationship between hedonic benefit and consumer happiness

3. Study Model and Study Methodology

The study model is presented first in this section, then information about the study universe and sample, followed by the data related to hedonic benefit, brand image, and consumer happiness

3.1. Study Model

Based on a detailed examination of the literature in the period before the study, the research model was developed to include the variables of hedonic benefit, consumer happiness, and brand image selected as the mediating variable. The model is shown in Figure 1.

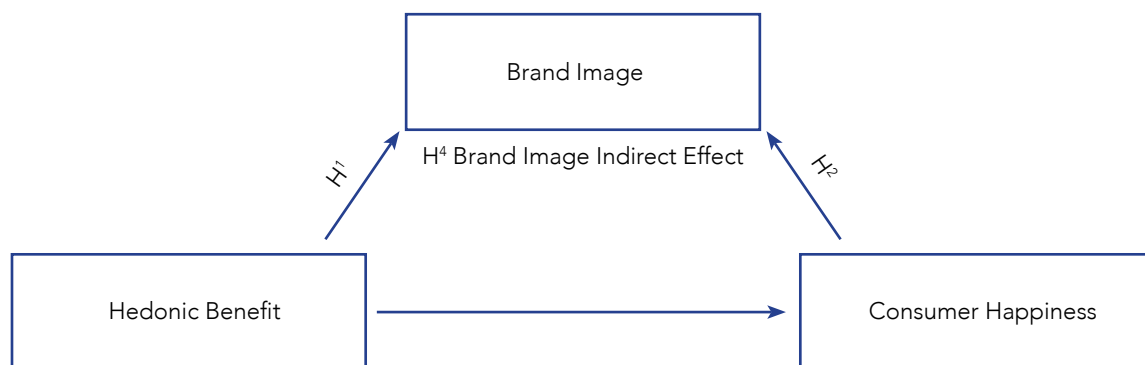


Figure 1. Study Model

3.2. Research Universe and Study Sample

This questionnaire-based study was conducted with 396 participants, aged ≥ 18 years, in the province of Bursa, north-west Türkiye. Using the convenience sampling method, the lowest sample number required for a 95% confidence interval according to Karagöz (2017) was calculated to be 274 subjects. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed, and after the exclusion of 54 (incomplete or casual responses), 396 questionnaires were included for analysis.

3.3. Data Collection Tools

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section included 6 questions to determine age, gender, education level, occupation, marital status, and income level. In the second section of the questionnaire, the scale developed by Babin et al. (1994) was used to measure the benefit perceptions of consumers. For hedonic benefit there are 11 items with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.93. The brand image scale developed by Low and Lamb (2000) consists

of 5 statements with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.85. To measure consumer happiness, the scale used was developed by Ruo-Fei et al. (2022). It consists of 5 items with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.85.

All the items on the scales were evaluated with 5-point Likert-type responses, scored as 1: I definitely disagree, 2: I disagree, 3: I am undecided, 4: I agree, 5: I definitely agree.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

The non-probability convenience sampling method was used to form the study sample. An online questionnaire was used as the data collection tool.

Approval for the study was granted by the Ethics Committee of Bursa Technical University (decision no: 5, dated: 15.10.2024). Before completing the online questionnaire, information about the study was

given and the participants provided informed consent for voluntary participation.

Data obtained in the study were analyzed statistically using SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Analysis of the mediating role was performed using Process Macro (Model 4) software, developed by Andrew F. Hayes.

4. Results

Normality tests and reliability analyses were first applied to the scales, then the data obtained in the study were examined. Normality tests, frequency, reliability, correlation, and regression analyses were performed. For the mediating role analysis, Process Macro (Andrew F. Hayes) was applied. Descriptive statistics of the sociodemographic characteristics of the study participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The Demographic Variables of the Study Participants

Parameters	N	%		n	%
Gender			Marital status		
Female	210	53	Single	277	69.9
Male	186	47	Married	119	30.1
Age (years)			Income level		
18-25	154	38.9	Income more than outgoings	102	25.8
26-35	162	40.9	Income equal to outgoings	129	62.6
36-45	48	12.2	Income less than outgoings	165	41.7
≥45	32	8.1			
Education level			Occupation		
Primary school	4	1	Student	152	38.7
High school	35	8.8	Civil servant	108	27.3
University	184	46.5	Private sector	102	25.8
Postgraduate	173	43.7	Retired	25	5.8
Total	396	100	Housewife	11	2.8

The total 396 study participants comprised 53% females and 47% males. Age distribution was seen to be 38.9% in the 18-25 years age group, 40.9% in the 26-35 years group, 12.2% in the 36-45 years group, and 8.1% in the ≥45 years group. Education levels were reported as 1% having completed middle school, 8.8% high school, 46.5% university, and 43.7% postgraduate. Of the total sample, 69.9% were single and 30.1% were married. Income level was stated as income greater than outgoings by 25.8%, income equal to outgoings by 62.6%, and outgoings greater than income by 41.7%. Occupations of the participants were seen to be 38.7% students, 27.3% civil servants, 25.8% private sector employees, 5.8% retired and 2.8% housewife.

The kurtosis and skewness values were examined of the statements in the hedonic benefit perception, brand image, and consumer happiness scales to determine whether or not the data were normally distributed. The variable of hedonic benefit was determined to have kurtosis value of -0.037 and skewness value of 0.123, the brand image variable had a kurtosis value of -0.806 and skewness value of 0.421, and consumer happiness had a kurtosis value of -0.554 and skewness value of 0.123. The values of all the scales were seen to be between -2 and +2, so the scale data can be said to have normal distribution (George and Mallery, 2010). As the data showed normal distribution, parametric tests were applied.

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Before analysis of the study model, validity and reliability analyses of all the dimensions were performed. Within this framework, separation and overlap validity and internal consistency reliability analyses were performed. The Cronbach alpha value, which is widely used to show the appropriacy of variables to the aim, was accepted as the measurement of internal consistency reliability. A Cronbach alpha coefficient of ≥ 0.60 is accepted as the threshold (Taber, 2018). To determine overlap validity, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were used to ex-

plain factor weighting of the items. An overlap reliability value of $AVE > 0.70$ was accepted as close, and $AVE > 0.50$ that the model was reliable and valid. (Hair et al., 2009). When the combined reliability value is > 0.70 , the AVE value cannot be accepted even if < 0.50 (Fornell and Lacker, 1981). Validity and reliability analyses were performed on the independent variable of brand image, the mediating variable of hedonic benefit, and the dependent variable of consumer happiness. It was concluded that the scales were valid and reliable (Table 2).

Table 2. Reliability Analysis Of The Variables Used In The Study

Variables	Cronbach Alpha Value	Number of statements	AVE	CR
Hedonic benefit	.891	11	0.41	0.88
Brand image	.919	5	0.36	0.74
Consumer happiness	.873	5	0.49	0.82

Correlation analysis was conducted to measure the relationships among the variables of hedonic utility, brand image and consumer happiness in the study.

Table 3 below shows the correlation analysis of the variables.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis

Variables	1	2	3
Hedonic benefit (1)	1		
Brand image (2)	.273**	1	
Consumer happiness (3)	.538**	.650**	1

** Correlation is statistically significant at the level of 0.01

As seen in Table 3, the results of the multiple correlation analysis showed correlations between all the variables at 1% significance level. A significant low-level correlation was determined between hedonic benefit and brand image ($r=0.27$, $p<0.01$). A significant moderate-level correlation was determined between hedonic benefit and consumer happiness ($r=0.53$, $p<0.01$). A significant high-level correlation was determined between brand image and

consumer happiness ($r=0.65$, $p<0.01$).

Simple regression analysis was applied to determine the effect of the independent variable of hedonic benefit on the dependent variables of brand image and consumer happiness, and of the effect of brand image on consumer happiness. The results of the simple regression analysis of the relevant variables are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Showing the Effect of the Variable of Hedonic Benefit on Brand Image and Consumer Happiness

Variables	Beta coefficient	Standard deviation	R2 value	p value
Hedonic benefit>brand image	,307	0,055	,273	0,00
Hedonic benefit>consumer happiness	,599	0,047	,538	0,00
Brand image> consumer happiness	,643	0,038	,650	0,00

As seen in Table 4, the independent variable of hedonic benefit had a statistically significant positive effect on brand image ($\beta=30$, $p<0.01$). The R2 value explains approximately 27% of the effect of the hedonic benefit variable on brand image.

The independent variable of hedonic benefit was found to have a statistically significant positive effect on the dependent variable of consumer happiness ($\beta=59$, $p<0.01$). The R2 value explains approximately 53%% of the effect of the hedonic benefit variable on consumer happiness.

The variable of brand image was found to have a statistically significant positive effect on the variable of consumer happiness ($\beta=54$, $p<0.01$). The R2 value explains approximately 65%% of the effect of the brand image variable on consumer happiness.

Thus the H1, H2, and H3 hypotheses were accepted. The effect of the independent variable of hedonic benefit on the mediating variable of brand image and the dependent variable of consumer happiness was investigated. The mediating relationships of the variables are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Hierarchic Regression Analysis Related to the Role of Brand Image on the Variables of Hedonic Benefit and Consumer Happiness

Variables	Beta coefficient	Standard deviation	P value	LLCI	ULCI
Hedonic benefit> consumer happiness total effect	.599	.047	0.00	.506	.692
Hedonic benefit> consumer happiness direct effect	.434	.039	0.00	.358	.510
Hedonic benefit> consumer happiness indirect effect	Effect (b) .165	Bootstrap standard error .031	BootLLCI .089	BootULCI .209	

As seen in Table 5, the variable of hedonic benefit was determined to have a statistically significant positive effect on the variable of consumer happiness (95% CI: 0.506-0.692, $p < 0.01$), with a total effect of 59% ($\beta: 0.599$) and the direct effect was found to be positive at a statistically significant level (95% CI: 0.358-0.510, $p < 0.01$).

Bootstrap regression analysis was performed to determine whether or not brand image had a mediating role in the effect of hedonic benefit on consumer happiness. The analysis results showed an indirect effect (95% CI: 0.089-0.209) and as the value range was below zero, the variable of brand image was understood to have a mediating role between hedonic benefit and consumer happiness.

The mediating effect was evaluated taking the theories of Baron and Kenny (1986) into consideration. According to Baron and Kenny, to be able to say that there is a mediating variable, there must be a significant correlation between the independent variable and the dependent variable, a significant correlation between the independent variable and the mediating variable, and a significant correlation between the dependent variable and the mediating variable. When the mediating variable is included in the model formed of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, if the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable decreases significantly, there can be said to be a partial mediating effect (Baron and Kenny, 1986: 1173-1182). In the simple regression analysis, the independent variable of hedonic benefit had an effect of $\beta = .59$ on the dependent variable of consumer happiness. With the mediating effect of brand image, the beta coefficient fell to $\beta = .16$. Thus, there can be said to be a partial mediating effect of brand image in the relationship between hedonic benefit and consumer happiness. Therefore, the H4 hypothesis was accepted.

5. Discussions

The desire of humankind to feel better throughout life both physically and mentally has been shown to

be the basis of pleasure-seeking behaviour. The wish to be happy, which is subjective as much as it is valuable, is reflected in every area of life. The concept of happiness and the seeking of happiness, which have been considered at great length have recently attracted increasing attention in social sciences fields in particular. The world evolving into an increasingly dissatisfied consumer society has led to pleasure-seeking starting to be seen everywhere, and has been shown to be an important factor for consumer happiness after the purchase. The search for hedonic benefit reveals the power of senses and emotions in the purchase, and in one sense explains the relationship with consumer happiness. Moreover, the expectations of consumers today are not limited to the benefits of a brand but they are also attracted to the perceived effect of different brand images such as the visually pleasing elements of a brand, the stories, and the superior features. This suggests that in addition to hedonic benefits, brand image could have an effect on consumer happiness.

The aim of this study was to investigate the perceived hedonic benefit that could have an effect on consumer happiness and the role of brand image, which was thought to have a mediating effect, on the smartphone preferences of consumers. From the results of the analyses performed in the study it was understood that the hedonic benefit perceptions of smartphone users were influential on brand image and consumer happiness. Previous studies in the literature that have examined the relationship between hedonic benefit and consumer happiness have demonstrated that by forming an effective mechanism for the element of taking enjoyment from life, hedonic benefit affected consumer happiness (Anderson et al., 2013; Gaston-Breton et al., 2020; Mingione, 2020; Thürridl et al., 2020). The current study results support these findings in literature. It was also observed that the variable of brand image formed an effective mechanism on consumer happiness, and this result was consistent with the literature. It has been determined in previous studies that brand image increased consumer happiness, and an increase in purchasing frequency was expected.

rienced as a result of customer happiness (Yoshida et al., 2021), and Petruzzellis et al. (2010) stated that the perceived image of the brand is imprinted in the mind of the consumer.

Studies of consumer happiness have investigated many products and services such as the perceived value of services such as travel, entertainment, eating drinking, and gourmet experiences (Howell and Hill, 2009; Nicolao et al., 2009; Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003; Weingarten and Goodman, 2021), the happiness offered to ethical consumers showing environmentally friendly and socio-economic-focused consumer behaviour (Cachero-Martínez et al., 2024; Ramos-Hidalgo et al., 2022; Ruo-Fei, et al., 2022), the happiness of a healthy lifestyle offered by healthcare products and services (Block et al., 2011; Cornil and Chandon, 2016; Renner et al., 2012), and the happiness offered to consumers in digital markets (Dhiman and Kumar, 2020; Lin and Windasari, 2019). Unlike the previous literature, the current study was related to smartphones only, and investigated the indirect effect of brand image in the relationship between hedonic benefit and consumer happiness.

6. Conclusion

Smartphones have become not only a communication tool, but also a statement of identity and a platform for socialising and creating experiences in the daily life of individuals. In this study, the direct effect of perceived hedonic benefit on consumer happiness, and the indirect effect with brand image mediation were compared quantitatively. The data obtained from 396 smartphone users in the province of Bursa showed that consumer happiness was strengthened directly by hedonic benefit ($\beta=0.59$) and partially indirectly ($\beta=0.17$) by brand image. These findings show that in the mobile technology market, emotional needs have become internalised with rational characteristics and can shed light on the multi-layered structure of consumer happiness.

This study can be considered to make theoretical, methodological, and managerial contributions to this field. From a theoretical perspective, by transferring the literature of consumer happiness to mobile telephone dependency, which requires a high level of participation, the study results confirm that the relationship of hedonic value and happiness is valid for other technology-based products. By emphasizing that happiness is not dependent on internal pleasure factors alone, but also on the symbolic and social value of a product, the partial mediating role of brand image provides empirical support to multi-levelled value theories (eg., Consumer Values Theory). Revealing the hedonic benefit-brand image-consumer happiness chain provides a new angle to the holistic models explaining the “well-being” concept in consumer behaviour research.

Methodologically, this field study conducted in Türkiye is one of the first quantitative studies to have examined consumer happiness in the developing smartphone market, and therefore contributes geographical variety and cultural factors to the literature. Methodological robustness and clarity were provided by the separate mediating tests for direct and indirect effects performed with PROCESS (Model 4). The validity and reliability tests of the Turkish versions of the scales provide a measurement tool basis for future studies.

From a managerial contribution perspective, the results showed that when hedonic elements of brands (design, colour, aesthetic experience) are at the forefront, consumer happiness is directly increased, so focus on emotional associations can be recommended in product placement. The partial mediating role of brand image indicated that happiness-focused loyalty was created by improving the hedonic values of positive brand perception. Emphasizing the “happiness theme” in advertising campaigns can address the consumer’s desire to feel good, and this theme should be visually supported with intimate moments, positive emotions, and social interaction.

There were some limitations to this study, primarily the cross-sectional design and that self-reported data were used. Longitudinal studies in the future can monitor the change in happiness over time. In addition, comparisons between cultures will be able to test the generalisability of the findings. Additional variables such as rational benefit, brand trust, and advertising perception could also be evaluated to expand the model.

In conclusion, happy customers are important for companies to gain a competitive advantage. In the light of the data obtained in this study, it can be said that companies that want to have a say in the market should thoroughly analyse the happiness-seeking of consumers. Companies wanting to gain customer loyalty should focus on consumer happiness. In product placement studies, happiness associations can be made in advertising, and the happiness value can be presented to consumers.

Declarations:

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest. The study protocol was approved by the Bursa Technical University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Decision No. 2024/19, 15 October 2024). Before data collection began, each prospective participant was shown an electronic information sheet explaining the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw at any time without penalty and data-protection measures. Informed consent was recorded electronically: participants indicated ag-

reement by selecting the statement “I approve of participating in the study”. All responses were collected anonymously; no personally identifying data were stored, and confidentiality was maintained at every stage of data handling and reporting.

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A Research on the Determination of First Aid Knowledge Levels and Knowledge Resources of Tourist Guiding Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore both the first aid knowledge levels and the information sources used by students enrolled in tourism guidance department. In this study carried out on Balıkesir University Tourism Faculty Tourism Guidance Department students, 295 students were included by deliberate sampling method. A questionnaire form with 45 questions was prepared for data gathering. The students' total first aid knowledge level was calculated out of 40 points, with 1 point awarded for each correct answer in a 40-question test. The first aid total score of the students is calculated on the basis of 40 points. 51.2% of the students evaluated their own first aid knowledge level as "low". The mean of first aid knowledge total score of the students was 29.26 ± 3.48 on the basis of 40 points. It was determined that the knowledge about first aid was obtained mostly via school (88.5%), internet (63.7%) and television (53.2%). Poisoning knowledge ($p=0.02<0.05$), burn knowledge ($p=0.000<0.05$),

general first aid knowledge ($p=0.000<0.05$), fracture-dislocation knowledge ($P=0.000<0.05$) and total knowledge scores ($p=0.000<0.05$) were statistically significantly different between the students at different classes. There were significant differences found between the students with different ages in terms of cardiac massage knowledge, artificial respiration knowledge ($p=0.033<0.05$) and fracture-dislocation knowledge ($p=0.02<0.05$). It was found that the majority of the students find themselves inadequate for first aid, but their first aid knowledge levels above the median. As class level increases, the first aid knowledge score decreases and the most important knowledge sources are school, internet and television.

Keywords: Tourist Guiding, Students, First Aid, Knowledge Sources.

JEL Codes: L83, I10, P46

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1. Introduction

First aid is practiced in any accident or in a situation where the life is in danger, the health officers are on the spot, immediately, without wasting time and at the scene. Environmental facilities and the materials at the scene of the accident are used. It is defined as practices that help people who suddenly get sick, injured or have an accident without the use of medical equipment, to avoid further complications and safeguard their lives (Köksoy et al., 2012; Nayir et al., 2011, Örsal et al., 2011, Şirin & Kaya, 2006, Duman et al., 2013, Gülser Uruk & Erdoğan, 2022).

10% of deaths after serious injuries and accidents occur in the first 5 minutes while 50% of them occur in the first half hour. In such cases, "lost time" increases the mortality rate (Dereli et al., 2010) and the time of the intervention to survivor or injured person should be as short as possible (Uskun et al., 2008). Timely first aid has an important place in the prevention of disability and in the process of healing by providing basic life support and preventing death and further damage (Erkan & Göz, 2006; Şirin & Kaya, 2006; Duman et al., 2013; Sönmez et al., 2014). However, it is not always possible to find a person who have health education or first aid knowledge within the required time or to access a hospital (Dündar et al., 1999; Uskun et al., 2008; Çakallıoğlu et al., 2021). Almost everyone encounter some situations that require first aid and it reveals the necessity to intervene with injuries (Dinçer et al., 2000; Duman et al., 2013). For this reason, first aid is a collection of practices that all individuals in society must carry out under all circumstances, whether they receive or not receive health education (Vaizoğlu et al., 2003; Duman et al., 2013). In particular, the first person who intervene in the event of an accident or illness is a firefighter, police officer, coach, group leader or tourist guide, ambulance crew or similar persons who are at the scene and witness the situation (Altıntop et al., 2000: 53; Akgün et al., 2023). It is of great importance that university students who will work as tourist guides after completing their education possess the necessary knowledge and skills in first aid. Due to their professional roles, tourist guides work in the field with large groups of tourists, participate in adventure tours that may pose health risks, and undertake long journeys. In emergencies, tourist guides are often among the first to respond to tourists, and therefore must be equipped with appropriate first aid knowledge and skills. For this reason, first aid courses are included as compulsory subjects in the curricula of tourism guidance departments in Türkiye. There are numerous studies in the literature that examine the importance and impact of first aid training for various professional groups such as healthcare professionals, teachers, and drivers, and assess their levels of knowledge. However, no study has been found that evaluates the first aid knowle-

dge levels of tourism guidance students or investigates whether first aid courses in tourism guidance programs achieve their intended outcomes. Therefore, this research, which focuses on the first aid knowledge of tourism guidance students, is expected to fill a significant gap in the literature.

This study also examines the relationship between tourist guides' professional roles and their first aid knowledge, offering a theoretical framework that highlights the critical importance of first aid not only in health-related professions but also in all field-based occupations. In this context, the study aims to provide a multidisciplinary contribution to the fields of tourism, tour guiding, and health education.

It is anticipated that the findings of this research will serve as a basis for recommendations aimed at improving tourism guidance curricula, not only at the academic level but also in practical application. In a people-centered and risk-prone sector like tourism, enhancing emergency response capacity is expected to offer significant societal benefits in terms of both tourist safety and the country's international image.

2. Conceptual Framework

Tourist guides are not only information providers in the tourism industry; they also directly impact tourist satisfaction and the overall travel experience by presenting this information in an effective and engaging manner. Therefore, tourist guides are among the most important front-line actors in the tourism industry. Through their ability to convey a destination's culture and attractions, their knowledge, communication skills, and the service they provide, guides can transform an ordinary trip into an unforgettable experience (Ap and Wong, 2001).

Tourist guides undertake duties and responsibilities in a wide variety of areas, not just nature and adventure tours, but also cultural tours, city tours, religious tourism, health and thermal tourism. While emergency situations are more common in adventure tours that involve high-risk activities like rafting, mountaineering, and diving, unexpected health problems, accidents, or situations requiring emergency intervention can occur in any tour organization (Turner, 2003; Öter, 2007).

The vast majority of tours in Türkiye are long-time Anatolian tours which need long trips (Koroğlu & Koroğlu, 2011). In some cases, especially during peak tourism seasons or long-distance tours, tourist guides may work up to 15 hours a day, including travel, guiding, and coordination tasks. These long and tiring tours -such as climbing to the Nemrut Tumulus- can be physically demanding. Additionally, tourists tend to engage in more risk-taking behaviors during holidays, including excessive consumption of alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs (Bellis et al.,

2007; Hesse et al., 2008). Constant changes in accommodation, eating in unfamiliar restaurants, and prolonged exposure to sunlight further increase health risks. As a result, tourist guides may face various first aid situations, including traffic accidents, blood pressure issues, heart attacks, brain hemorrhages, food poisoning, fractures, fainting, falls, and foreign body penetration (Köroğlu & Köroğlu, 2011: 76). These situations can occur not only in extreme conditions or on tours, but also during city walking tours, ancient city tours, eco-tours, or museum visits. Tourist guides have important responsibilities such as to create safe and reliable environments for tourists, to cope with illnesses, injuries and deaths in a calm manner and to keep other tourists calm, and guide candidates who will fulfill these responsibilities in the future by doing this profession have to have a good level of first aid knowledge (Howard et al., 2001; GÜDÜ Demirbulat et al., 2017). According to the conducted studies, the tourist guides should have security, health and first aid knowledge and they have to have first aid certificates (Weiler & Davis, 1993; Black et al., 2001; Christie & Mason, 2003; Wong & McKercher, 2012; Carmody, 2013).

The tourist guide profession is not limited to simply conveying information; it encompasses multifaceted responsibilities such as security, crisis management, and emergency response. Therefore, first aid knowledge is not only a fundamental requirement for guides, but also a vital competency that must be constantly updated and reinforced. Especially on group tours involving long and challenging routes, or in areas with limited access to healthcare, a guide's prompt and accurate response is crucial. First aid training not only enhances guides' individual competencies but also contributes to ensuring tourist safety and enhancing the quality of the tour experience. In this context, first aid knowledge and training should be considered an integral part of the tourist guide profession, requiring continuous improvement. A trained guide is the foundation for both safer and more professional service. Furthermore, further scientific research on the first aid competence of tour guides is necessary to expand existing knowledge in this field, more accurately identify needs, and develop effective training programs.

While discussing the importance of tourist guides having first aid knowledge and conducting research on this subject, it is quite striking that there is no other study conducted in the tourism sector except for a study measuring the first aid knowledge level of hotel employees in Türkiye (Emir and Kuş, 2015) and a study conceptually examining the necessity of first aid training in tourism guidance (GÜDÜ Demirbulat et al., 2017).

On the other hand a number of studies have been conducted in Türkiye to determine the levels of knowledge on first aid for people from different fields.

Table 1 shows the studies on first aid knowledge levels in Türkiye. In Türkiye, there are also studies that measure "first aid knowledge level and attitudes" (Polat & Turacı, 2003; Şirin & Kaya, 2006; Nayir et al., 2011; Usta et al. 2017), "the necessity of first aid education" (Bildik et al., 2011), "the factors affecting first aid knowledge level" (Duman et al., 2013) and "first aid knowledge and skill level" (Emir & Kuş, 2015) besides the studies that measure only "first aid knowledge levels" (Özçelikay et al., 1996; Çullu et al., 1998; Dündar et al., 1999; Altıntop et al., 2000; Dinçer et al., 2000; Vaizoğlu et al., 2003; Erkan & Göz, 2006; Başer et al., 2007; Bölükbaş et al., 2007; Coşkun et al., 2008; Bakar & Maral, 2010; Dereli et al., 2010; Metin & Mutlu, 2010; Köksoy et al., 2012; Sönmez et al., 2014; Bozkurt et al., 2015; Altındış et al., 2017; Yetiş & Gürbüz, 2018; Aktaş et al., 2019; Orhan & Aydın, 2020; Çakallıoğlu et al., 2021; Demirci Güler & Alptekin, 2021; Gülser Uruk & Erdoğan, 2022; Karaman Özlü et al., 2022; Akgün et al., 2023; Işık Demiraslan et al., 2023; Ak et al., 2023; Solmaz et al., 2024; Yüksel Çaylak et al., 2024; Doğanç et al., 2025). There are also studies measuring the level of knowledge for a specific situation which required first aid. For example, Uskun et al. (2008), Örsal et al. (2011), Serinken et al. (2011) and Aslan et al. (2015) was conducted the studies about the knowledge levels of first aid for home accidents while Göktaş et al. (2014) was conducted the studies about the knowledge levels of first aid for poisoning cases and Göktaş et al. (2015) for epilepsy. It was observed that most of the students and teachers who were studying at different subjects and at different levels were selected as the study group in order to measure first aid knowledge levels. These two study groups are the most studied sample for research may be due to the majority of accidents occurred in schools and during childhood (Nayir et al., 2011; Bakar & Maral, 2010; Karaman Özlü et al., 2022). In addition to these two working groups, there are also studies on people in which different sectors (drivers, employees, assistants, health personnel, traffic policemen, mothers, housewives, women, prisoners and hotel employees) were selected as the sample. Although the results of the conducted studies show that first aid knowledge is moderate (Şirin & Kaya, 2006; Bölükbaş et al., 2007; Nayir et al., 2011; Aslan et al., 2015; Usta et al., 2017; Aktaş et al., 2019; Demirci Güler & Alptekin, 2021; Karaman Özlü et al., 2022; Solmaz et al., 2024) and good (Dündar et al., 1999; Uskun et al., 2008; Dereli et al., 2010; Örsal et al., 2011), the results of the majority of studies show that the level of first aid knowledge in Türkiye is inadequate (See Table 1).

The literature frequently examines whether there are significant differences in first aid knowledge levels based on participant demographics. The primary goal of these studies is to identify which groups require more intensive training by demonstrating

the impact of variables such as age, gender, education level, and professional experience on first aid knowledge. This allows for more targeted, effective, and comprehensive training programs. For example, some studies (Oysa Şirin & Kaya, 2006; Nayir et al., 2011; Emir & Kuş, 2015; Orhan & Aydın, 2020; Yüksel Çaylak et al. 2024) have found that women have higher levels of first aid knowledge than men. This can be explained by their higher interest and responsibility in health matters, their more devel-

oped risk perception, their encounters with more first aid-requiring situations than men, and their greater tendency to participate in training in this field (Orhan and Aydın, 2020). Some studies have found differences between participants' age and first aid knowledge levels. Some studies have found that knowledge scores decrease as participants age (Şirin ve Kaya, 2006; Başer et. al., 2007, Coşkun et. al., 2008, Örsal et. al., 2011), while others have found that knowledge scores increase with age (Dereli et. al. 2010).

Table 1. The Demographic Variables of the Study Participants

Year	Researcher	Subject of The Study	n	Sample Group	Conclusion
1996	Özçelikay et al.	First aid knowledge levels	333	University students	The findings indicate that students possess an inadequate level of first aid knowledge.
1998	Cullu et al.	First aid knowledge levels	300	Drivers	Findings indicated that drivers lack adequate first aid knowledge and practical skills.
1999	Dündar et al.	First aid knowledge levels	172	Allied health personnels	It was found that healthcare personnel had a good level of knowledge on most first aid topics, although their understanding of cardiac and respiratory procedures was insufficient.
2000	Altıntop et al.	First aid knowledge levels	275	Traffic police	It was determined that knowledge of traffic police is inadequate before the training and knowledge levels after training increased significantly.
2000	Dinçer et al.	First aid knowledge levels	138	Pre-school educators	It was determined that the educators do not find their knowledge on first aid as adequate and their first aid knowledge scores increases as the learning status increases.
2003	Polat & Turacı	First aid knowledge levels and attitudes	342	Police school students	It was determined that the knowledge and attitudes of the students on first aid are insufficient.
2003	Vaizoğlu et al.	First aid knowledge levels	231	Primary school students	The findings indicate that students possess a notably low level of first aid knowledge.
2006	Erkan & Göz	First aid knowledge levels	149	Teachers	The study revealed that teachers' knowledge regarding first aid is insufficient.
2006	Şirin & Kaya	First aid knowledge levels and attitudes	422	Physical education teachers	It was found that teachers possessed a moderate level of first aid knowledge, with female teachers demonstrating higher knowledge levels compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, first aid knowledge tended to decline with increasing age, while it improved as the level of education increased.
2007	Başer et al.	First aid knowledge levels	312	Teachers	It was found that teachers have insufficient first aid knowledge, and that this knowledge tends to decline with increasing age.
2007	Bölükbaş et al.	First aid knowledge levels	80	High school students	The students' first aid knowledge was found to be at a moderate level, with school being their primary source of information.
2008	Coşkun et al.	First aid knowledge levels	219	Mothers	It was determined that the majority of the mothers have low levels of first aid knowledge. The knowledge scores decreases with age and increases with education level.
2008	Uskun et al.	First aid knowledge levels for house accidents	180	Housewives	It was found that housewives' first aid knowledge scores are at a good level and knowledge scores increases as their education level increases.

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2010	Bakar & Maral	First aid knowledge levels	3775	High School Students	It was observed that students possess a limited level of first aid knowledge.
2010	Dereli et al.	First aid knowledge levels	772	Mothers	It was found that mothers have adequate first aid knowledge, with knowledge levels improving alongside increases in age and educational attainment.
2010	Metin & Mutlu	First aid knowledge levels	134	College of Health students	It was concluded that the students possess an inadequate level of first aid knowledge.
2011	Bildik et al.	Necessity of first aid training	88	Faculty of Education students	It was concluded that the students possess an inadequate level of first aid knowledge.
2011	Nayir et al.	First aid knowledge levels and attitudes	364	Teachers	It was observed that teachers demonstrated moderate levels of first aid knowledge, with female teachers scoring higher than their male counterparts.
2011	Örsal et al.	First aid knowledge levels for house accidents	400	Women	About two-thirds of women had enough first aid knowledge for home accidents. Their knowledge decreased as they got older. Women with higher education learned mostly from TV and the internet.
2011	Serinken et al.	First aid knowledge levels for house accidents	1017	Women	It was found that women with high education level have high first aid knowledge level and they obtain knowledge about first aid from television.
2012	Köksoy et al.	First aid knowledge levels	482	Prisoners	It was determined that about half of the prisoners have a low level of knowledge about first aid. The level of education increases, the success grade increases.
2013	Duman et al.	First aid knowledge levels and the factors that affect it	247	University students	It was found that most students hold misconceptions and incorrect practices regarding first aid.
2014	Göktaş et al.	First aid knowledge levels for poisoning cases	936	University Students	It was found that university students in health-related fields have better knowledge about first aid for poisoning, whereas students from other departments lack sufficient knowledge on this topic.
2014	Sönmez et al.	First aid knowledge levels	110	Pre-school teachers	It was determined that pre-school teachers' first aid knowledge is not sufficient.
2015	Aslan et al.	First aid knowledge levels for house accidents	351	Mothers	It was found that mothers have a moderate level of first aid knowledge, which improves as their educational level rises.
2015	Bozkurt et al.	First aid knowledge levels	128	Teachers	It was determined that the teachers are most knowledge about hot stroke and epilepsy and they don't have adequate knowledge about cardiac massage, artificial respiration and foreign body prick.
2015	Göktaş et al.	First aid knowledge levels for epilepsy	629	Nursing students	As the level of education of the students increases, the first aid knowledge increases, and the first aid knowledge sources are determined as university and driving courses.
2015	Emir & Kuş	First aid knowledge and skill levels	340	Hotel employees	It was determined that women have more first aid knowledge than men.

2017	Usta et al.	First aid knowledge levels and attitudes	243	Vocational school students	The students demonstrated a moderate level of first aid knowledge, with 55.2% showing interest in receiving training and engaging in related educational programs.
2017	Altındış et al.	First aid knowledge levels	1167	University Students	Most participants were found to have inadequate first aid knowledge, with gaps even in fundamental topics.
2018	Yetiş & Gürbüz	First aid knowledge levels	432	Vocational school students	The study revealed that students of the Vocational School of Health Services generally felt inadequate in first aid, and prior training significantly contributed to both their confidence and the accuracy of their knowledge.
2019	Aktaş et al.	First aid knowledge levels	116	Teachers	Teachers were found to possess a moderate level of first aid knowledge. As age increased, their scores tended to decline, whereas those who had undergone first aid training achieved higher scores compared to those without such training.
2020	Orhan & Aydın	First aid knowledge levels	2038	Pre-service teacher	It was found that pre-service teachers lacked sufficient knowledge about first aid and acknowledged this deficiency by indicating a need for further education.
2021	Çakallıoğlu et al.	First aid knowledge levels	71	School bus drivers	It was determined that school bus drivers lacked sufficient knowledge of first aid.
2021	Demirci Güler & Alptekin	First aid knowledge levels		Pre-service teacher	The study concluded that the preservice primary school teachers had a moderate level of basic first aid knowledge.
2022	Gülser Uruk & Erdoğan	First aid knowledge levels	302	Underground Mine Workers	The study found that over 40% of the employees had misconceptions regarding essential first aid procedures, including bleeding control, cardiac massage, and artificial respiration.
2022	Karaman Özlü et al.	First aid knowledge levels	291	Teachers	While individuals who had received first aid training demonstrated higher self-efficacy scores, teachers' overall first aid knowledge was assessed as moderate.
2023	Akgün et al.	First aid knowledge levels	60	Preschool Teachers	Preschool teachers' knowledge of first aid was determined to be insufficient in terms of the expected competency level.
2023	Işık Demiraslan et al.	First aid knowledge levels	122	Employees	The study found that employees working in the industrial site of Artvin province had low levels of first aid knowledge, indicating a need for improvement in this area.
2023	Ak et al.	First aid knowledge levels	300	University Students	It was determined that students have insufficient knowledge of first aid practices.
2024	Solmaz et al.	First aid knowledge levels	205	University Students	Students enrolled in the Child Development Program were found to possess a moderate level of first aid knowledge.
2024	Yüksel Çaylak et al.	First aid and basic life support knowledge levels	224	High school students	Sports high school students were found to have low levels of first aid and BLS knowledge, with an awareness of their own inadequacy.
2025	Doğanç et al.	First aid knowledge levels	200	University Students	Findings of the study point to a deficiency in first aid knowledge among students in elementary teacher education programs.

* It is limited to accessible resources. This table was prepared as part of a bibliometric review to highlight the lack of research directly involving tourist guides and tourism guidance students on the topic. It also aims to contribute to the conceptual framework of the study by identifying gaps in the existing literature.

Some studies have found a positive correlation between education level and first aid knowledge, with individuals' first aid knowledge increasing as their level of education increases (Dinçer et al., 2000, Şirin & Kaya, 2006, Coşkun et al. 2008, Uskun et al., 2008, Dereli et al., 2010, Örsal et al., 2011, Köksoy et al., 2012, Aslan et al., 2015 and Göktaş et al., 2015). This may be due to the fact that individuals with higher education have more learning opportunities, are more aware of health issues, and are more motivated to participate in first aid training. Based on these results, the following hypotheses were formulated in the study:

H₁: *There is a significant difference between students' gender and first aid knowledge level.*

H₂: *There is a significant difference between students' age and first aid knowledge level.*

H₃: *There is a significant difference between students' grade level and first aid knowledge level.*

Considering the critical responsibilities of tourist guides and the research conducted on first aid, determining the level of first aid knowledge of tourist guide candidates/students while they are still in the training phase is of great importance in terms of developing their professional competencies.

3. Material and Methods

3.1. Type of Research

This research is a descriptive study using a quantitative approach and was conducted within the framework of the general screening model. The primary objective of the study is to determine the current knowledge level and information sources of students in the Tourism Guidance Department at Balıkesir University Tourism Faculty regarding first aid. The aim is to analyze the current situation without intervening in any variables. To this end, quantitative data (scores, frequencies, percentages, etc.) is collected from students through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using statistical methods. These data, obtained from a large group of participants, were analyzed in accordance with the general screening model used to identify specific characteristics of individuals (Altunışık et al., 2012; Ural & Kılıç, 2013).

This research was conducted in accordance with ethical standards and was approved by Balıkesir University's Ethics Committee (11.03.2025; E-19928322-050.04-495784).

3.2. Sample

The primary purpose of this research was to determine the level of first aid knowledge and the sources of knowledge for students who take tourism guidance education. It was also aimed to determine

whether there is a meaningful relationship between first aid knowledge level and socio-demographic characteristics of students who took tourism guidance education. The universe of this research was the first, second, third and fourth year students who were studying in the Tourism Guidance Department of Balıkesir University Tourism Faculty during the spring semester of 2024-2025 academic year.

There are several reasons for selecting students from the Tourism Guidance Department of Balıkesir University Tourism Faculty as the sample for this study. Firstly, the researcher's employment at the university facilitates direct access to students and makes the data collection process more effective and economical. This provides advantages in time management, cost, and implementation processes. Furthermore, the department has incorporated compulsory courses within the Tourist Guiding Professional Regulations (<https://mevzuat.gov.tr>) into its curriculum, including first aid training. Thus, assessing students' knowledge in this field provides a suitable basis for the study's purpose. Furthermore, students in the department are required to participate in a 90-day compulsory internship program during their undergraduate studies. These internships are conducted in various areas of the tourism sector, such as travel agencies, accommodation establishments, tour operators, and guidance services. This process allows students to actively participate in professional practice and increases their likelihood of encountering first aid situations in the field. This allows students' first aid knowledge to be assessed not only theoretically but also through practical experience. Finally, Balıkesir province, thanks to its geographical location and natural and cultural resources, is one of Turkey's leading tourism destinations, and the region hosts intensive tourism activities year-round. This provides students with more field observation and professional experience, thus increasing their likelihood of encountering health emergencies and strengthening the relevance of the research to the context.

First, the number of students enrolled in the tourism guidance section was learned of from student affairs by taking permission from the dean's office of faculty, and it was determined that the total number of students enrolled in four classes was 458. A deliberate (judicial) sampling method was used in determination of the sample size of the study. In this method, the elements that made up the sample consist of people who could answer the research problem according to the researcher (Altunışık et al., 2012: 142). Students with absenteeism constituted the limit of study. 305 students were included in the study. As the questionnaire forms of 10 students were incompletely filled, sufficient data could not be obtained and they are left out from the assessment. As a result of the evaluation, 295 questionnaires were used to conduct research analyzes. This sample size

was obtained from students participating in the research is thought to be sufficient to represent the universe and to generalize the results of the research to the universe (Ural & Kılıç, 2013).

3.3. Data Collection

A 45-question questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on the literature (Bölükbaş et. al., 2007; Altındış et al., 2017; Utlu & Altan, 2021; Demirci Güler & Alptekin, 2021). The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section contains three questions (sex, age, class) designed to gather information about the students' demographic characteristics. In the second section, there was a question about how the students assessed their own first aid knowledge levels and a multiple choice question for the determination of knowledge sources related to first aid. In the third section, A form consisting of 40 expressions (poisoning 10 expressions, bleeding 10 expressions, burn 6 expressions, cardiac massage and artificial respiration 5 expressions, general first aid knowledge 5 expressions and broken-out 4 expressions) was prepared to assess first aid knowledge levels. These expressions contained both right and wrong expressions. Students' knowledge of first aid was assessed using "true" and "false" questions, with each correct answer receiving 1 point. Poisoning and bleeding knowledge scores of the students were calculated on 10 points, burn knowledge scores were calculated on 6 points, cardiac massage and artificial respiration knowledge scores and general first aid knowledge scores were assessed out of 5 points, fracture and dislocation knowledge scores out of 4 points, and total knowledge scores out of 40 points.

The study results were analyzed using the "SPSS for Windows 21" statistical software package. In the statistical analysis, the Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20) reliability coefficient was used to analyze the internal consistency of the test items, frequency analysis, descriptive statistics and Independent Samples

t-test and One-Way ANOVA tests were used to test the hypotheses. Following the One-Way ANOVA, a Tukey post-hoc test was performed to identify which specific groups differed significantly from one another. $p < 0.05$ level was considered significant.

3.4. Limitations

This study have limitations. First, the study sample was limited to students in the Tourism Guidance Department of Balıkesir University Tourism Faculty. This makes the generalizability of the findings limited to student groups with similar characteristics.

Secondly, the survey form used as the data collection tool was developed by the researcher based on previous studies in the literature that had been tested for validity and reliability, and was revised based on expert opinions. Thus, content validity was ensured. However, a separate pilot study was not conducted during this process. The reason for not conducting a pilot study was that the questions were designed to be clear, understandable, and directly relevant to the target audience (tourist guiding students), and that the researcher had the opportunity to communicate directly with the students.

3.5. Reliability

The Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20) reliability coefficient was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the test items used in the study (Table 2). The KR-20 is used to determine the internal consistency of the test, particularly in measurement tools consisting of true/false (1/0) type items, assuming that all questions measure the same construct. The value of this coefficient ranges from 0 to 1. A reliability value between 0.80 and 1.00 indicates that the test is highly reliable; values between 0.60 and 0.80 indicate that the test is sufficiently reliable; and values below 0.60 indicate that the test has low reliability (Kalaycı, 2008).

Table 2. Situations Requiring First Aid: Internal Consistency Reliability Coefficient (KR-20) Results

Situations Requiring First Aid	KR-20	Values
Posioning	0,68	Sufficiently reliable
Bleeding	0,67	Sufficiently reliable
Burn	0,69	Sufficiently reliable
Cardiac massage and Artificial Respiration	0,81	Highly reliable
General First Aid Knowledge	0,83	Highly reliable
Fracture-Dislocation	0,56	Low reliability
GENERAL	0,64	Sufficiently reliable

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The overall KR-20 reliability coefficient for the knowledge test administered in the study was calculated as 0.64. In addition, separate KR-20 analyses were applied to the subtests created for each first aid situation, and the resulting reliability coefficients were found to range from 0.56 to 0.83. These results indicate that the test items generally have sufficient internal consistency and that the measurement tool can be considered reliable.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

The study group was composed of 55.3% (n=163) male and 44.7% (n=132) female students. 63.4% (n=187) of the students were between the ages of 20-22 and 21.4% (n=63) of the students were between the ages of 17-19 and 15.3% (n=45) of the students were over the age of 23. According to the

class distribution of the students, 30.5% (n=89) were in the first grade, 28.5% (n = 84) in the third grade, 25.8% (n=46) were in the second grade and 15.6% were in the fourth grade. 51.2% (n=151) of the students reported their level of knowledge about the first aid as "low" while 42% (n=124) of the students reported their level of knowledge about the first aid as "enough", 3.7% (n=11) of the students reported their level of knowledge about the first aid as "zero" and 3% (n=9) of the students reported their level of knowledge about the first aid as "high".

4.2. Knowledge Sources

Table 3 gives the distribution of knowledge sources of students for first aid. Students were found to learn the most of their knowledge about first aid via school (88.5%), internet (63.7%) and television (53.2%), respectively. Health personnels (40.3%) were in the fourth place in knowledge sources.

Table 3. Knowledge Sources of Students for First Aid

SOURCES	Yes	
	n	%
School	261	88.5
Internet	188	63.7
Television	157	53.2
Health Personnel	119	40.3
Familyt	103	34.9
Friend	101	34.2
Conference	96	32.5
Book	93	31.5
Brochure	63	21.4
Newspaper	62	21
Patients	53	18
Magazine	43	14.6
Radio	17	5.8
Poster	14	4.7
Other	5	1.7

4.3. Knowledge Scores

The average knowledge scores of the students for situations requiring first aid are presented in Table 4. In the study, the average score for the students' knowledge of poisoning was 7.31 ± 1.41 , the average score for the students' knowledge of bleeding was

6.16 ± 1.39 , the average score for the students' knowledge of burns was 4.19 ± 0.99 , the average score for the students' knowledge of cardiac massage and artificial respiration was 4.34 ± 0.78 , the average score for the students' general first aid knowledge was 4.40 ± 0.80 and the average score for the students' fracture and dislocation knowledge was 2.85 ± 0.94 .

Table 4. Situations Requiring First Aid, Expression Numbers and Mean Knowledge Scores

Situations Requiring First Aid	Expression Numbers *	First Aid Knowledge Score
Positioning	10	7.31±1.41
Bleeding	10	6.16±1.39
Burn	6	4.19±0.99
Cardiac massage and artificial respiration	5	4.34±0.78
General first aid knowledge	5	4.40±0.80
Fracture-dislocation	4	2.85±0.94
TOTAL KNOWLEDGE SCORE	40	29.26±3.48

*Maximum knowledge scores

4.4. Hypothesis Analysis

Table 5 shows the distribution of first aid knowledge scores according to socio-demographic characteristics of the students. There was no significant difference about poisoning knowledge scores between the students with different genders ($p=0.643>0.05$) and different ages ($p=0.406>0.05$) while there was a significant difference about the poisoning knowledge scores between the students in different classes ($p=0.02<0.05$). As the class level of the students increased, the knowledge scores about the poisoning decreased. The mean of the knowledge scores of the first grade students about poisoning was 7.54 ± 1.35 and the mean of the knowledge scores of the fourth grade students about poisoning 6.78 ± 1.38 . No significant difference was found between the students according to gender ($p=0.771>0.05$), age ($p=0.311>0.05$) and class ($p=0.647>0.05$) in terms of bleeding knowledge scores. There was no significant difference between the students with different genders ($p=0.771>0.05$) and ages ($p=0.766>0.05$) in terms of burn knowledge scores, but there was a significant difference between students in different classes in terms of burn knowledge scores ($p=0.000<0.05$). As the class level of the students increased, the knowledge scores about the burns decreased. The mean of the burn knowledge scores of the first year students was 4.57 ± 0.89 and the mean of the burn knowledge scores of the fourth grade students was 3.78 ± 1.13 . While there was no significant difference between the students in terms of knowledge scores of cardiac massage and artificial respiration according to gender ($p=0.677>0.05$) and classes ($p=0.427>0.05$), there was a significant difference between the students in terms of the knowledge scores of cardiac massage and artificial respiration ($p=0.033<0.05$) according to age. As the age of the students increased, the knowledge

scores about cardiac massage and artificial respiration increased. While there was no significant difference between the students with different genders ($p=0.702>0.05$) and ages ($p=0.894>0.05$) in terms of the general first aid knowledge scores, there was a significant difference between the general first aid knowledge scores of the students in different classes ($p=0.000<0.05$). As the class level of the students increased, the general first aid knowledge scores decreased. The mean of the knowledge scores of first grade students about general first aid was 4.57 ± 0.70 and the mean of the general first aid knowledge scores of fourth grade students was 3.93 ± 1.04 . While there was no significant difference between the male and female students ($p=0.201>0.05$) in terms of fracture-dislocation knowledge scores, there was a significant difference between the students with different ages ($p=0.02<0.05$) and classes ($p=0.000<0.05$) in terms of fracture-dislocation knowledge scores. It was observed that the students who were in the age range of 20-22 years had higher fracture-dislocation knowledge scores than in the other age ranges. And the knowledge scores about fracture-dislocation decreased as the class level of the students increased. The mean of the fracture-dislocation knowledge scores of the first grade students was 3.31 ± 0.70 and the mean of the fracture-dislocation knowledge scores of the fourth grade students was 2.54 ± 1.09 . While there was no significant difference between the students with different genders ($p=0.760>0.05$) and ages ($p=0.287>0.05$) in terms of total knowledge scores, there was a significant difference between the students in different classes in terms of total knowledge scores ($p=0.000<0.05$). As the class level of the students increased, the total knowledge scores about first aid decreased. The mean of the total knowledge scores of first grade students was 30.51 ± 2.92 and the mean of the total knowledge scores of fourth grade students was 27.41 ± 4.72 .

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Table 4. Situations Requiring First Aid, Expression Numbers and Mean Knowledge Scores

Situations Requiring First Aid	Variables	Groups	Number	%	First Aid Knowledge Score	p
POISONING	Gender	Male	163	55.3	7,35±1,44	0.643
		Female	132	44.7	7,27±1,38	
	Age	17-19 years	63	21.4	7,14±1,55	0.406
		20-22 years	187	63.4	7,33±1,34	
		≥23 years	45	15.3	7,51±1,50	
	Class	First	89	30.5	7,54±1,35	0.02*
		Second	76	25.8	7,45±1,44	
		Third	84	28.5	7,25±1,42	
		Fourth	46	15.6	6,78±1,38	
BLEEDING	Gender	Male	163	55.3	6,18±1,37	0.771
		Female	132	44.7	6,14±1,43	
	Age	17-19 years	63	21.4	5,98±1,49	0.311
		20-22 years	187	63.4	6,16±1,38	
		≥23 years	45	15.3	6,40±1,30	
	Class	First	89	30.5	6,19±1,29	0.647
		Second	76	25.8	6,30±1,47	
		Third	84	28.5	6,02±1,40	
		Fourth	46	15.6	6,13±1,47	
BURN	Gender	Male	163	55.3	4,18±0,99	0.771
		Female	132	44.7	4,21±1,01	
	Age	17-19 years	63	21.4	4,25±0,98	0.766
		20-22 years	187	63.4	4,19±1,01	
		≥23 years	45	15.3	4,11±0,95	
	Class	First	89	30.5	4,57±0,89	0.000*
		Second	76	25.8	4,14±0,84	
		Third	84	28.5	4,06±1,05	
		Fourth	46	15.6	3,78±1,13	
CARDIAC MASSAGE AND ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATION	Gender	Male	163	55.3	4,33±0,81	0.677
		Female	132	44.7	4,36±0,76	
	Age	17-19 years	63	21.4	4,28±0,80	0.033*
		20-22 years	187	63.4	4,32±0,84	
		≥23 years	45	15.3	4,62±0,58	
	Class	First	89	30.5	4,38±0,65	0.427
		Second	76	25.8	4,26±0,77	
		Third	84	28.5	4,43±0,75	
		Fourth	46	15.6	4,24±1,08	

KNOWLEDGE OF GENERAL FIRST AID	Gender	Male	163	55.3	4,38±0,80	0.702
		Female	132	44.7	4,17±0,83	
	Age	17-19 years	63	21.4	4,43±0,80	0.894
		20-22 years	187	63.4	4,38±0,79	
		≥23 years	45	15.3	4,42±0,92	
	Class	First	89	30.5	4,57±0,70	0.000*
		Second	76	25.8	4,51±0,59	
		Third	84	28.5	4,38±0,88	
		Fourth	46	15.6	3,93±1,04	
FRACTURE AND DISLOCATION	Gender	Male	163	55.3	2,79±0,98	0.201
		Female	132	44.7	2,93±0,89	
	Age	17-19 years	63	21.4	3,21±0,74	0.02*
		20-22 years	187	63.4	3,72±0,97	
		≥23 years	45	15.3	2,91±0,97	
	Class	First	89	30.5	3,31±0,70	0.000*
		Second	76	25.8	2,72±0,86	
		Third	84	28.5	2,65±0,99	
		Fourth	46	15.6	2,54±1,09	
TOTAL KNOWLEDGE SCORE	Gender	Male	163	55.3	29,21±3,34	0.760
		Female	132	44.7	29,33±3,54	
	Age	17-19 years	63	21.4	29,33±3,93	0.287
		20-22 years	187	63.4	29,07±3,44	
		≥23 years	45	15.3	29,98±2,92	
	Class	First	89	30.5	30,51±2,92	0.000*
		Second	76	25.8	29,45±3,30	
		Third	84	28.5	28,80±2,84	
		Fourth	46	15.6	27,41±4,72	

* p<0.05

In the analyses, no significant difference was found between the students' gender, age and first aid knowledge level, and H1 (There is a significant difference between students' gender and first aid knowledge level), H2 (There is a significant difference between students' age and first aid knowledge level) were rejected. A significant difference was found between students' grade level and general first aid knowledge scores ($p=0.000<0.05$) and H3 (There is a significant difference between students' grade level and first aid knowledge level) was accepted.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Accurate and conscious first aid in cases where emergency intervention is needed plays a major role in taking away the life-threatening elements. It is of great importance that the tourist guides who

are with the tourists during their travels and who are interested in all their problems and the students in tourist guidance department who will make this profession when they graduate should have sufficient and even very good level knowledge about the first aid. For this reason, it was aimed to determine first aid knowledge level and knowledge sources of the students of tourist guidance department in this study and important results were obtained.

It was found that the majority of students had higher scores than average scores in both situations requiring first aid and total first aid knowledge levels, although they found themselves insufficient in first aid. Also, in studies conducted by Nayir et al. (2011), Usta et al. (2017) and Solmaz et al. (2024), it was determined that participants did not consider themselves competent in first aid, but their knowledge levels were average or above average. This

finding suggests that students do not find their first aid knowledge satisfactory and shows that students can not well assessed themselves and they are not aware that their knowledge is correct. This may be due to the dissatisfaction of the students about their education, lack of practical training, lack of self-confidence, or a very different cause. Bakar & Maral (2010) and Karaman Özlü et al. (2022) stated the lack of practical training in first aid in Türkiye. The lack of practical training does not allow the students to test the theoretical knowledge that they have and this condition causes them to think that they do not have enough knowledge about first aid. People who do not find themselves adequately can not make correct and conscious intervention. The psycho-motor aims for the skill should be among the purposes of first aid training (Sönmez et al., 2014). For this reason, assistance and support should be provided to ensure that students feel satisfied with first aid, active participation in lectures and trainings should be encouraged, and physical infrastructure (Example: laboratory) required for practical training should be provided. Also, it can be analyzed why students do not find themselves as adequate with another study. It was found that the students obtained first aid knowledge via school, internet and television. It is not surprising that schools are the most important knowledge sources. Because first aid courses are among the mandatory courses of curriculum programs in institutions where tour guide education is provided in Türkiye. Bölükbaş et al. (2007) and Göktaş et al. (2015) found that the knowledge source of the students was school. According to the studies on women, Örsal et al. (2011) found that the knowledge sources of knowledge are television and internet while Serinken et al. (2011) found that the source of knowledge is television. In the study conducted by Altındış et al. (2017) on university students, it was determined that TV, radio and the internet were the most used sources of information. This shows that the sources of knowledge differ as the study group differs. More knowledge about first aid should be given especially in media such as television and internet. It is necessary to determine whether there is misknowledge about the subject especially on the internet. It should be regularly inspected and necessary precautions should be taken. In addition to general internet use, global online education platforms such as Udemy, Coursera, and Khan Academy provide accessible and structured first aid training programs, which could serve as valuable resources for students seeking to enhance their knowledge. Although online global education platforms such as Udemy and Coursera were not reported by the participants as primary sources of first aid knowledge in this study, these platforms represent a growing trend in educational resources and could be considered in future research.

There was no significant difference was found about conditions requiring first aid and total first aid knowledge levels between genders. A similar result was also revealed in the study conducted by Karaman Özlü et al. (2022). However, Şirin & Kaya (2006), Nayir et al. (2011), Emir & Kuş (2015), Orhan & Aydın (2020) and Yüksel Çaylak et al. (2024) found that women had more first aid knowledge than men in the studies conducted on teachers, hotel employees and high school students. Such a result was not found in the studies conducted on students. Likewise, there were no significant differences between the students at different ages in terms of the conditions requiring first aid and total first aid score. Only a significant relation was found between age and cardiac massage and artificial respiration and fracture-dislocation knowledge scores. And, knowledge scores increased as age increased. Dereli et al. (2010) was found a similar result. In contrast to this result, knowledge scores decreased as age increased according to Şirin & Kaya (2006), Başer et al. (2007), Coşkun et al. (2008), Örsal et al. (2011) and Solmaz et al. (2024). When this result obtained in the research is taken into consideration, it is expected that the level of knowledge increases as the class level or age increases. However, it was revealed that as the class level increased, the scores obtained in both first aid requiring conditions and total first aid levels decreased except hemorrhage in this study. This result may be due to the fact that the age and class level are not directly proportionate to each other and also older students in junior classes. According to Dinçer et al. (2000), Şirin & Kaya (2006), Coşkun et al. (2008), Uskun et al. (2008), Dereli et al. (2010), Örsal et al. (2011), Köksoy et al. (2012), Aslan et al. (2015) and Göktaş et al. (2015), it was determined that the level of first aid knowledge increased as the education level increased. The results of these studies support the result of our study. Because, the first aid courses in the current faculty were given to the first grade. As class level increased, students forget the existing first aid knowledge and their knowledge levels decreased. It is a necessity for schools to provide first aid classes in the first class because of the beginning of internship training of the students at the end of the first class. First aid courses are not given in the senior classes due to the necessity of internship training in tourism schools. In this case, first aid lessons may not be restricted to only first year class and first aid training may be spread over four years by continuous, up-to-date and practical training, thus the students can update their knowledge. When considering the dynamic nature of first aid, the adoption of continuous education is mandatory. The students should keep up-to-date their first aid knowledge in business life after graduation with in-service trainings. In order to provide in-service training, the Turkish Union of Tourist Guides (TUREB) should work in coopera-

tion with the related health institutions and first aid certificates should be given to tourist guides similar to those in the world, especially. Tourist guides may provide a brief overview of their first aid certification and competence during the pre-tour briefing. This can increase tourists' confidence and awareness regarding emergency preparedness during the tour.

We believe that the cooperation between the universities, TUREB, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, related health institutions, and other relevant national and international institutions (such as the Red Cross or WHO) will make important contributions to the education and health of the community. In particular, integrating internationally recognized first aid certification programs into the training of tourist guides may help ensure global standards and enhance trust among tourists.

Additionally, comparative studies with tourist guide students from different universities would be beneficial to determine the impact of both regional differences and educational practices on knowledge levels. Furthermore, developing valid and reliable measurement tools to assess first aid knowledge and skills among students and graduates is also an important need for future research.

This study will be a source for academicians who want to study about tourism and tourist health, the determination of the first aid knowledge and skill levels of tourist guides and their training needs and it will make a contribution to the literature in this subject. It is predicted that the findings and results from the collected data in this study will help and guide the development of theoretical and empirical studies and hypotheses on first aid that may be generated in the future.

Ethics Committee Approval:

This study was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Balıkesir (11.03.2025; E-19928322-050.04-495784).

Conflict of Interest:

None declared by the authors.

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A Research on the Determination of First Aid Knowledge Levels and Knowledge Resources of Tourist Guiding Students

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Guest Theft in Hospitality Businesses: Sample of Kuşadası

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Abstract

Guest theft, which is among the negative customer behaviours, has significant effects on businesses, employees and other consumers. In this context, the aim of the research is to reveal the processes related to guest theft in hospitality businesses. In the research, semi-structured interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods, was used because it allows for an in-depth examination of the subject. The population of the research consists of house-keeping and front office department employees working in 5-star hospitality businesses operating in Kuşadası. In this regard, interviews were conducted with a total of 20 front office department employees. MaxQDA 24 Pro software was used in the content analysis of the obtained data. Upon examination of the findings, it was determined that there is no standard regarding which products guests can take from their rooms in hospitality businesses. A wide range of items have been found to be subject to guest

theft, from toilet paper in guest rooms to overhead projectors in public areas. Research findings indicate that guests have stolen items from their rooms, common areas, and other guests. While thefts from hotel rooms and public areas cause financial losses in Hospitality Businesses, thefts from other guests lead to loss of prestige. When guest theft is noticed, front office department employees generally intervene based on the monetary value of the stolen item. It is also among the findings that employees ignore customer theft incidents because interventions will result in negative comments on social media sites and create a bad impression for their business.

Keywords: Theft, Guest Theft, Hospitality Businesses.

JEL Codes: M0, M1, Z3

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1. Introduction

Tourism is considered one of the economic activities where security and safety issues have important consequences. Crime in the tourism sector is considered a serious problem (Hua et al., 2020). Moira et al. (2013) stated that the hospitality industry, which is an important component of the tourism sector, appears to be vulnerable to crime cases. All kinds of criminal behaviour are occurring in the facilities, raising questions and concerns about their management by hoteliers. The nature of hotel crime is generally considered to be opportunistic and convenient, and the hospitality sector is noted to be particularly vulnerable to criminal activity in tourist destinations (Ho et al., 2016). Hotels have also been shown to be unique contexts facing a wide range of crime issues. There are two main issues that make the hospitality industry unique. First, hotels face the paradoxical problem of encouraging guests to use the hotel as a second home, while also securing the hotel against a wide range of criminal activities (Gill et al., 2002). The unique characteristics of these events, combined with the need to ensure privacy and silence of customers, raise a reasonable debate about the management of such events.

Tourist misbehaviour is of increasing interest to academic researchers and practitioners in the hospitality and tourism sector (Wan et al., 2021). Because unethical consumer practices in the hospitality industry constitute a global problem. These problems are encountered in countries and regions where the tourism sector is developing rapidly and the number of tourists is increasing (Omeland & Raczkowski, 2020). Ethical issues in the hospitality industry are not considered of a new phenomenon and this reflects the challenges that arise in a cash-based, people-intensive industry (Stevens, 2011). Although much of the service literature is based on the assumption that customers behave ethically, extensive research evidence has shown that customers habitually and intentionally engage in devious behaviour (Reynolds & Harris, 2009). Fombelle et al., (2020) stated that although the phrase "The customer is always right" suggests that customers provide universal benefits for firms, customer deviance has been on the rise in recent years, and discussed customer deviance ranging from classic examples such as shoplifting to hostile anti-brand behaviour on social media and even breaking established norms such as trespassing in stores after closing hours. Moira et al. (2013), in his study with hotel managers, found the existence of all kinds of crimes such as theft, drug use/abuse, prostitution, fraud, domestic violence.

Customer abuse is common in the service sector (Kashif et al., 2017). Theft, which is among the deviant behaviours of customers, is considered as a phenomenon that the entire business world faces and threatens businesses (Alan et al., 2010). Abdelhadi

et al. (2014) stated that the most common customer misbehaviour is consumer theft. Theft also appears to be a significant problem for hospitality businesses. Guest theft is among the ethical problems commonly encountered in hotel businesses and this situation causes financial losses in hotel businesses (Yilmaz et al., 2021). Crime prevention in the hotel environment faces special challenges due to the strong customer focus and guests' desire for privacy. This means that hotel managers have to use a less intrusive set of methods, often relying on alert, well-trained staff. This study provides a qualitative perspective on crime and security management in the hotel industry, but further research is needed to determine the roles and responsibilities of security managers and the crime prevention techniques that are most successful in this unique environment (Gill et al., 2002). In this context, the aim of the research is to reveal the processes related to customer theft in hospitality businesses. In line with the objectives of the research, the following questions were developed:

Research question 1: Which products do guests steal at the workplace?

Research question 2: Which of the items taken by guests at the workplace are considered theft?

Research question 3: What are the strategies to reduce guests theft in the workplace?

2. Conceptual Framework

Organizations face the risk of fraud and theft by managers, employees, customers, suppliers, and other parties (Clifton, 2023). The illegal taking of another person's property without that person's consent is considered theft (Clifton, 2023; Ünal, 2020). In legal terms, theft is defined as the unlawful taking of a person's property or services without the owner's consent. There are two basic elements that constitute the crime of theft: (1) the taking of property from its rightful owner, and (2) the attempt to permanently deprive the rightful owner of his/her property (Yang & Chen, 2023). Theft incidents can be encountered in many businesses. Businesses that have assets that are easy to move, have easy access to cash or have various stocks are much more likely to face theft incidents. Theft often results in traumatic events and causes great harm to the person (Ünal, 2020).

Theft is a universal problem in many sectors (Yang & Chen, 2023). Numerous studies have investigated theft in the workplace in various sectors (Goh & Kong, 2016). Korgaonkar et al. (2021), has made great efforts to understand and theorize consumer misbehaviour in marketing literature. However, there is little research examining shoplifting theoretically. This is surprising, considering that the annual cost of shoplifting in the United States is currently close to \$50 billion. In addition, retailers and local govern-

ments lose revenue due to theft and consumers inevitably pay higher prices. In 2018, the amount lost due to employee theft per incident was determined to be \$1,361.

The hospitality industry is growing rapidly as a result of high demand and service needs among customers (Rahman et al., 2021). However, since hospitality facilities are open to the outside, they are the primary target for theft incidents (Çevik, 2006). Therefore, hospitality businesses are also significantly affected by theft incidents. In the tourism sector, guests who have no intention of paying for a service and those who steal items from the hotel room or on the plane are considered thieves (Pratt, 2020; Chebli et al., 2024). Gill et al. (2002) categorizes theft incidents in a hotel as the theft of customers' valuables etc., the theft of hotel property and the theft of staff assets. Stevens (2011) found that instances of insider theft are common in the hotel industry and that theft by employees and guests is a significant problem. They also believed that theft was an industry-wide problem and inherent in the industry, a fact supported by research.

It is observed that the products subject to theft in hospitality businesses vary. Gill et al. (2002) stated that theft could involve hotel assets, staff property or guest property, and revealed that all of the hotels in his study experienced property theft. He noted that these thefts ranged from the theft of ashtrays or cutlery by guests to the theft of quite large antiques by strangers. A study conducted by the Mediterranean Touristic Hoteliers Association in 105 hotels in Antalya in 2003 reveals the prevalence of guest theft in hotels. According to the study, guests most often steal towels from hotels, as well as bathrobes, ashtrays, hotel emblems and plastic shoes (Akyol, 2004). Stevens (2011) reported that at the end of a trade show at a hotel, a 42-inch flat-screen TV disappeared from the stage area while vendors were loading their equipment, and hotel managers and police could not determine whether a hotel employee or another vendor was responsible, and that guests stole lamps and television sets. Moira et al. (2013) emphasized that thefts in hotels are frequent, twenty-five cases were reported, and the top two types were theft against customers and theft within the hotel. The value of the stolen goods can range from minimal, such as stealing supplies from a stroller maid, to high-value items like cash, jewelry, or computers. The thefts take place both inside the hotel (room service) and in public areas (parking service, hotel beach, etc.).

Theft is costly for all sectors and difficult to control (Poulston, 2008). Research on the cost of customer-related theft has focused on the retail sector (Broadhurst et al., 2011; Dootson et al., 2023). Theft incidents committed by guests in hotels cause financial losses to businesses (Alan et al., 2010), reduce the motivation of employees and cause businesses

to lose their prestige (Olçay et al., 2018). Leasca (2023) states that the American Hotel and Lodging Association estimates that theft causes \$100 million in losses to hotels annually. Aksoy (2004) states that items stolen from hotels amount to 1.2 trillion dollars. In light of this data, it seems important to reveal the causes of guest theft. In this regard, Pratt (2022) states that the boundaries are not clear about which items are owned by guests who pay for a hotel room. Huefner & Hunt (2000) found that customers may steal as a retaliatory behavior not to get the product for free but to get back at the business. Yılmaz et al. (2021) emphasizes that guest theft is committed for reasons such as personality disorders, mental illnesses, the idea of taking a souvenir from the hotel, habits, evaluating the products within the scope of the service purchased and need for them. Leasca (2023), on the other hand, states that theft by consumers is carried out with the concern that the products offered in businesses (shampoo, etc.) cannot be found elsewhere.

Given the significant impact of guest theft on businesses, employees and other consumers, it is important for hospitality businesses to take measures to prevent guest theft. According to the research findings, strategies developed from the guests' point of view to prevent theft in hotels include using products without logos, taking deposits for certain products (e.g., towels and bathrobes), securing items, observation, strict control, and product usage cards (e.g., towel cards) (Yılmaz et al., 2021). Moira et al. (2013) highlights that the company implements several measures to prevent incidents, including hiring security personnel, installing security cameras, using electronic keys/cards to track room access, and screening incoming customers. In addition, Ho et al. (2016) state that security cameras are considered one of the most effective tools in hotel environments to monitor and deter potential criminals inside or outside the hotel. However, hotels cannot install such security cameras in the hotel room due to various legal restrictions such as invasion of privacy. It is stated that these arrangements may cause guests to feel uncomfortable due to constant monitoring in the name of security.

Despite precautions, there are still issues in preventing theft in hospitality businesses. Gill et al. (2002), discovered that hospitality businesses often tolerate petty theft by customers. Ho et al. (2016) stated that, due to commercial concerns, hotels may be reluctant to report any incidents that occur in the hotel environment to the police. Abdelhadi et al. (2014) emphasised the impact of cultural differences on customer theft, highlighting that while Western hotels implement policies to prevent the theft of hotel items, the same behaviour is considered excusable in Libya. Yılmaz et al. (2021) determined that hotels mostly do not impose sanctions regarding guest theft. The reasons for this are usually explained as

the difficulty of proving that the guest commits the theft and the fact that the theft is discovered after the guest leaves the hotel. Some managers who imposed sanctions said they contacted the guest (or the agency, if applicable) to request the product or fee. When examining legal sanctions for guest theft, Leasca (2023) found that in 2010, a woman was sentenced to three months in prison for stealing two towels from the Transcorp Hilton Abuja Hotel in Nigeria.

In the light of the data obtained, guest theft has serious economic and social consequences for accommodation establishments. For this reason, Gill et al. (2002) stated that more research is needed to determine the extent of guest theft. As a result of the literature review, it has been observed that there is a limited number of studies on guest theft in accommodation businesses. For example, Yilmaz et al. (2021) interviewed 12 senior managers of large-scale hotels and addressed the issue of guest and employee theft together. However, there is no research that reviews the processes experienced by front office department employees who are faced with guest theft and need to produce solutions in a holistic process. In this context, the research aims to reveal the processes faced by front office department employees regarding guest theft and their methods of solving the problem.

3. Methodology

Qualitative research explores real-world issues, providing deeper insights into them. Qualitative research involves collecting information about participants' experiences, perceptions and behaviours. One of the strengths of qualitative research is its ability to describe processes and patterns of human behaviour which are difficult to quantify (Tenny et al., 2017). Due to the limited number of studies on customer theft in hospitality businesses in the national and international literature, the subject of the research, a qualitative research method was chosen. This was necessary in order to address the issue with a detailed and holistic approach, and to examine the participants' experiences, perceptions and behaviours towards customer theft in depth. This study was designed using a phenomenological approach, which is one of the qualitative research designs. For this research, ethics committee permission was obtained from Adnan Menderes University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee dated 09/07/2024 and numbered 15/14.

3.1. Obtaining Data

The quality of the data collected is important in qualitative research, depending on the method used (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). Interviews form the backbone of primary data collection in qualitative research designs. They also provide participants with

the flexibility to explain topics based on their level of knowledge. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews mostly allow the researcher to intervene when necessary, facilitating the subject's understanding of the topic or question under investigation (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). Kallio et al. (2016) stated that the reason why semi-structured interviews are a popular data collection method is that they are both versatile and flexible. In the light of these data, a semi-structured interview form was used to obtain qualitative data. The semi-structured interview form, conducted via conversation with one participant at a time, uses a mix of closed and open-ended questions and often includes processes accompanied by why or how questions (Adams, 2015). In this regard, the interview form prepared by the researcher consisted of 2 parts, and the participants' opinions were obtained with a semi-structured interview form that included the demographic information of the participants and interview questions. The interview form primarily includes personal information and interview questions regarding the participants' age, gender, educational status, working position and the number of years they have been working in the field of tourism. Interviews were conducted individually with each participant and lasted an average of 20 minutes. In order to avoid data loss during the interviews, audio recordings were made with the permission of the participants.

Questions asked to participants during the interviews:

- 1- Do you encounter guest theft in your working life? How do you feel when you encounter it?
- 2- Have you received any training on guest theft? If yes, what was the training like?
- 3- How do you deal with customer theft? (Do you blacklist them? Do you keep statistics? Do you transfer information about the theft to other hotels?)
- 4- Which products are counted as theft if the customer takes them away or which products are counted as theft or which products can be taken away? What products do guest steal from your business?
- 5- Do you think there is a difference in the cases of guests showing theft behavior according to nationality/age/gender?
- 6- Why do you think guest steal?
- 7- Are there any theft cases that you ignore or tolerate?
- 8- Do you take any measures to reduce theft (products with logo / products without logo)? Are there any problems you have in taking precautions? How can they be solved?
- 9- If you were to make a ranking when negative customer behaviors are examined, where would you put guest theft?
- 10- Can you share an experience you have had regarding guest theft? How did it happen? What did you do?

3.2. Study Group

Apart from choosing a research topic and an appropriate research design, there is no more fundamental research task than obtaining a sufficient sample to create a reliable study. Ensuring sufficient data is the precursor to reliable analysis and reporting. However, as in many disciplines, little attention is paid to estimating sample size in qualitative interviews. This may be partly because qualitative research emerges from an emergent design paradigm, with hesitancy to estimate sample size in the often variable and undefined initial stages of research (Marshall et al., 2013). In qualitative studies, sample sizes need to be determined as in quantitative studies, but they should not be determined with the same methods (Malterud et al., 2016). Determining the sample size in qualitative research is contextual and partly depends on the scientific paradigm in which the research is conducted. For example, qualitative research on positivism will require larger samples than in-depth qualitative research so that a representative picture of the entire population studied can be obtained. However, the paper concludes that sample sizes of a single case can be highly informative and meaningful, as illustrated by examples from management and medical research. Unique examples of research using a single example or case but involving new areas or findings that are highly relevant to the topic may be worth publishing. Creswell and Creswell (2023) state that phenomenology studies can be conducted with a number of participants between 3-10 people. The dominant concept regarding sample size in qualitative research is "saturation" (Malterud et al., 2016). Theoretical saturation can also be useful as a guide in designing qualitative research; practical research suggests that samples of 12 may be cases where data saturation occurs among a relatively homogeneous population (Boddy, 2016). For this reason, the research data were continuously examined before coding. The interviews were finished after it was observed that similar answers were given. In this

context, the study group of the research consists of 20 front office department employees working in different positions in various hotels in the Kuşadası tourism region.

3.3. Analysis of Data

The research data were analyzed using thematic analysis technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2019). In this context, firstly, the interview records were transcribed in detail and read repeatedly in order to become familiar with the data. This process was carried out by the researcher, as suggested by Lester et al. (2020). Each participant's transcription was recorded in a different file and the files were named P1, P2, P3, ... P20. Then, the first coding process was carried out systematically by coding the striking statements in the data. The coding process was carried out inductively. The codes created were grouped according to their similarities and primary themes were developed from these groups. The themes were reviewed in terms of their suitability for the data, and the final themes that provided semantic integrity were identified and named. In the final stage, the created themes were visualized in the findings section and reported, supported by participant statements. This entire process was carried out with MaxQDA 24 Pro software, considering the features of software used in qualitative research, such as ease, speed and minimizing errors (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

4. Results

In this part of the study, the findings obtained as a result of interviews with front office department employees regarding customer theft in accommodation establishments are presented. In this context, data on the descriptive characteristics of the employees who participated in the semi-structured interviews are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of Participants

Participant No	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Education Status	Sector Experience (years)	Number of Hotels Worked	Position
P1	36	Male	Married	Master	10	6	Chef
P2	35	Male	Single	Lisans	15	3	Assistant Manager
P3	29	Female	Married	University	10	2	Chef
P4	30	Male	Married	University	17	4	Assistant Manager
P5	38	Male	Married	Master	20	5	Manager
P6	29	Male	Married	University	9	3	Chef
P7	42	Male	Married	High School	23	5	Manager
P8	30	Male	Single	University	11	4	Chef
P9	37	Male	Married	University	20	12	Manager

P10	25	Male	Married	High School	7	2	Receptionist
P11	40	Male	Married	University	20	7	Manager
P12	40	Male	Married	University	27	4	Manager
P13	21	Male	Single	High School	5	2	Receptionist
P14	30	Male	Married	Master	15	5	Assistant Manager
P15	30	Male	Single	University	13	2	Shift Leader
P16	35	Male	Single	Master	17	5	Manager
P17	39	Male	Single	University	21	5	Shift Leader
P18	41	Male	Married	University	16	2	Chef
P19	40	Male	Married	University	22	2	Manager
P20	38	Male	Married	University	21	8	Manager

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive characteristics of the individuals who participated in the study. According to the table, the participants are between the ages of 21-42 and the majority of them are male in terms of gender. Most of the participants are university graduates and their sector experience ranges

between 5-23 years. In this context, it can be said that the study group is quite experienced. Additionally, it is seen that the number of hotels where the participants work is between 2-12. Finally, it is understood that the participants take various responsibilities in the front office department.

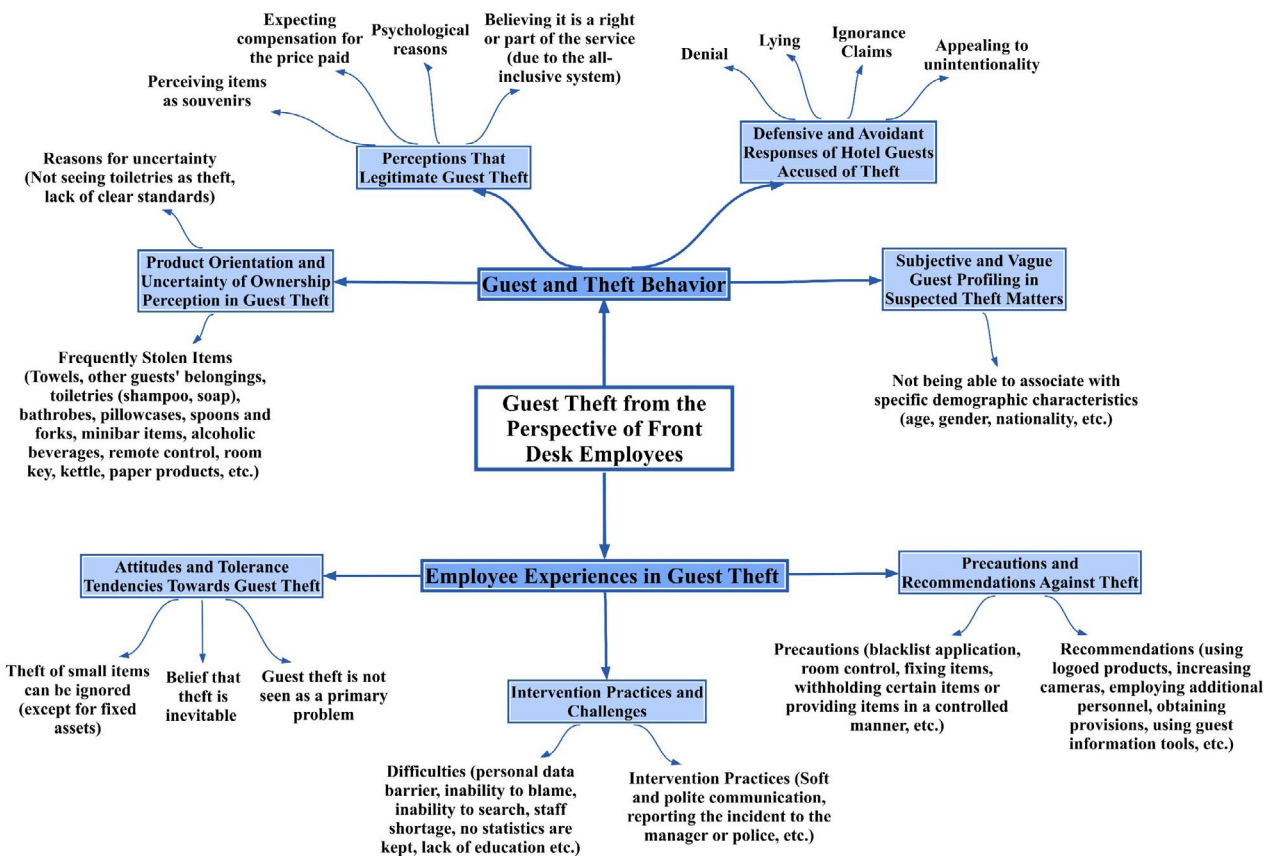


Figure 1. Thematic Map

The thematic map presented in Figure 1 summarizes the themes that emerged within the scope of guest theft from the perspective of the employees of hospitality businesses in the form of a map. According to the figure, the qualitative data obtained from the

front office department employees can be presented in two main themes: "Guest and Theft Behavior" and "Employee Experiences in Guest Theft". Each main theme is explained together with its sub-themes.

4.1. Guest and Theft Behavior

Under this heading, the themes regarding guest and theft behavior from the perspective of the participants are explained. In this context, the title, in its most general form, reveals which types of products guests are more likely to steal, the ways in which they justify theft, their behavior in confronting theft, and whether theft behavior overlaps with certain guest profiles.

Theme 1: Product Orientation and Uncertainty of Ownership Perception in Guest Theft

This theme first explains what types of products guests steal most often. According to the data obtained, it was found that guests steal towels most often, as stated by K19, "usually towels... towels are at a bit high rate for some reason, somehow it has become a habit for hotel guests to take towels." However, in order of frequency, the participants stated that other guests' belongings, boucle products (shampoo, soap), bathrobes, pillowcases, spoon and fork, minibar drinks, alcoholic beverages, remote controls (TV or air conditioner), room card, kettle and paper products such as napkins/toilet paper were targeted by guests. In addition, less frequently mentioned but noteworthy products include items such as televisions, curtains, shower heads, safe boxes and projectors. Some participants stated that they did not consider it as "theft" for guests to take toiletries, slippers, disposable items or minibar drinks, and that such products were considered acceptable, although they may vary from person to person. Participants often stated that the reason for this situation was that guests had already paid for these products. For example, K11's statement that *"it depends on the point of view... I mean, the boucle product is already specially prepared for that guest, it is something that is offered for the use of that guest, it is not considered as theft because the leftovers are thrown away after the guest leaves, but taking the fixed material of the hotel, the reusable and replaceable material is theft."* supports this finding. On the other hand, the statements of one participant as follows: *'We do not have a standard, our guests can take the boucle products, the materials we put in the rooms such as shoehorns, but other than that, towels and sheets, people have accepted this now, hoteliers have accepted this now, they see it as invisible, so these are things that are likely to happen...'* (P16) emphasise that there is no specific standard for what guests cannot take with them in hospitality businesses.

Theme 2: Perceptions That Legitimate Guest Theft

In this theme, how guests justify their theft behavior was examined through employee observations. Participants stated that customers often justify their reasons for stealing with perspectives such as "wanting

to take something as a souvenir," "wanting to get something back for the money paid," and "seeing it as a right." For example, K13 summarizes the result of this situation as *"the guest takes it as a memory, but we already give it to them when they come and request it from the reception. For example, we ordered 5,000 room cards during the last season, that is, during the summer, and the number of cards we had at the end of the season was 380."* In addition, participants stated that customers do not know which products they can and cannot take with them or that they misinterpret the limits of the all-inclusive system. K4's explanations regarding the finding are as follows:

"Some of them take it as a memory, sometimes they see it as a right, they can say that we paid for the hotel and this is also included in the service, some of them say that they thought of it as a gift, or they give what they bought as a gift, and that also happened. For example, one of our guests bought 20 glasses, they were served them at the bar and the glasses were not returned. We had beautiful casablanca glasses, last time we told them, they served you with our glasses, but it's not coming back. He said it was a gift. He said he accepted it as a gift. He said that glass was included in the all-inclusive package."

In addition to all these explanations, employees also associated guests' theft behavior with a character trait, habit or psychological reasons. The underlying reason for these explanations is that the nature of the stolen products seems meaningless to the employees. For example, K12 explains this situation with the following words:

"The guests have cryptomania, meaning they can't rest until they steal it. For example, let me give an example from last season, we have a shopping mall right below. He is not a guest who cannot afford it, he can afford it but he will definitely go there and steal that chocolate. We asked and questioned why he stole it. He says he is sick and he cannot feel comfortable if he does not steal this. You say this and he says I'm sorry. He says I have money and I can buy it but I feel happy when I take it without paying, he says I'm sorry, he says I'll give you more than that... because he did his job and earned his happiness and he took it without paying."

Theme 3: Defensive and Avoidant Responses of Hotel Guests Accused of Theft

This theme explains the reactions of the guests when theft behaviour was realized. The individuals who participated in the research stated that when the theft was noticed, the customers mostly denied the crime, claimed that the incident was accidental, had no knowledge of the issue or lied. Such defensive and avoidant reactions, on the one hand, make the process of theft intervention difficult for employees, and on the other hand, they show that the customer avoids confronting his/her behaviour.

Shower head... I'm talking to the housekeeper and I say, don't you have one? They say, "Mr X, how can we authorise the exit without a shower head? We also ask the guest, we say that there is no shower head, did you put it somewhere or did you take it out, if you took it, you can also say that, you know, it's not a problem. We look, it comes out of the guest's suitcase, and he says, 'is this how it happened again, we were going to change it, and it got into it while we were putting things in.' I told you not to take the shower head with you." (K17)

Theme 4: Subjective and Vague Guest Profiling in Suspected Theft Matters

This theme explains the profile perceptions of employees about customers who steal. Although there is no common demographic characteristic that stands out in the interviews, some employees stated that customers in the middle and upper age group commit theft behaviour more frequently. However, the issue of theft was not significantly associated with either gender or nationality by employees. For example, K1 summarizes this situation with the following statement: *"I think this (theft) has nothing to do with any nationality, age, group or race because some people have acquired it as a habit, so I cannot reduce it to nationality. I have worked with 30-40 different nationalities so far and all of them have theft incidents, although rare."* Therefore, the theme implies that theft behaviour is too diverse or contextually variable to be associated with a specific guest profile.

4.2. Employee Experiences in Guest Theft

Under this heading, the attitudes developed by hotel employees against customer theft, the institutional obstacles they face, and the preventive strategies and suggestions they implement are explained.

Theme 1: Attitudes and Tolerance Tendencies Towards Guest Theft

This theme reveals how employees develop an approach to theft incidents and in which cases they tolerate these behaviours. During interviews, some employees stated that small losses (e.g. toiletries, slippers, towels, etc.) were often overlooked. For example, P15 explains this situation as follows: *"We don't have much especially in repeatable products, for example towels or materials that they can use in the room. Since they are already ordered with a certain capacity, we can't always do that, but in cases in which they can eat or drink, if it is not an alcoholic beverage, for example, they run out of a cola, they say I want to take this, we say okay, take it."* A different participant (P16) said, *"We don't have a standard, our guests can take their boucle products, the shoehorns we put in the rooms. Apart from that, towels, sheets, people have accepted this now. Hotel employees have accepted this now, they see*

these as things that are highly likely to be stolen," revealing that the theft of these products is sometimes considered as an 'accepted' or "inevitable" situation. On the other hand, theft behavior is often not seen as a serious threat, rather direct violent behaviors such as harassment and insults are among the priority problems for employees. This situation once again reveals that employees do not consider theft to be relatively unimportant but rather that it is part of the nature of the job. Although the general perception is as described, one participant ranked guest theft in the first place in terms of the difficulties he experienced in his working life. P11 explains the issue with the following words:

"When we look at those who drink alcohol and harm other guests, it may not cause a problem when they do not drink alcohol, and if they have already drunk too much alcohol, the employees does not give alcohol after a certain point, warns the guest, says that they will not give alcohol until they feel better. We can prevent it like this. We gently warn the disruptive guest and then warn them through security or, if necessary, warn the hotel's department manager and take them under control. But unfortunately theft cannot be prevented. In my opinion, it comes first because it is not possible to prevent it. After a person says he didn't do it and denies it, because he is a guest, in terms of guest satisfaction and assuming that the guest is always right, I can never, ever say that he has stolen without a fixed proof of guilt..."

Theme 2: Intervention Practices and Challenges

This theme covers how employees react to theft incidents, which methods they prefer, and the structural and legal obstacles they face in this process. First of all, all businesses explained that they do not keep statistics on guest theft. However, hotel employees do not know exactly how to act in the face of guest theft and emphasized that they have not received any training on this process. Only P17 explained the training regarding this process with the words, *"We need to stay calm, not blame 100% on things we are not sure about, and use those attitudes."* Even though they are not trained in a similar way, other business employees often avoid making direct accusations in cases of suspected theft and use indirect and polite communication language. Participants stated that *"these issues are really sensitive. You can lose the guest completely, you can make sure that he/she will not come there again, or you can say that it is wrong without offending the guest. Generally, guests are offended about this."* (P9) or *"Let's say there is a pillow missing in the room, we say it in a polite way without accusing the guest that it could be a mistake."* (P18). While one participant stated that a harsher attitude should be displayed as a business in guest theft, he emphasized that negative comments that can be written on the internet are also a deterrent factor for them. The participant's words on this

issue are as follows; *"Actually, we can be harsher on this issue, but we are not being complete. Offending and hurting the guest is not something we do very often. Negative comments have affected tourism in many different ways in the last five years. I mean, if the guest writes five negative comments because we are going to ask for two things, the cost of those five one stars is worth much more."* (P19).

In the post-intervention process, some employees report the case to their managers, while others take the case to the police. Although these practices are not institutionally based on a standard procedure, decisions are generally made on an individual basis. For example, it is among the findings that even the situation of reporting guest theft to the police can be considered as a last resort considering the satisfaction of other guests. P13 explained this situation as follows: *"We talk to the guest first, if the guest says I did absolutely nothing like that, we have to contact the police if necessary. The police coming to the hotel is a very bad sight among so many guests. We definitely have to call the police when we have to, but otherwise we stay away from the police as much as possible."* In addition, many factors such as limited camera recordings, not being able to call customers directly, not being able to file charges, and not having a control staff (housekeeping employee) on night shifts, as required by the Personal Data Protection Law in Turkey, are among the factors that limit employee intervention. It is understood that these situations show that employees are forced to deal with legal boundaries and institutional deficiencies, and sometimes lead them to illegal behavior. For example, the behavior of a business as a result of the inability to search despite the fact that it was understood that the lampshade, which can be expressed as a fixture in the hotel room, was stolen, draws attention. The participant conveys his experience with the following words:

"The housekeeper notices that there is no lampshade in the room after the guest checks out. Since we, as the front office, know the guests more personally, we clearly inform them that they have not checked out yet. There is a problem, we cannot open the luggage. The luggage is also a big one, but there is almost a 5 percent chance that the lampshade could have come out in another way. Either he must have taken it a few days ago and since the cleaning is done every day, it must have been noticed. Considering these possibilities, we realized that the possibility of him taking it when leaving was high. Therefore, there are some legal and illegal researches, of course the inside of the room is not visible, so unfortunately there is an illegal side. After thinking that the lady who cleaned the room, the mini bar attendant, the floor manager and the HK manager who checked the room were sure about this issue, we opened the luggage, regretfully and unwillingly, but of course because our aim in our business is

to protect, by placing staff around when there were no guests, to make sure that no guests had arrived. After seeing the product inside, the guest came to pick up his suitcase and it was determined that it was his. We said we want you to open your suitcase in front of him. He did not want to open it, we informed him that we had to open it in the presence of security, otherwise we would call the police. Since we were sure, we opened it and it came out." (P7)

Theme 3: Precautions and Recommendations Against Theft

This theme includes the strategies developed by employees and businesses to prevent theft cases. According to the findings, the most frequently taken measure is the blacklist application. Employees try to prevent guests from staying again by blacklisting them as a result of their thefts. However, the most common practice is the control practice after the guest checks out, as stated by P18, *"We follow up directly on the day the guest checks out. We immediately tell housekeeping when they check out, they give feedback to us, and if there is a deficiency, we do not let the guest out."* Similarly, control practice is also carried out during the day. One participant summarized this practice in the business as follows: *"For example, when our housekeeping colleagues go to clean during the day, we check if there are any missing items in the room, on a daily basis, in order to prevent such situations. Of course, theft occurs, but we definitely have it checked, so we can prevent any extra items that may occur as a result of the day earlier"* (P15). On the other hand, businesses fix the items with a high risk of loss or give them at the request of the guest. Practices such as boucle products or minibar drinks in limited quantities, distributing towels and bathrobes in a controlled manner, or not placing products with a high risk of theft in the room are prominent. Participants explained this situation as follows: *"This year, they fixed the shampoo and shower gel in the shower area, fixed them in the showers like hand soap dispensers, they fill them and provide service that way. Such a measure was taken this year."* (P10), or *"For example, television remotes, air conditioner remotes, hair dryers, kettle accessories, all of these are very valuable to us, of course we take precautions, we have to"* (P7).

As a result of the interviews, the participants made some suggestions to reduce guest theft. These suggestions are generally centered around placing the company logo on stolen products that guests are unlikely to use, increasing the number of cameras, employing special personnel for control, obtaining provisions for additional fees, or providing information about what guests can and cannot take from the hotel. Especially considering that guests may be uninformed about this issue, it is thought that taking measures to inform them will reduce guest theft. The participant offers the following suggestion on the subject

I think it would be nice if the information sheet we give to the guests included a nice note saying that you cannot take anything belonging to the hotel out of the hotel or that you cannot take anything out of the room.” (P13)

5. Conclusion

This research examines the perceptions of front office department employees in hospitality businesses towards customer theft, their reactions to these behaviors and the difficulties they face at the institutional level, aiming to make visible a problem that is frequently encountered but often goes unreported in the accommodation sector. This is because it is difficult to accurately determine how much and what type of crime is occurring in hotels, as not enough reports are shared (or accessible) by the police or hotels (Ho et al., 2017). The findings obtained show that guest theft cannot be considered as a one-dimensional behaviour. In this context, guest theft has shown that customer perception, service delivery style, organisational procedures and legal regulations shape this situation.

In the research, it was concluded that towels, other guests' belongings, boucle products, bathrobes, pillow cases, spoon-forks, minibar drinks, alcoholic beverages, remote control, room card, kettle and paper products are frequently stolen from an accommodation establishment. It can be seen that the result obtained is in parallel with the literature (Pratt, 2022; Sufi et al., 2023). However, the result obtained is similar to the classification of Gill et al. (2002), but the research did not find any results regarding the theft of hotel employees' assets. Therefore, it is thought that this relative difference is due to the fact that it is very rare for guests to steal the assets of hotel employees.

One of the important results of the research is the areas where customer theft is carried out. As a result of the research, it is seen that the customers perform theft behavior in their room, from other customers and in the general areas of the hotel. Thefts from hotel rooms have serious economic consequences for accommodation businesses. In this context, it was determined that approximately 350 towels were stolen annually in one of the hotels where the research was conducted. Data were obtained that customer thefts against other customers caused a loss of prestige for accommodation establishments. It has been revealed that the victimized customers have an attitude that the accommodation establishments should take responsibility for the theft incident. This result should be taken into consideration for businesses that want to have a good image in the eyes of their customers. In addition, the theft of overhead projectors from the hotel's meeting room or POS machines at the reception shows that the theft behavior of customers is not limited to the rooms and it is

seen that general areas should be carefully controlled. As a result of the research, there are also some results on how front office department employees who experience theft will behave. In particular, employees emphasized that the financial value of stolen goods influenced their understanding of customer intervention. Some hotel employees accepted the theft of small items as well as fixtures as the nature of the business. In line with the literature, small-scale theft of products is tolerated (Gill et al., 2002). Some of the reasons for this are that it is difficult to prove (Yilmaz et al., 2021), it is not reported to the police due to commercial concerns (Hoa, 2016), and it cannot be searched due to the personal data protection law. This situation, as found in the research, brings with it the risk that businesses may sometimes resort to illegal practices such as secret searches in order to protect themselves. In addition, it was found that when theft is discovered, guests often develop strategies such as denial, lying, avoidance or claiming ignorance, while employees have difficulty in confronting these situations. In this context, this results in guests perceiving property boundaries as flexible or ambiguous, and as a result, guests develop defense mechanisms. In addition, the findings regarding the possibility that the interventions made to the customers who committed theft may return as negative comments on holiday social networking sites and that some theft incidents are ignored by the front office department employees are also remarkable data.

It was concluded that the guests considered some products as their own and stole them for souvenir purposes or for psychological reasons (cryptomania, etc.). This result is similar to the results obtained by Yilmaz et al. (2021) and Sufi et al. (2023). A study has found that robbery rates increase in high-priced hotels and that theft rates also increase with the number of security guards (Bach & Pizam, 1996). In addition to this result, this research has reached the conclusion that the all-inclusive system resorts to forms of justification such as guests misinterpreting its limits. Therefore, this study concluded that the all-inclusive system may be a factor that may pave the way for guest-related theft cases. In this respect, the study adds a new dimension to the literature on criminal behavior in tourism (especially guest theft) and makes an important contribution to future research. In addition, in this respect, the research indicates that criminal behavior is shaped by systemic conditions, not individual ones. However, when looking at the existing literature, there are different results regarding the relationship between demographic variables and theft behavior. Huefner and Hunt (2000), who investigated six types of retaliatory behavior by customers, including theft, vandalism, and personal assault, also present evidence that men are more likely than women to engage in these types of crimes. They also argue that people

with lower education are significantly more likely to engage in retaliatory behaviors such as theft, vandalism, and physical aggression. Daunt and Harris (2010) emphasizes that low income is effective in bad customer behavior and that there is a relationship between low income levels and theft behavior. Contrary to these research findings, Ho et al. (2017) stated that the demographic characteristics of hotel guests had no effect on their likelihood of becoming victims of theft. This study brings a new perspective to the field by revealing that these demographic factors are not determinants of guest theft behavior.

In the study, it was concluded that hotel employees did not receive any training on customer theft. In this context, employees primarily show the behavior of communicating with the guest in a polite language in the fight against theft. Similarly, no specific statistical data is kept on theft. Employees frequently use the blacklist application against guest theft, thus preventing repeat accommodations (Pratt, 2022). In addition, they ensure that the rooms are checked (during the day or after check-out), and the products are fixed or provided to the guests on a limited basis. However, these practices are often carried out on individual initiative, lacking a systematic institutional structure. For example, while housekeeping staff can check rooms when customers check out during the day, they cannot do so at night because there are no staff members on duty.

Hotel employees also made some suggestions. It was concluded that these suggestions generally included placing the company logo on the stolen products, increasing the number of cameras, hiring new personnel, making provisions or informing the guest about the hotel products. Especially considering the different hotel types and procedures, it is thought that the information process will be effective. Because it is understood from guest statements and employee observations that the theft of some products is not a conscious theft, but is often perceived as part of the service or as a "takeaway". Therefore, clear information on the ownership status of products can both prevent misunderstandings and reduce stealing behavior. In addition, in the context of the results obtained in the research, standard procedures should be developed for theft cases (report, recording, intervention flow), employees should be trained to deal with theft, a recording system should be established for stolen products, and camera systems should be increased within the legal limits. A blacklist database should be developed by establishing hotel associations or regional business networks, which can be done at the sectoral level, and the intervention area should be expanded by taking into account the personal data protection law. Additionally, handling customer theft processes in public areas may cause unrest and reactions in the hotel environment, so interventions should not be carried out in front of other guests.

Due to the nature of the research, there are some limitations in this study. The main limitations are that only the perspectives of the front office departments are included and Kuşadası is chosen as the research area. It is thought that the opinions of different department employees (e.g. housekeeping) will also contribute to the results of the research. In addition, it is thought that examining guest theft in different tourist destinations in Turkey will contribute to the generalization of the results according to destination differences. On the other hand, the perception of theft can be examined from the guest perspective, and the theft phenomenon can be compared in different hotel types (city, holiday, boutique). It can be examined whether the all-inclusive system increases guest theft or, more generally, the crime rate in hotels, thus revealing the effects of the type of service. Studies can be carried out to determine the financial burden that guest theft creates for hospitality businesses. This study was conducted in five-star hotels. Broadhurst et al. (2011) found that businesses with 10 or fewer employees in the retail sector were most prone to customer theft. He cited the lack of sufficient resources for surveillance systems as the reason for this situation. In this context, small hotels may be preferred for future research. Furthermore, Babin and Griffin (1995) found that consumers with low self-esteem view theft as a more "fair" or "just" behavior than those with high self-esteem. In this context, it is thought that psychological studies aimed at determining the personality traits of guests who exhibit theft behavior will be useful in preventing guest theft.

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Research Article

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Adaptation of Traditional Tavern Culture to New Generation Taverns, Loyalty, and the Impact of Social Benefit: The Case of Çanakkale

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Abstract

Traditional taverns have endured as significant cultural assets of Anatolian lands. However, changes in consumption habits have led to the emergence of new-generation taverns. This shift has resulted in the neglect of traditional taverns, which are an important component of cultural heritage. This study focuses on traditional taverns and their patrons within the scope of intangible cultural heritage. It investigates the effects of individuals' perceptions of traditional tavern culture, loyalty to traditional taverns, and perceptions of social benefit on their adaptation to new generation taverns. The research was conducted with individuals in Çanakkale who embrace traditional tavern culture. Data were collected from 409 regular patrons of traditional taverns in Çanakkale using face-to-face and online survey techniques. Relationships among the latent variables were analyzed through structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings indicate that traditional tavern culture positively influences loyalty and social benefit. Similarly, individuals' perceptions of social

benefit regarding traditional taverns were found to increase loyalty, yet showed no significant effect on adaptation to new generation taverns. Moreover, as individuals' traditional tavern culture strengthens, their adaptation to new generation taverns decreases. Likewise, higher loyalty to traditional taverns corresponds to lower adaptation to new generation taverns. Additionally, as individuals age, their adaptation to new generation taverns declines. However, no significant relationship was found between traditional tavern experience and adaptation to new generation taverns. These results highlight the role of traditional tavern culture in preserving cultural heritage and its implications for understanding changing consumption patterns in the hospitality sector.

Keywords: Traditional Tavern, New Generation Tavern, Social Benefit, Loyalty, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Structural Equation Model.

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1. Introduction

Human beings are inherently social creatures (Işık, 2018). Eating and drinking are fundamental activities that fulfill our biological needs (Ay & Şahin 2014). While this basic phenomenon is realized, people can interact with different cultures by engaging in social communications. Each society has its own cultural elements. Social communications can occur when different cultures experience joy, grief and entertainment activities together (Ciğerim, 2001; Erdem et al., 2018). While this basic phenomenon is realized, people can interact with different cultures by engaging in social communications. Each society has its own cultural elements. Social communications can occur when different cultures experience joy, grief and entertainment activities together (Ciğerim, 2001; Erdem et al., 2018).

These places, which have been one of the fundamental values that form the cultural structures of societies, are one of the most important cultural elements that include the geographical lifestyles, production styles, historical development processes, economic and cultural activities, beliefs and ethnic characteristics of societies (Üçer & Peşken 2001, Ciğerim, 2001; Erdem et al., 2018). Taverns, have been the examples of Anatolia's food and beverage culture which survived to this day were founded on the basis of social communications and interaction. However, due to the developments of technology and tourism, it has undergone changes in order to maintain its existence as cultural heritage.

The industrial revolution and the intensification of technological developments have caused people's leisure times to increase and their understanding of entertainment to change. The changing consumption behavior had caused an increase in product diversity and competition in the emerging market. In this context, businesses have tended to develop new trends and innovations in order to keep up with this change and respond to consumer demands (Tarinç & Özbek, 2022). The industrial revolution and the intensification of technological developments have caused people's leisure times to increase and their understanding of entertainment to change. The changing consumption behavior had caused an increase in product diversity and competition in the emerging market. In this context, businesses have tended to develop new trends and innovations in order to keep up with this change and respond to consumer demands (Tarinç & Özbek, 2022). These newly developed trends and innovations can cause traditional cultures to degenerate and change. Especially the young generations' excessive contact with technology may cause them moving away from their culture and prevent transmitting it to the next generation. This can cause cultural changes and disruptions (Seylan and Güney, 2014)

Cultural changes and corruption have been also expressed as the degeneration and destruction of religion, language, morality, traditions and customs (Şahin, 2011). Accordingly, the unique eating and drinking culture of the society has been also changing. Food, food types, beverages, and the need for eating and drinking that nourish the society, and the places, beliefs and practices formed in this context have been defined as a holistic and unique cultural structure (Maviş, 2008; Mankan and Özçelik, 2019; Güler, 2010). Based on this definition, it is possible to emphasize that there is a significantly strong bond between culture and the concept of food and beverage (Sormaz & Kaya, 2019).

In the literature, it is seen that there are studies that deal with traditional taverns from different perspectives. Erdiçli (2023) examined the taverns that existed from the 16 th century to the 20 th century. Altun & Elidemir (2023) examined the products in the kitchen of the meyhanes in Cyprus from a gastronomic point of view. Yalap (2017) emphasized the importance of taverns as the subject of poems in Turkish literature. Yenici (2020) emphasized the importance of tavern culture by examining the photographs of the famous photographer Ara Güler reflecting the tavern culture. Çapraz (2018) states that taverns are home to the basis of the minstrel rivalries in Turkish culture and that they are performed in taverns. In this direction, it is obvious that taverns have made many contributions to Turkish literature. In the literature, it is seen that taverns have social benefits, but they are not directly analyzed in terms of social benefit. This situation reveals the originality of the study. Examining the traditional tavern patrons by addressing the concept of loyalty in the context of place-human relationship supports the originality of the study.

In the research, the transformation of traditional taverns into new generation taverns, focusing on how social benefits, traditional tavern culture, and loyalty influence adaptation to these new spaces. It also investigates whether age and years of tavern-going experience affect adaptation. Considering the impact of technology on consumption habits and spatial preferences, the study explores the role of taverns as intangible cultural heritage, particularly their contribution to social benefits and loyalty in human-space relations. Since no existing model analyzes the factors influencing adaptation to new generation taverns, this research is expected to fill a gap and contribute to the literature.

1.1. Traditional and New Generation Tavern

Traditional taverns have survived from the Ottoman period to the present day and stand out as an element that reflects the food and beverage culture of

Anatolia. Taverns have been defined as social places where people come together to eat, rest and spend time. Taverns were places that served food and beverages and generally run by non-Muslims during the Ottoman period. With the proclamation of the Republic, taverns have been opened in many places as a result of the Anatolian people's adaptation to the tavern culture. The concept of taverns, generally associated with maritime and maritime trade, continues to exist in the coastal cities of Anatolia (Açhan, 2018; Erdinçli, 2020b; Şimşek, 2021).

When considered historically, traditional taverns have been known as places where those engaged in maritime activities and maritime trade visited ports to spend time in the Byzantine period (Öztekin, 2005). The port culture, which was formed by different nations coming together at that time, has been observed in historical sources that has survived to the present day as taverns. When historical sources have been examined, it is seen that in the port culture, various drinks were consumed in the places located in the ports and various appetizers were served to accompany the drinks (Erdinçli, 2023). Today, the same service continues in taverns.

These food and beverage venues, which have survived from the Byzantine period to the present day, have become a culture that reflects and pioneers the gastronomy of Anatolia (Öncü et al., 2001). With the change in technology and people's consumption understanding, traditional taverns have undergone changes and deteriorations in order to survive in their market. Today, it has still referred as a culture that continues to exist traditionally and is kept alive in many provinces, especially İstanbul (Erdinçli, 2020b).

New generation taverns have been places that bring a modern and contemporary (popular) interpretation to traditional tavern customs and culture. These types of taverns do not preserve the traditional elements that have been refined through historical accumulation, and offer different atmospheres with contemporary gastronomy, modern design, creative appetizers and food menus (Yıldız & Davutoğlu, 2020; Güzel et al., 2023). They differ from traditional taverns from their decoration to their lighting. New generation taverns have been venues that stand out with their entertainment-centered stage shows (Aydın, 2022). In these places, deep relationships are not established; they create environments that are superficial and far from emotional connections. In this sense, new generation taverns are modern places that emphasize consumption and are places that express lighter, flexible relationships (Demiral & Özel, 2016; Şahin & Yazıcıoğlu, 2020).

The social development of the world and the involvement of women in business life in Anatolia have caused the eating and drinking habits of individuals in Anatolia to change (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Espe-

cially with the declaration of the Republic, the increase in women's social rights and their presence in business life have led to some changes in Anatolian culture. These changes can be considered as the pioneers of the change in Turkish gastronomy. In this context, the social benefit-creating feature of traditional taverns and the loyalty-creating feature, which has been identified with the concept of loyalty-regularity within the framework of this benefit, stand out as concepts that need to be addressed separately. These concepts are also important in terms of their positive reflections on tourism.

1.2. Social Benefit

The tourism sector has become an important sector in the world economy in the last century. It has become a locomotive sector that provides an important source of commercial income for countries (Köşker, 2024). The tourism sector is linked to many sectors. Its impact on more than one sector can play an important role in the development of the country. Many studies in the literature emphasize that tourism activities improve community life and the quality of social life (Besculides et al., 2002; Attanasi et al., 2013; Yolal et al., 2016). Tourism activities such as cultural travel contribute to social benefits (Yolal, 2017).

Social benefits can be listed as follows: increase in income level, increase in tax revenues, positive increases in employment, diversification of economic inputs, enrichment in social, cultural and environmental factors (Andereck et al., 2005; Duman et al., 2021). The realization of touristic activities helps to increase public services in cities, urban structuring, strengthening the infrastructure and increasing investments in terms of social benefits (Zhuang et al., 2019; Eryer, 2024).

Developments in the field of tourism can affect local people in many ways in terms of social benefits. These include the protection of local values, tolerance, foreign language learning, cultural mobilization, information exchange, awareness about the protection of historical and cultural assets, and the protection of cultural resources (Uygur & Baykan, 2007; Kozak et al., 2013).

Protecting traditional taverns within the scope of intangible cultural heritage is likely to help preserve Anatolian gastronomy culture. Preserving tavern culture and gastronomy and ensuring its survival through incentives can help cities' food and beverage cultures come to the fore and become centers of attraction (Deniz, 2024).

As traditional taverns have been one of the basic inputs of Anatolian culture can enable the preservation of social identity in the destination they are located. Presenting the cultural values of the taverns and reflect this culture to tourists will strengthen the

ties between society and increase awareness of social identity, social loyalty and cultural values. Touristic activities such as cultural travels contribute to social benefit (Yolal, 2017). Thus, traditional taverns will remain as places that best reflect the cultural identity, cultural structure and eating- drinking rituals (Kayran & Atçı, 2024; Sezen & Külekçi, 2020).

Traditional taverns have been one of the most basic elements of Anatolian culture. They are the common point of many different cultures living in Anatolia. They reflect local gastronomy and also socialization spots. This allows them to have an important place in terms of social benefit, by providing economic inputs, supporting employment, supporting local production and helping to preserve the cultural values of the society (Denk, 2023; Elmacioğlu & Seçme, 2023).

1.3. Loyalty

In the literature, loyalty is generally defined as the tendency to maintain continuity toward a business, product, or service, often expressed in the food and beverage industry as increased customer frequency (Dick & Basu, 1994; Reichheld & Schefter, 2000; Şahin & Biçer, 2020). It refers to customers' repeated preference for the same business based on positive perceptions (Skogland & Siguaw, 2004; Rizwan et al., 2014) and is conceptually linked to "regularity". In traditional taverns, the concept of loyalty has been associated with the concept of regular (Ayhan, 2023), where regulars select taverns not only for gastronomy, service, or ambiance but also for the emotional experiences they provide. Over time, this regularity develops into an emotional, cultural, and behavioral attachment that goes beyond the customer-space relationship, creating strong emotional closeness with the tavern, its owner, and employees, and sustaining loyalty even without direct consumption (Upamannu et al., 2015; Halitoğulları & Dinç, 2020).

1.4. Traditional Tavern Culture

Traditional tavern culture, a centuries-old cultural tradition combining food, drink, music, and conversation, emphasizes social interaction and relaxation and is especially common in the Balkans, Middle East, and Mediterranean, adapting uniquely to local societies over time. Türkiye, hosting many civilizations, developed a shared cultural structure, with drinking culture persisting from ancient Turks through the Ottoman Empire to the Republican Era and today, despite periodic bans and religious prohibitions in the predominantly Muslim society. Taverns have been significant sources for literature and cinema, featuring in numerous works of the Republican period. Raki, the culturally symbolic anise-scented drink,

has a 500-year history dating back to the Ottoman era and became popular in İstanbul taverns after the conquest by Mehmet the Conqueror. With this rich cultural background, taverns developed unique rituals, where etiquette, respect, love, and trust are applied at the table. Culturally, taverns have brought together people from diverse backgrounds, fostering interaction and creating a distinctive cultural space within a society where alcohol consumption was religiously restricted (Ögel, 2006; Gülgen, 2010; Zat, 2013; Erdinçli, 2020a; Şimşek, 2021).

2. Research Model and Research Hypotheses

In the research, the effect of traditional tavern culture and traditional taverns on social benefit, loyalty, and adaptation to new generation taverns, with adaptation defined as the endogenous variable and traditional tavern culture as the exogenous variable. Traditional taverns, accepted as part of a city's cultural heritage, preserve customs and rituals while fostering community spirit, solidarity, and economic growth through local food and beverage offerings for both locals and tourists. By creating social benefits, they strengthen loyalty, as individuals who value these benefits tend to remain committed to traditional taverns rather than choosing alternative venues. In this context, the research hypotheses are developed accordingly.

Acehan (2018) emphasized that people interacted with each other by reading poems in the meyhane. In addition to this situation, he stated that it was a place preferred by the intellectual individuals of the period. Yılmaz (2016) emphasizes that taverns are preferred by poets. In this direction, he states the importance given to taverns by the poets of the period who benefited socially and left an impact on the culture of the society with literary works.

Therefore, individuals who are aware and have experience of the social benefits of traditional taverns will increase their loyalty to traditional taverns and will prefer other food and beverage venues less. Particularly they will stay away from experiencing new generation taverns. In this context, H1, H2 and H3 are proposed as follows;

H₁: As traditional tavern culture increases among regulars, the perception of social benefit created by traditional taverns increases.

H₂: As the traditional tavern culture increases among regulars, the perception of loyalty to traditional taverns increases.

H₃: As the perception of social benefit created by traditional taverns increases among regulars, the perception of loyalty to traditional taverns increases.

Harmandar (2020) emphasized from past to present, the understanding of entertainment in tourism has

undergone changes from time to time. With the development of technology, people's interaction with each other is increasing. As a result of these interactions, past entertainment concepts have been forgotten and new ones have been formed instead. Lale and Koca (2023) mentions the change and modernization of entertainment culture over time. In this direction, the research hypothesis 4 was formed as follows.

H₄: While traditional tavern culture increases among regulars, adaptation to new generation taverns decreases.

Perceptions play an important role in individuals' attitudes and behaviors. Perceptions that arise as a result of individuals' interaction with their external environment shape their thoughts, attitudes and behaviors over time (Arkonaç, 2001). For this reason, the events that individuals experience in a conventional order make it difficult for them to have attitudes and behaviors towards a new order. In addition, the individual's ability to adapt to and adopt an innovation occurs when he/she thinks that it benefits him/her (Yeloğlu, 2007). Gültekin & Onsekiz (2005) examined the changing understanding of entertainment in Turkey's Ankara province. They emphasized that the increase in the city population and the political understanding of the period made important changes in the understanding of entertainment. The emergence of a new generation understanding in taverns can be associated with this issue. Under the influence of technology, there are changes in society's understanding of consumption and entertainment. In this direction, hypothesis 5 is formed as follows.

H₅: While the perception of social benefit created by traditional taverns increases among regulars, compliance with new generation taverns decreases.

The concept of regularity becomes prominent in traditional taverns. Regularity occurs as a result of emotional and physical attachment to the place and is associated with loyalty (Ayhan, 2023). Individuals' loyalty to the venue affects their behavioral intentions. In particular, as individuals' loyalty to the venue offering touristic products or services increases, their intention to revisit and recommend to the existing establishment increases (Chi & Qu, 2008; Hernandez-Rojas, Folgado-Fernandez & Palos-Sanchez, 2021). In this context, individuals' high loyalty to traditional taverns may reduce their preferences for new generation taverns and create difficulties in their adaptation. H₆ is proposed as follows.

H₆: While individuals' perception of loyalty to traditional taverns increases, compliance with new generation taverns decreases.

Temurçin & Alaydin (2021) emphasized that in chan-

ges are realized in the spatial preferences of individuals as their age increases. Suggestions were made for elderly tourist groups and it was stated that strategies should be developed for these tourists. Duygun & Koçyiğit (2021) based on research the places preferred by segments of society may differ according to age. It is stated that the types of spaces differ according to the segments of society. The functions of the spaces are shaped according to the structure of the society and their preferences are made according to this shaping. In Sönmez's (2022) master's thesis titled "Places that have lost their gender, an analysis on the transformation of taverns in northern Cyprus", tavern preferences differ according to both gender and age. It is stated that taverns were previously characterized as places preferred more by men. It is emphasized that women also prefer them with modernization. He states that there are old taverns that are generally preferred by middle age and above. He states that the preferences of women and new generation taverns have increased.

H₇: As the age of regulars increases, compliance with new generation taverns decreases.

H₈: While the traditional tavern experience of the regulars increases, the adaptation to the new generation tavern decreases.

Nowadays, traditional taverns have slowly begun leave their place to the new generation taverns. New generation taverns emerged as a result of the dominance of popular culture. However, new generation taverns are entertainment venues where music and dance are at the forefront. In particular, new generation taverns are preferred by younger individuals because of their more modern music and food and beverage offerings. It is known that middle and older age individuals are more likely to prefer traditional taverns because of the atmosphere they are used to (Aydin, 2022; Güzel et al., 2023). The main reason for this can be seen as the fact that young individuals are more open to looking for new products and service offerings with taking risks, and older individuals want to continue to experience traditional products and services without taking risks (Han & Ryu, 2007; Türkmen dağ & Hassan, 2018). Otherwise, it becomes easier for individuals to adopt the product or service depending on their experience with it (Wang et al., 2008). At this point, the high age and experience of individuals who prefer traditional taverns will increase their loyalty to these places and make it difficult for them to adapt to new generation taverns. This case is the main reason for both H₇ and H₈. Eight hypotheses were proposed within the scope of the research. Structural equation modeling of these hypotheses is given in Figure 1.

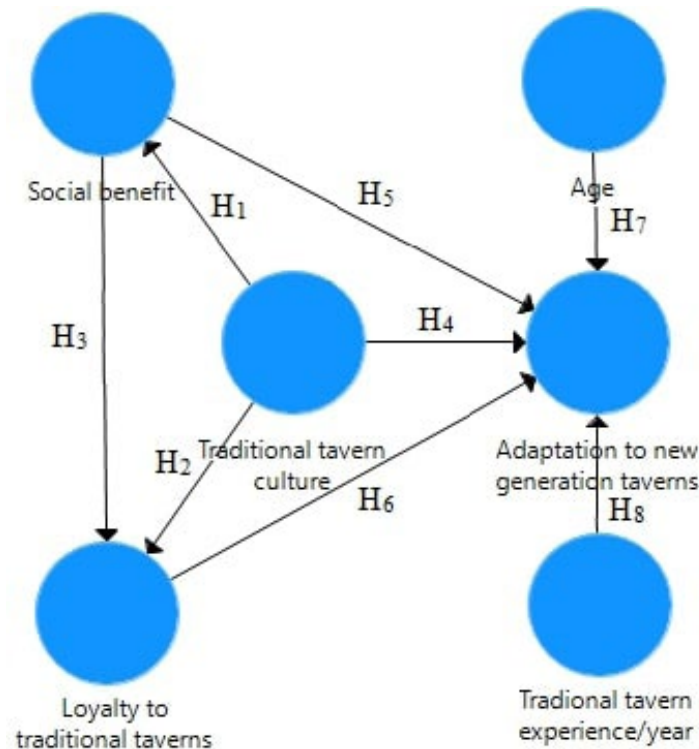


Figure 1. Research Model and Hypotheses

3. Method

3.1. Measuring Tool

In the research, the impact of traditional tavern culture on individuals' social benefit, loyalty and adaptation to new generation taverns created by traditional taverns has been investigated within the framework of individuals' intangible cultural heritage. The effect of social benefit and loyalty to the traditional tavern on adaptation to the new generation taverns was also examined. It was also investigated whether the age and experience of the regulars had an effect on the adaptation to the new generation of taverns. In the literature of the research, no scale that was developed and validated to measure the latent variables of the study was found. Thereupon, before the current research, a qualitative study "Traditional Turkish Tavern Culture and New Generation Taverns within the Scope of Intangible Cultural Heritage¹" and "Traditional Turkish Taverns within the Scope of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Canakkale Example²" was conducted. The statements related to the latent variables were created from interviews, research findings and other studies available in the literature (Eksen, 2000; Öncü et al., 2001; Zat, 2002; Zat, 2013; Koçu, 2015; Erdiñçli, 2020a; Erdiñçli, 2020b; Zat, 2020; Erdiñçli, 2023). The survey was based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 5

strongly agree). In this context, a scale consisting of 37 items was developed in the research. The traditional tavern culture dimension of the scale consists of 7 items, the social benefit dimension consists of 10 items, the loyalty to traditional tavern dimension consists of 9 items, and the adaptation to the new generation tavern dimension consists of 11 items.

3.2. Setting and Sample

The research was carried out in Canakkale province. Therefore, the population of the research consists of individuals who live in Canakkale and have tavern experience. A survey was used to obtain the data of the research and the surveys were filled out face to face and online. At the same time, those who regularly visit traditional taverns and tavern staff were asked to send the survey to their acquaintances who are regular patrons in Canakkale via social media platforms. In the research, purposive sampling technique and snowball sampling technique, which are non-probability sampling methods, were preferred. A total of 409 usable surveys were obtained in the research. Therefore, it contains 409 regulars information that is suitable for data analysis. The data for the research were collected between February 2024 and June 2024.

¹Güzel, L., Duran, E. and Hamarat, B. (2023). Somut Olmayan Kültürel Miras Kapsamında Geleneksel Türk Meyhane Kültürü ve Yeni Nesil Meyhaneler. In 7th International West Asia Congress Of Tourism Research (P. 348-369). 08-10 June 2023 Skopje, North Macedonia.

²Can, M., Güzel, L., Hamarat, B., Duran, E. and Gümüşdal, F. (2024). Traditional Turkish Taverns as Intangible Cultural Heritage: The case of Çanakkale. International Tourism Economy Culture Congress (ITEC). 08-10 May 2024 Skopje, North Macedonia.

3.3. Limitations

Since the research was conducted in Çanakkale province, generalizations can only be made from the research findings to the Çanakkale community. Traditional taverns with intangible cultural heritage potential were discussed in the research. The opinions of individuals who do not have knowledge about traditional taverns and new generation tavern culture were not included in the research.

3.4. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling

SmartPLS ready-made software is one of the data analysis tools. Analysis logic is based on PLS-SEM. PLS-SEM, called variance-based structural equation modeling. PLS-SEM analysis methods use the least squares method such as regression as a prediction method. It is based on estimating the relationship coefficients that maximize the R^2 value of the dependent variable. In other words, it is a method written to minimize the variance of the error terms while maximizing the explained variance of the dependent variable, the latent variable (Duran et al., 2022; Hair et al., 2014).

Testing linearity is another requirement that is looked in the structural model's fit. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value should not exceed three while analysing the multilinear connection between observed variables. However, Smart-PLS recognises that the tolerance value could be greater than 0.20 or the VIF value may be less than 5 for the lack of multicollinearity. These are regarded as problematic linearity levels (Hair et al., 2017; Yıldız, 2020).

The method does not require larger samples as the model becomes more complex and the number of estimated parameters increases, as in covariance-based structural equation modeling. In addition, the method does not require any distribution assumption in structural equation modeling and creates samples from the data set based on the bootstrap technique. It is a non-parametric method that deals with the parameters obtained from each sample (Civelek, 2018).

In order to ensure convergent validity of the partial least squares structural equation model, three basic criteria must be met. First, the standard factor loading of each observed variable belonging to latent variables must be greater than 0.70 and less than 0.90 (Chin, 1998). Secondly, for each construct, Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach Alpha (CA), convergent validity, and discriminant validity have to be established, with values greater than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). Finally, the Average Variance Extracted

(AVE) value for each structure must be higher than 0.50. Additionally, it should be $CR > AVE$ (Gürbüz, 2019; Grima et al., 2021).

Another criterion in testing the structural equation model is discriminant validity. Discriminant validity; is expressed as the separation of a structure/factor from other structures in terms of its properties. Discriminant validity is measured in three ways. In order to ensure discretisation or discriminant validity, the load value of an indicator in one structure must be at least 0.100 units higher than the load value in other structures. The second distinguishing feature is the criterion value developed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The Fornell-Larcker criterion is the comparison of the square root of the AVE values of the variables with the values in the correlation matrix between the structures. The square root of the AVE value on the diagonal is greater than the correlation values in the row and column it belongs to. The distinctive final model evaluation is checking the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) coefficients. Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M. and Sarstedt, M (2015), it shows the ratio of the average of the correlations of the variables for all expressions in the research to the geometric averages of the correlations of the same variable. The authors stated that in concepts that are theoretically close to each other, 0.90 should be smaller than 0.85 in other cases.

One of the criteria by which the model is evaluated is the fit criteria. One of the compatibility criteria provided by the SmartPLS ready-made software is SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) and Rms Theta values. Fit criteria show the extent to which the proposed model matches the available data. The SRMR value is between 0-1. While an SRMR value of 0 indicates perfect fit, a value less than 0.80 is considered sufficient (Kline, 2005). The other fit criterion is the Rms Theta value, which measures the closeness of the structural model to the observed data and how close the estimated parameter values are to the observed data. The Rms Theta value must be less than 0.12 (Henseler et al., 2014, Hair et al., 2017).

In PLS-SEM, the predictive power of the model can be calculated with R^2 and f^2 . R^2 value gives the explanation ratio of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. Another effect size is f^2 . f^2 gives the explanation ratio of exogenous variables in the endogenous variable. An effect size of 0.02 and above indicates a low effect, a value of 0.15 and above indicates a medium effect, and a value of 0.35 and above indicates a high level effect (Hair et al., 2017). Another effect coefficient is the predictive power (Blindfolding) value. Prediction power shows the power of the model to predict latent variables and is expressed as the effect size criterion (Yıldız, 2020).

4. Findings

4.1. Descriptive Findings

The research was conducted on 409 regulars. 46.5% of the regulars are women and 53.5% are men. 56.7% of the regulars are married and 43.3% are single regulars. 22.0% of the regulars have a postgraduate education, 52.3% have an undergraduate education. The rate of regulars with associate degree is 13.2%, the rate of regulars with secondary education (High School etc.) is 12.5%. The average age of the regulars was calculated as 44.42 ± 10.879 , 11.2% of them were determined to be 30 years old and under. It was determined that 26.7% of the regulars were

between the ages of 31-40 and 31.5% were between the ages of 41-50. It is estimated that 30.6% of regulars are 51+ years old. The monthly frequency of frequent tavern visits by regulars was calculated as 2.33 ± 1.563 .

Regulars have been going to the tavern for an average of 20.45 ± 10.819 years. While the rate of those who have been going to taverns for ten years or less is 22.5%, 35.5% of them had been going to taverns for 11-20 years. The proportion of regulars who have been going to the tavern for 21-30 years is 29.1%. 13.0% of the regulars visiting the tavern as 31+ years. The results obtained are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics and Frequency Distribution of Regulars

Variable	Characteristic	N	%
Sex	Women	190	46.5
	Men	219	53.5
Marital status	Married	232	56.7
	Single	177	43.3
Education	Postgraduate	90	22.0
	Bachelor degree	214	52.3
	Associate degree	54	13.2
	High School	51	12.5
Age	21-30 years	46	11.2
	31-40 years	109	26.7
	41-50 years	129	31.5
	51+ years	125	30.6
Years going to the tavern	1-10 years	92	22.5
	11-20 years	145	35.5
	21-30 years	119	29.1
	31+ years	53	13.0

4.2. Structural Equation Model Findings

No scale with accepted validity and reliability was found to measure the latent variables of the study. Thereupon, interviews have been conducted with people who were assumed to have a traditional tavern culture, and the interviews of the interviewees were recorded. During the interviews, the themes of 'Traditional Turkish Tavern Concept and Traditional Tavern Culture' were researched and examined in Maxqda ready-made software. Statements were created in four main themes from the interviews and findings of the research. Themes were considered as scales and each scale has been evaluated within itself. The common factor structures of the expressions have been examined with the exploratory Factor Analysis. Principal Components Method was preferred as the method, and Varimax method was preferred for factor rotation. Sample adequacy for

exploratory factor analysis had been examined with the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin measurement. Whether the correlation matrix used in calculating the factor loading matrix was an identity matrix was calculated using the Bartlett test statistic. Each scale had been examined within itself to determine common factor structures. This is because the research is not a scale development study. In the study where the common factor structures of the "traditional tavern culture" scale were examined, a single factor was found and it was determined that a single factor explained 61.503% of the total variance. It was determined that the common factor structure of the "Loyalty to the traditional tavern" scale was gathered into a single factor. It was determined that this determined factor explained 56.202% of the total variance. Since the factor load of the expressions SB1 and SB2 in the 'social benefit' scale was calculated to be less

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than 0.40 in the obtained factor structure, they were removed from the scale and the scale was collected in a single factor and it was determined that it explained 63.895% of the total variance. Finally, the common factor structures of the "adaptation to new generation taverns" scale were examined and it was seen that they were collected in a single factor. The single factor identified explains 68.332% of the total variance. Sampling adequacy was examined with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and it was determined that KMO values were between 0.832 and 0.939. Therefore, the samples were found sufficient for factor analysis. Whether the correlation matrices used in calculating the factor structures were identity matrix was examined using Bartlett's Test of Sphericity approach and all factors were found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

The research model was created by the obtained factors taking into account. In testing the model, it was tested with the structural equation model, which is based on minimum variance and has a non-parametric approach. SmartPLS 3.3.4 ready-made software was used to test the structural model.

In model testing with SmartPLS, standard factor loadings (Factor Loading) must be greater than 0.70 for convergent validity. In addition, VIF values, which are indicators of multicollinearity, should not be greater than 3 or 5. In the study, the criterion that the VIF value was not greater than 5 was taken into account. In testing the model, the VIF value of the observed variable A3 was determined to be greater than the critical value 5 and was removed from the analysis. No linear multicorrelation was found among other observed variables. The largest VIF value was calculated as 4.667. For convergent validity, factor loadings must be greater than the threshold value of 0.70. In the study, it was determined that there were observed variables with factor loadings less than 0.70. Among these variables, SB1 and SB2 were removed from the scale because their factor loading was less than 0.60 and the AVE value for the latent variable was less than 0.50 which is less than the critical value. These two statements were also determined as items that disrupt the factor in the exploratory factor analysis. Since the AVE value for convergent validity

in all factors was calculated to be greater than the threshold value of 0.50, observed variables with a factor loading of less than 0.70 were not removed from the analysis. Thus, it was decided that convergent validity was achieved.

In the study, internal consistency reliabilities for the structures included in the model were also examined. Cronbach Alpha, Henseler's rho_A and Composite Reliability statistics were examined for internal consistency reliability. Since the internal consistency reliabilities of all structures were determined to be greater than the threshold value of 0.70, the internal consistency reliabilities of the structures were ensured.

Since the AVE value for convergent validity was greater than 0.50 in all structures, it was decided that convergent validity was achieved. The discriminant validity of the structures was decided by looking at the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT statistics. For the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, the correlation values (square root of the AVE value) of each variable were calculated to be greater than the threshold value of 0.70 and were found to be greater than other correlations in the same row and column. To ensure the discriminant validity of the constructs, the HTMT criterion must also be met. In the study, when the highest HTMT statistic was calculated as $0.856 < 0.900$, the HTMT criterion was also met. In addition, cross loads were examined and no observed variables were found to be loaded on more than one structure. Therefore, discriminant validity of the constructs for the model was ensured in the study.

For the model obtained in the research, the fit values of the model were examined with SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) and Rms Theta values. SRMR statistic was calculated as 0.079 for the fit of the structural model. Another fit statistic is the Rms Theta value, which measures the closeness of the structural model to the observed data and how close the estimated parameter values are to the observed data. In the research, the Rms Theta value was calculated as 0.111, lower than the threshold value of 0.120, and it was decided that the model was an appropriate model. The results obtained are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Critical Values for Adaptation to New Generation Taverns

		E	TTC	L	SB	Age	A
Fornell-Larcker	Traditional tavern experience (E)	1.000					
	Traditional tavern culture (TTC)	0.182	0.784				
	Loyalty to the traditional tavern (L)	0.122	0.555	0.749			
	Social benefit (SB)	0.193	0.768	0.515	0.735		
	Age	0.856	0.188	0.201	0.223	1.000	
	New generation taverns adaptation (A)	-0.361	-0.388	-0.049	-0.253	-0.345	0.823

AVE		1.000	0.615	0.561	0.541	1.000	0.677
Cronbach's Alpha		1.000	0.910	0.888	0.878	1.000	0.947
rho_A		1.000	0.914	0.893	0.890	1.000	0.958
Composite Reliability		1.000	0.927	0.911	0.903	1.000	0.954
HTMT	Traditional tavern experience (E)	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Traditional tavern culture (TTC)	0.193	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Loyalty to the traditional tavern (L)	0.132	0.598	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Social benefit (SB)	0.204	0.836	0.587	-----	-----	-----
	Age	0.856	0.196	0.210	0.237	-----	-----
	New generation taverns adaptation (A)	0.372	0.399	0.117	0.256	0.357	-----
Greatest VIF		4.667					
SRMR		0.079					
Rms Theta		0.111					

SmartPLS path figure for the effect of traditional tavern culture, loyalty to traditional tavern and social benefit latent variables on adaptation to new generation taverns has been obtained and is given

in figure 2. Since the smallest t value between the latent variables and the observed variables in the path graph was 11.128 > 1.96, all factor loadings were found to be statistically significant.

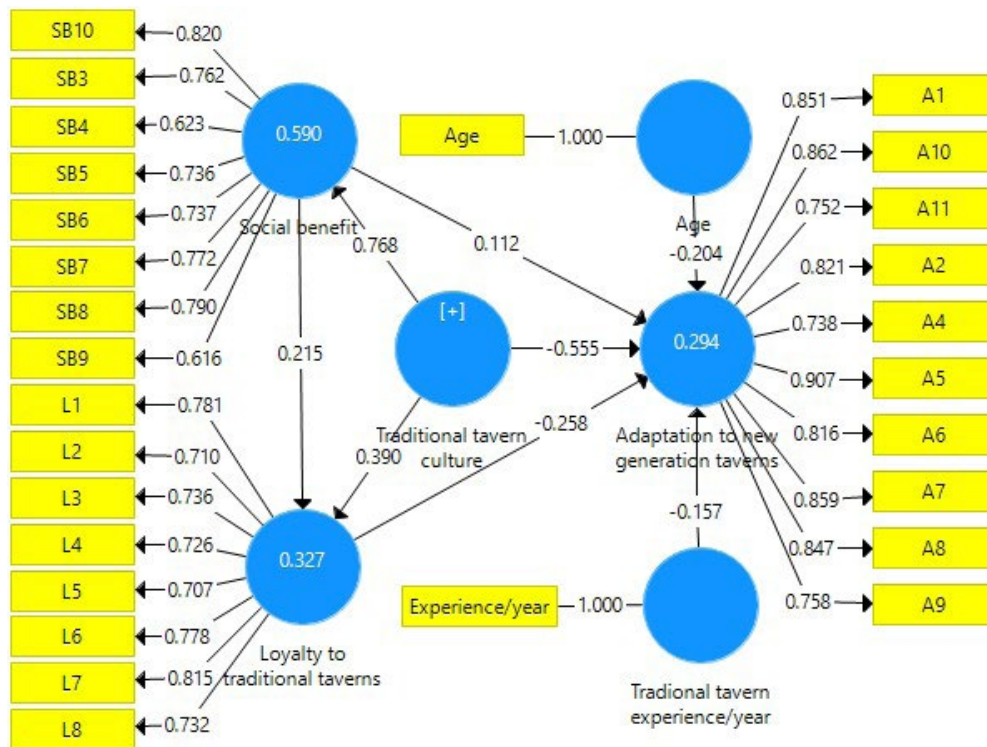


Figure 2. Path Figure and Relationships Towards Adaptation to New Generation Taverns

According to Figure 2;

- It has been determined that there was a statistically significant $\beta=0.768$ -unit effect in the same direction between the traditional tavern culture and the perception of social benefit created by traditional taverns among the regulars ($t=31.029$ $p=0.000$). According to this determined effect, while the traditional tavern culture increases among the regulars, the perception of social benefit created by traditional taverns increases.
- It has been determined that there was a statistically significant $\beta=0.390$ unit effect in the same direction between the traditional tavern culture and the perception of loyalty to traditional taverns among regulars ($t=4.829$ $p=0.000$). According to this determined effect, as the traditional tavern culture increases, the perception of loyalty to traditional taverns increases among the regulars. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

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- It has been determined that there was a statistically significant $\beta=0.215$ unit effect in the same direction between the perception of social benefit created by traditional taverns and the perception of loyalty to traditional taverns among regulars ($t=2.107$ $p=0.035$). According to this determined effect, the perception of benefit of traditional taverns increases among regulars, while the perception of loyalty to traditional taverns increases. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported.
 - It has been determined that there was a statistically significant $\beta=0.555$ unit effect in the opposite direction between the traditional tavern culture and adaptation to new generation taverns among regulars ($t=9.001$ $p=0.000$). According to this determined effect, while the traditional tavern culture increases among the regulars, the adaptation to the new generation taverns decreases. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was supported.
 - It has been determined that there is an effect of $\beta = 0.112$ units between the perception of social benefit created by traditional taverns and adaptation to new generation taverns. This determined effect did not constitute sufficient statistical evidence ($t=1.440$ $p=0.150$). Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was not supported.
 - It has been determined that there was a statistically significant $\beta=0.258$ unit effect in the opposite direction between the regulars' perception of loyalty to traditional taverns and adaptation to new generation taverns ($t=3.595$ $p=0.000$). According to this determined effect, while the loyalty of the regulars to the traditional tavern increases, the compliance with the new generation taverns decreases. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was supported.
 - It has been determined that there was a statistically significant reverse effect of $\beta=0.204$ units between the ages of traditional tavern goers and their adaptation to the new generation tavern ($t=2.004$ $p=0.041$). According to this determined effect, as the age of the regulars increases, compliance with the new generation taverns decreases. Therefore, Hypothesis 7 was supported.
 - It has been determined that there was a statistically reverse effect of $\beta = 0.157$ units between the traditional tavern goers' traditional tavern experience and their adaptation to the new generation tavern. This determined effect was not found to be statistically significant ($t=1.617$ $p=0.106$). Therefore, Hypothesis 8 was not supported.
- Hypothesis results, factor loadings and information about the findings for the research model in figure 1 are given in Table 4. In the table, R squares show the explained variance.

Table 4. Hypothesis Results and Factor Loadings

Factors/Structures	Code	Standard loads	t value	R2	Structure reliability			AVE
					CA	rho_A	CR	
Adaptation to new generation taverns (A)	A1	0.851	49.034	0.724	0.947	0.958	0.954	0.677
	A2	0.821	47.828	0.674				
	A4	0.738	29.455	0.545				
	A5	0.907	104.692	0.823				
	A6	0.816	43.990	0.666				
	A7	0.859	48.516	0.738				
	A8	0.847	48.561	0.717				
	A9	0.758	35.059	0.575				
	A10	0.862	62.943	0.743				
	A11	0.752	30.485	0.566				
Social benefit (SB)	SB3	0.762	23.985	0.581	0.878	0.890	0.903	0.541
	SB4	0.623	11.411	0.388				
	SB5	0.736	25.262	0.542				
	SB6	0.737	19.889	0.543				
	SB7	0.772	26.568	0.596				
	SB8	0.790	24.784	0.624				
	SB9	0.616	11.128	0.379				
	SB10	0.820	36.672	0.672				

Loyalty to the traditional tavern (L)	L1	0.781	25.488	0.610	0.888	0.893	0.911	0.561
	L2	0.710	22.084	0.504				
	L3	0.736	19.228	0.542				
	L4	0.726	18.650	0.527				
	L5	0.707	15.184	0.500				
	L6	0.778	33.340	0.605				
	L7	0.815	23.909	0.664				
	L8	0.732	17.119	0.536				
Traditional tavern culture (TTC)	TTC1	0.814	28.945	0.663	0.910	0.914	0.927	0.615
	TTC2	0.727	17.631	0.529				
	TTC3	0.710	22.923	0.504				
	TTC4	0.792	22.405	0.627				
	TTC5	0.797	29.158	0.635				
	TTC6	0.806	29.524	0.650				
		0.848	35.216	0.719				
Hypothesis	Standard loads		Standard Error	t-Value	P	Result		
H1: TTC --> SB	0.768		0.025	31.029	0.000	Supported		
H2: TTC --> L	0.390		0.081	4.829	0.000	Supported		
H3: SB --> L	0.215		0.102	2.107	0.035	Supported		
H4: TTC --> A	-0.555		0.062	9.001	0.000	Supported		
H5: SB --> A	0.112		0.078	1.440	0.150	Not supported		
H6: L --> A	-0.258		0.072	3.595	0.000	Supported		
H7: Age --> A	-0.204		0.102	2.007	0.041	Supported		
H8: E --> A	-0.157		0.097	1.617	0.106	Not supported		

The predictive power of the tested model was examined with Adjusted R^2 . R^2 values can be seen in latent variables in the model. According to the regulated R^2 ;

Traditional tavern culture and social benefit variables explain 32.7% of the change in the latent variable of loyalty to traditional taverns. The traditional tavern culture variable explains 59.0% of the change in the social benefit latent variable. It has been determined that 29.4% of the change in the latent variable of adaptation to new generation taverns, the endogenous variable that was tried to be explained in the research, was explained by external variables, age and experience variables.

Effect sizes were measured with f^2 value and the following effect levels were reached.

It has been determined that the effect level of the traditional tavern culture variable on the loyalty to traditional taverns variable was low, with $f^2=0.093$. It has been determined that the effect level of the traditional tavern culture variable on the social benefit variable provided by traditional taverns was high,

with $f^2=1.441$. It has been determined that the effect level of the traditional tavern culture variable on the adaptation to new generation taverns variable was moderate, with $f^2=0.162$. It has been determined that the effect level of the loyalty to the traditional tavern variable on the adaptation to new generation taverns variable was low, with $f^2=0.061$. It has been determined that the effect level of the social benefit variable on the loyalty to traditional taverns variable was low, with $f^2=0.028$.

The predictive powers of the structural model for endogenous variables were measured with Q^2 and the following results were obtained.

It has been determined that the structural model loyalty variable had a medium level of predictive power with $Q^2 = 0.178$. It has been determined that the structural model social benefit variable had a medium level of predictive power with $Q^2 = 0.306$. It has been determined that the structural model had a medium level of predictive power with $Q^2 = 0.188$ in the adaptation variable to new generation taverns. The results obtained are given in Table 5.

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Table 5. Effect and Power Statistics For The Tested Model

		Loyalty	Social benefit	Adaptation
Corrected R ²		0.324	0.589	0.286
f ²	Traditional tavern experience			0.009
	Traditional tavern culture	0.093	1.441	0.162
	Loyalty to traditional taverns			0.061
	Social benefit	0.028		0.007
	Age			0.012
Q ²		0.172	0.306	0.188

5. Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

5.1. Discussion

Anatolian lands have hosted many civilizations from past to present and are a repository of cultural heritage. The concept of cultural heritage is considered an important factor in the preservation of the Turkish culture (Açııcı et al., 2017). Importance should be given to preserving cultural assets, transferring them to future generations, keeping them under historical protection and using them for tourism purposes. Because cultural assets are one of the most important factors that reflect the structure of the society in which they exist. It is possible to consider traditional taverns as one of the most basic elements that reflect the sociological structure and gastronomy of Turkish society. Traditional taverns are places that have survived from past to present and have their own rituals, drinking rules and cultural interactions (Acehan, 2018).

Many taverns were operated during the Ottoman period, and poetry, recitals and literary conversations took place in these taverns. In this respect, it is possible to conclude that events that may benefit the society take place in traditional taverns through cultural interactions. According to Acehan (2018), it is stated that those who prefer taverns generally chat and discuss literary values, and conversations about poetry and literature are held. He also states that people share their knowledge with each other in taverns. Therefore, while the traditional tavern culture is increasing today, as in the past, the social benefit created by traditional taverns is increasing.

Traditional taverns are at the basis of cultural interactions. With the conquest of İstanbul by the Ottoman Empire, Muslims and non-Muslims began to spent time together in taverns. It has been stated that Muslims prefer taverns despite periodic bans (Erdoğanlı, 2023). In Erdoğanlı's (2023) who is described as places where regulars meet the staff and other regulars and where pleasant conversations occur as a ritual. Therefore, regulars feel loyal to the places and experience the tavern culture. Therefore, today,

as in the past, there is a connection between tavern culture and loyalty to the traditional tavern. This result was also reached in the research.

It is seen in the literature that one of the reasons why tavern goers prefer taverns is to socialize (Zat, 2002; Yılmaz, 2005). By the foundation of the Republic, people's socialization opportunities have changed. Places started to play a mediating role in establishing interactions between people and having a good time. Şahin (2021) he states that people have the opportunity to get to know each other better through the interactions they create among themselves. Birer (2018) states that entertainment organizations were organized in taverns by non-Muslims. It was stated that Turks also participated in these entertainment organizations organized by non-Muslims. It is stated that these performances in taverns made important contributions to Turkish classical music. In addition, the fact that Muslims, along with non-Muslims, prefer taverns and that they still continue today reveals that the concept of loyalty is still supported. In line with the information obtained within the scope of the research, it can be said that people show cultural development by interacting with each other in the tavern. Therefore, it can be said that while the social benefit generated by traditional taverns has increased in the past, the perception of loyalty to traditional taverns has increased. A similar result was found in the research and social benefit increased loyalty to the tavern.

The study shows that an increase in traditional tavern culture among regulars enhances their perception of social benefits and loyalty to these taverns. As Eksen (2000), Zat (2002), and Koçu (2015) argued, traditional taverns are social spaces where respectful, sincere, and heartfelt conversations take place, shaped by unique traditions and rituals. This cultural accumulation has been reflected in Turkish literature and songs, highlighting their historical significance. Regulars, therefore, embody traditional tavern culture, etiquette, and rituals, which strengthens both their loyalty and perception of social benefit. Beyond being personal spaces for cultural and experiential sharing, traditional taverns are recognized as part of Turkey's intangible cultural heritage, whose

preservation ensures transmission to future generations. Additionally, by providing local food and beverages to both tourists and locals, these taverns promote social solidarity and contribute to local economic growth.

This study also showcased that cultural depth and tradition are important reasons for preference for both local people and tourists. Therefore, it has been revealed that commitment to tradition and cultural depth resists the superficial post-modern consumption culture. Within this scope the study indicates that increases on traditional tavern culture among the regulars causes decreases on adaptation on new generation taverns. As indicated in the literature (Antil, 1988; Zat, 2002; Wang et al., 2008; Güzel et al., 2023) the touristic destinations and venues like traditional taverns contain a unique culture along with traditions and rituals. However, differences between generations have made changes in the culture of traditional taverns inevitable, and the culture of traditional taverns has disappeared in the so-called new generation taverns. This situation has led to the new generation taverns being seen as places where only alcohol is consumed and far from sincerity, and they have been ignored by individuals who prefer traditional taverns. For this reason, it is revealed that individuals' who have deep knowledge on traditional taverns will create difficulties in adopting and adapting to new generation taverns.

According to the information obtained in the study, it was concluded that those who preferred traditional taverns did not prefer new generation taverns. Traditional tavern goers believe that the taverns they visit are generally places where conversation is predominant and entertainment is not prominent. The taverns that have survived from the Ottoman period to the present day which also vary according to certain characteristics, differ from the new generation taverns that emerged with today's entertainment approach. The main reason why traditional tavern goers prefer taverns is to consume alcohol and chat. However, Harmandar (2020) states that new generation taverns do not match traditional taverns with their loud noises, dances and music. It is stated that there are differences between those who go to taverns that were operated illegally during the Ottoman period and those who prefer taverns called regular taverns (Harmandar, 2020). A similar situation exists between traditional taverns and new generation taverns in today's taverns. This is one of the findings obtained in the research. Therefore, regulars with traditional tavern culture do not adapt to new generation taverns. In addition, regulars who are loyal to the traditional tavern will not adapt to the new generation taverns. In the study, it was found that while loyalty to traditional taverns increased, compliance with new generation taverns decreased.

With the development of technology, people's un-

derstanding of entertainment also changes. People interact more with the opportunities brought by technology. This can increase people's interaction with each other. New generation taverns are places created with a modern consumption approach. Individuals who prefer new generation taverns can visit them mostly to have fun, dance and listen to loud music (Zat, 2020). Traditional taverns can be preferred for chatting, gaining information and literary concerts. It is stated that those who preferred taverns in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century were well-equipped, cultured, art-loving, well-mannered, easy going, philosophical and influential people. New generation taverns, which are similar to armchair taverns in the past, are generally defined as taverns where people go to drink alcohol (Harmandar, 2020). The Hypothesis established within the scope of the study shows overlap with the information obtained from Harmandar's (2020) study. In addition to this situation, (Acehan, 2018) states that taverns are depicted as an important place in Turkish literature and that literary figures, poets and writers prefer them to refresh themselves, relax, relieve fatigue, get rid of tension and chat. (Acehan, 2018).

Traditional taverns differ conceptually from new generation taverns, serving as spaces where poets and writers historically exchanged ideas and emotions. Consistent with the literature, the study finds that as traditional tavern culture and rituals are maintained, regulars tend to avoid new generation taverns, supporting the hypothesized inverse relationship between loyalty to traditional taverns and adaptation to new generation ones.

The concept of regularity, closely linked to loyalty, reflects the emotional or physical attachment of patrons to a place (Ayhan, 2023). While people from different social classes may frequent the same tavern, their preferences differ based on cultural priorities, meaning traditional tavern regulars are less likely to prefer new generation taverns. Literature highlights that the motivations for visiting traditional versus new generation taverns differ, with historical taverns organizing entertainment in the 17th and 18th centuries to cultivate regular customers (Erdoğanlı, 2020a, 2020b). Similarly, modern new generation taverns adopt this approach to boost consumption and economic gain.

Although new generation taverns have different features from traditional taverns, they are places with economic inputs. They can create a multiplier effect on the economy with their food and drink features. In this sense, there should be a positive relationship between the perception of social benefit and adaptation to new generation taverns. In the study, a relationship was found between social benefit and harmony, but this relationship was not found to be statistically significant.

5.2. Conclusion and Suggestions For Further Studies

Traditional taverns, with their unique cultural heritage rituals, have the potential to take their place among the most important tourism preferences of purposeful and conscious gastronomy tourists. The transfer of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of traditional taverns to tourism and the provision of sociocultural and socioeconomic benefits within this framework will ensure the development of social awareness, protection and development reflexes for these values. The research results also overlap extensively with social change theory in this context. Therefore;

- The research results show that the development and deepening of the deep cultural rituals, gastronomy and behavioral patterns of traditional taverns will also create positive sociocultural and socioeconomic effects on the local society.
- Similarly, it turns out that increasing consciousness and awareness of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of traditional taverns increases the level of loyalty to these places. This result shows that destination loyalty regarding the tourism experience will similarly increase.
- The increase in the perception of benefits regarding traditional taverns and their values reveals a social reflex to protect and develop the social and cultural values of these taverns. This situation, like the other results mentioned above, constitutes the main framework of social change theory.
- Every traditional and profound element has an important place in tourism and motivation for participation in tourism. In this context, it becomes clear that the protection of traditional taverns is important in terms of tourism and tourist sustainability.

As a result, the fact that traditional taverns are one of the basic inputs of Anatolian culture is important for our country's tourism because it will play an important role in both ensuring the development of the country's tourism in a sustainable perspective and preserving the social and cultural identity of the destination. In this context, presenting the cultural values that traditional taverns have and reflect to tourism will strengthen social ties and increase awareness of social identity, social loyalty and cultural values.

The research has progressed through traditional taverns in the province of Çanakkale. Within the scope of the research, research can be conducted in places where the number of traditional taverns is higher. Since there are not many studies on traditional taverns, the subject can be examined again from different perspectives. Traditional tavern gastronomy and traditional gastronomic products of Turkish taverns can be examined.

The limitation of researches on traditional taverns in the literature stands out as an important criterion that increases the contribution level of this study to the field and enables it to offer new hypotheses to be tested in the field. At the same time, this is the basic criterion of the originality of the work. It can be a guide for researchers who focus on these concepts.

The fact that there are a limited number of studies in the literature modeling the cause and effect relationship between the variables affecting the patrons' choice of traditional taverns or their adaptation to new generation taverns also reveals the contribution of this study to the literature.

In this regard, the sample can be enlarged and data can be collected from more participants. Tavern rituals in different regions can be investigated. The relationship between cultural differences in the understanding of alcohol consumption and its effects on traditional taverns can be examined and added to the literature. Studies can be conducted on topics such as examining traditional tavern gastronomy, the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage elements, and the place of traditional taverns in society.

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A Bibliometric Analysis of Sustainable Tourism and Sustainable Development: Trends, Themes, and Research Gaps

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Abstract

This study presents a bibliometric analysis of academic publications on the subjects of sustainable tourism and sustainable development, aiming to reveal the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and research trends within the field. Additionally, this study aims to identify gaps in the literature, guide future research, and contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through the tourism sector. Articles on "sustainable tourism" and "sustainable development" retrieved from the Web of Science database were included in the analysis. The annual number of publications, three-field plot, most relevant authors, author impact, most relevant journals, journal impact, most relevant institutions, publication distribution by country, most cited articles, word cloud, thematic map, co-citation network, co-occurrence keywords, and international collaborations were examined. A total of 1,296 articles

indexed in the Web of Science between 1992 and 2025 were analysed using the Biblioshiny package within the RStudio software. The findings indicate a significant increase in academic interest in this field, particularly after 2019. Authors such as Wang Y., Li Y., and Hall C. M. stand out, while Journal of Sustainable Tourism and Sustainability were identified as the most prolific journals. The results show that themes such as governance, environmental indicators, and community-based tourism are prominent, while climate change, CO₂ emissions, and digital transformation have emerged as rising topics.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Sustainable Development, Bibliometric Analysis, Research Trends.

JEL Codes: Z32, Q01, Q56

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1. Introduction

Sustainable tourism is one kind of tourism that satisfies local needs as well as those of present visitors without endangering the capacity of next generations to satisfy their own needs (Amerta et al., 2018). In tackling important problems, including environmental damage, climate change, and socioeconomic inequality, sustainable tourism has become more relevant worldwide. This kind of tourism aims to strike a balance between consumption, transformation, and sustainable use of resources rather than only preserving natural resources (Liu, 2003).

Three main aspects define sustainable tourism: environmental, socio-cultural, and financial. Environmentally, it emphasises the best application of resources and the preservation of ecological processes. Socially, it underlines the preservation of regional culture, the enhancement of intercultural understanding, and the enhancement of community welfare. Economically, it seeks to guarantee fair income distribution, so reducing poverty, and so contribute to long-term benefits (Amerta et al., 2018; Streimikiene et al., 2021).

Sustainable development and tourism are rather closely related. Often considered as the useful implementation of sustainable development ideas inside the travel industry is sustainable tourism (Ali & Frew, 2013; Haid & Albrecht, 2021). In this sense, Gössling and Hall (2006) underlined the need to include sustainable practices into tourism operations to avoid negative effects on ecosystems and underlined how directly tourism is linked to global environmental changes.

Sustainable tourism policies have to be totally included in national and international sustainable development strategies if we are to guarantee that the goals of global development are reached (Yfantidou & Matarazzo, 2017). Academic interest and research output in this area have clearly increased as sustainable tourism—especially in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—becomes ever more important.

Considering these factors, this study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of academic articles on sustainable tourism and sustainable development. Through this analysis, the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and research trends in the field will be revealed. The study is expected to provide insights that will guide future research and contribute to achieving sustainable development through the tourism sector.

2. Literature Review

The conceptual foundations of sustainable tourism were established in the late 1990s. Hunter (1997) introduced the idea that sustainable tourism should be viewed as an adaptable paradigm capable of

providing flexible solutions tailored to different contexts. Briassoulis (2002) and Tosun (2001) identified the structural and managerial challenges associated with implementing sustainable tourism, particularly in developing countries. These early studies emphasised the importance of the “triple bottom line” approach, which focuses on achieving balance among environmental, social, and economic considerations.

Liu (2003) argued that sustainable tourism is not solely about conserving natural resources but also about managing consumption and transformation processes. Hall (2019) examined the role of tourism in the United Nations’ 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting the significant influence of tourism on policy development, despite its limited direct representation within the SDGs framework. Sharpley (2020) highlighted the theoretical distinctions between tourism and development, suggesting that certain aspects of these two concepts may remain fundamentally incompatible.

Recent empirical studies have concentrated on topics such as community-based tourism (Lee & Jan, 2019), climate change adaptation (Scott, 2011), and resilience planning in community tourism (Lew, 2013). These studies provided valuable insights into local community perceptions, governance structures, and the socio-economic impacts of tourism on quality of life. Tao & Wall (2009) emphasised that tourism can be an effective strategy for achieving sustainable livelihoods, particularly in rural areas.

In recent years, digitalisation has become a major focus of research on sustainable tourism. While Prados-Castillo et al. (2023) investigated the potential of blockchain technology to improve openness and confidence in tourism transactions, El Archi et al. (2023) investigated how digital platforms are changing sustainable tourism practices. Also increasingly important are environmental communication techniques and green marketing ideas. Vaid (2023) concentrated on the function of green marketing in supporting sustainable tourism practices; Cavalcante et al. (2021) performed a bibliometric analysis on the development of sustainable tourism marketing.

Institutional structures and sustainability education have been identified as critical components for advancing sustainable tourism. León-Gómez et al. (2023) emphasised the importance of integrating sustainability education into tourism programs, while Mota et al. (2018) identified governance-based gaps in tourism planning literature.

Additionally, bibliometric analyses have become increasingly valuable in mapping the intellectual landscape and identifying emerging themes within the field of sustainable tourism research. Garrigós-Simón et al. (2018) and Huang (2025) employed tools such as VOSviewer and Biblioshiny to identify knowledge networks and outline future research directions in the field.

In summary, sustainable tourism continues to evolve as a dynamic and multidisciplinary field of study. While significant theoretical frameworks have been established (Hunter, 1997; Briassoulis, 2002; Liu, 2003), gaps remain in practical applications and empirical validations, indicating opportunities for further research that integrates sustainable tourism into broader sustainable development strategies.

3. Materials and Methods

Bibliometric analysis was used in the study. Bibliometric analysis is conducted to enhance the advancement, usability, and accessibility of scientific databases, such as Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), using specialised software. It is important because large volumes of scientific data can be processed, and high research impact can be created with bibliometrics (Donthu et al., 2021). Within the scope of bibliometric analysis, three-field plot (Maggio et al., 2021), most related authors and the impact of authors, most related journals and the impact of journals, most related institutions, most cited sources, word cloud, thematic map, co-citation network papers, Co-occurrence keywords (Passas, 2024), and

collaborations between countries were examined. In the study, articles that took the subjects of “sustainable tourism” and “sustainable development” together were examined. As of February 19, 2025, 1826 publications on “sustainable tourism” and “sustainable development” were found in the WoS database. The reason why the WoS database was preferred within the scope of the study is that it is older and therefore covers past studies and has a higher impact rate (Chadegani et al., 2013). Publication types other than articles were excluded from the analysis, and a total of 1,296 articles were identified and included in the analysis. No restrictions were imposed on the publication languages of the articles. Accordingly, the publication languages were determined to be English, French, Croatian, Czech, German, Italian, Dutch, Lithuanian, Malay, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Russian, Spanish, Slovenian, and Turkish. The data were analysed and visualised using the R software interface RStudio and the Biblioshiny package (version 4.3.1). R Studio and the Biblioshiny package are frequently used by various researchers (Krešić & Gjurašić, 2022; Arıcı et al., 2023; Lukose et al., 2024; Huang, 2025; Göktaş, 2025) for bibliometric analysis.

4. Findings

Table 1. Main Information

Description	Results
Timespan	1992:2025
Sources (Journal)	398
Documents	1296
Annual Growth Rate %	9.06
Document Average Age	6.23
Average Citations per doc	19.08
References	59010
Keywords Plus (ID)	1515
Author's Keywords (DE)	3781
Authors	3383
Authors of single-authored docs	221
Single-authored docs	239
Co-Authors per doc	2.98
International co-autorship %	27.93

As shown in Table 1, upon examining the general information of the articles, it is evident that 1,296 studies were published on the subject between 1992

and 2025. The annual growth rate of the articles is 9.06%, and the author collaboration between countries is 27.93%.

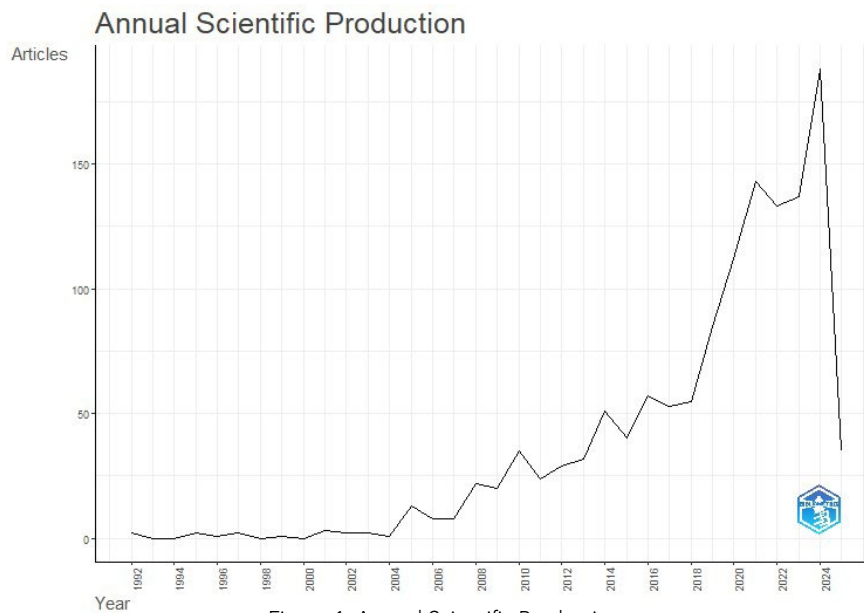


Figure 1. Annual Scientific Production

As shown in Figure 1, academic production on sustainable tourism and sustainable development was very limited in the early 1990s but entered a clear upward trend after 2005. This growth accelerated in the post-2010 period and gained remarkable momentum from 2019 onwards. Between 2020 and 2022, the number of publications increased steadily, reaching its peak in 2024. This upward trajectory can

be explained by the influence of the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals on academic agendas, as well as the growing need to restructure tourism in the post-COVID-19 era. Overall, the sharp increase in publications highlights that sustainable tourism has become a central theme in the global research agenda. In the study, a Sankey Diagram was used for a three-field plot.

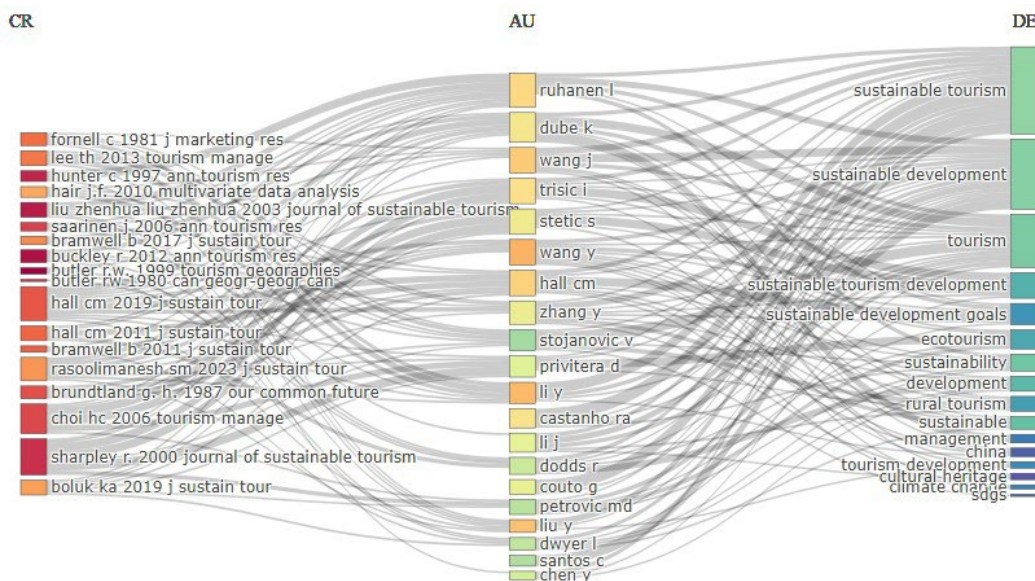


Figure 2. Three-Field Plot

A Sankey Diagram is used to visualise the energy flow in various networks and processes (Riehmman et al., 2005). A three-field plot consists of references (left), authors (middle), and keywords (right). The size of the rectangles next to references, authors, and keywords shows the magnitude of the connections between the components. According to the three-field plot analysis, it is seen that the most frequently used sources in the studies are Hall, C. M. (2019) (10 studies), Rasoolimanesh, S. M (2023) (8 studies), Sharpley, R. (2000), and Boluk, K. A. (2019) (7 studies). The most frequently used keywords in the

studies are sustainable development (17 studies), sustainable tourism (16 studies), tourism (14 studies), Sustainable Development Goals (6 studies), and sustainable tourism development (5 studies). The prominence of names such as Hall, Rasoolimanesh, and Sharpley suggests that theoretically based and normative studies continue to hold influence. At the same time, this structure reveals that the literature on sustainable tourism primarily revolves around a few authors, indicating that knowledge production is centralised.

A Bibliometric Analysis of Sustainable Tourism and Sustainable Development: Trends, Themes, and Research Gaps

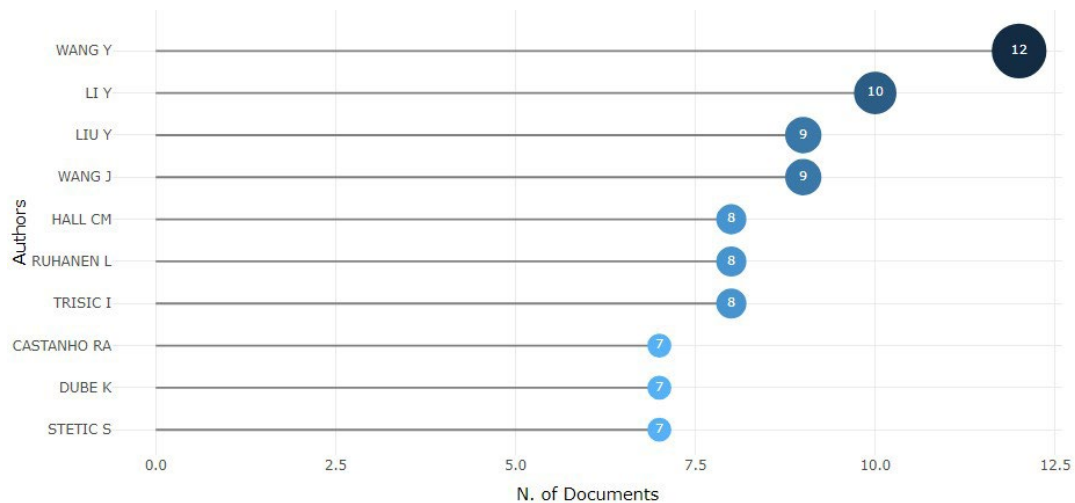


Figure 3. Most Relevant Authors

Figure 3 shows the 10 most relevant authors to the topic. This ranking is based on the number of studies by the authors on the topic and the fractional data of these studies. It is observed that Wang, Y. has published the most articles on the topic, with 12 publications. Li, Y. is in second place with 10 articles, Liu, Y. is in third place with 9 articles, and Wang, J. is in fourth place. Hall, C. M., Ruhanel, L., and Trisic, I. are in fifth, sixth, and seventh places with 8 artic-

les, respectively, while Castanho, R. A., Dube, K., and Stetic, S. are in eighth, ninth, and tenth places with 7 articles, respectively. The fact that many of the most active authors are based in China and Asia reflects a growing regional academic interest in the field. Furthermore, the high level of productivity among authors is also indicative of a high level of collaboration, suggesting that the field is well-developed in terms of collective knowledge production.

Table 2. Author's Impact

Authors	h_Index	g_Index	m_Index	TC	NP	PY_start
Hall C. M.	8	8	0,71	797	8	2009
Liu, Y.	7	9	0,5	218	9	2012
Wang, Y.	7	9	0,389	91	12	2008
Li, Y.	6	10	0,857	260	10	2019
Ruhanel, L.	6	8	0,333	571	8	2008
Stetic, S.	6	7	1	90	7	2020
Trisic, I.	6	8	1	91	8	2020
Castanho, R. A.	5	7	0,714	83	7	2019
Couto, G.	5	6	0,833	71	6	2020
Dube, K.	5	7	0,833	71	6	2020

Table 2 shows the local impact levels of authors who have conducted studies on sustainable tourism and sustainable development. The evaluation elements include H-index, G-index, M-index, TC (total citations), NP (Number of Publications), and PY_start (year of starting publications). De Visscher (2011) states that the h-index is more useful as a bibliometric tool. Therefore, the author's impact ranking

was determined based on the h-index scores. The high h-index values of authors like Hall reveal not only their productivity but also their significant impact. However, the fact that some authors receive relatively low citations despite their high number of publications suggests that the balance between quality and quantity is not always parallel.



Figure 4. Most Relevant Journals

Figure 4 lists the sources that have published the most on the subject. This ranking is based on the number of studies published by the sources on the subject and the fractional data of these studies. It is observed that the majority of publications on the subject were produced by Sustainability, with 240 articles. Figure 4 indicates that publications on sustainable tourism and sustainable development are concentrated in a limited number of journals. Among them, Sustainability and the Journal of Sus-

tainable Tourism stand out as the leading outlets, reflecting both high productivity and strong academic influence. While Sustainability benefits from its open-access policy to host a large volume of studies, the Journal of Sustainable Tourism maintains its position as the field's most impactful and specialized journal. This concentration suggests that the topic attracts attention from both generalist and discipline-specific journals, highlighting its multidisciplinary relevance.

Table 3. Impact Journal

Journal	h_Index	g_Index	m_Index	TC	NP	PY_start
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	42	76	2,333	6143	105	2008
Sustainability	33	50	2,75	3775	240	2014
Journal of Cleaner Production	14	19	0,667	786	19	2005
Current Issues in Tourism	12	15	0,667	460	15	2008
Sustainable Tourism	12	20	0,444	480	20	1999
Tourism Management	12	13	0,387	1611	13	1995
Tourism Management Perspectives	11	13	0,917	431	13	2014
Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes	11	14	0,647	353	46	2009
Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Research	9	15	0,9	234	15	2016
Tourism Planning & Development	9	16	0,429	282	18	2005

Table 3 shows the local impact levels of journals that publish studies on sustainable tourism and sustainable development. The evaluation elements include H-index, G-index, M-index, TC (total citations), NP (Number of Publications), and PY start (year of starting publications). Similar to author impact, this

ranking is also based on the h-index. The majority of high-impact journals cover the disciplines of environmental sciences, planning, and tourism, demonstrating the multidisciplinary nature and increasing academic integration of sustainable tourism.

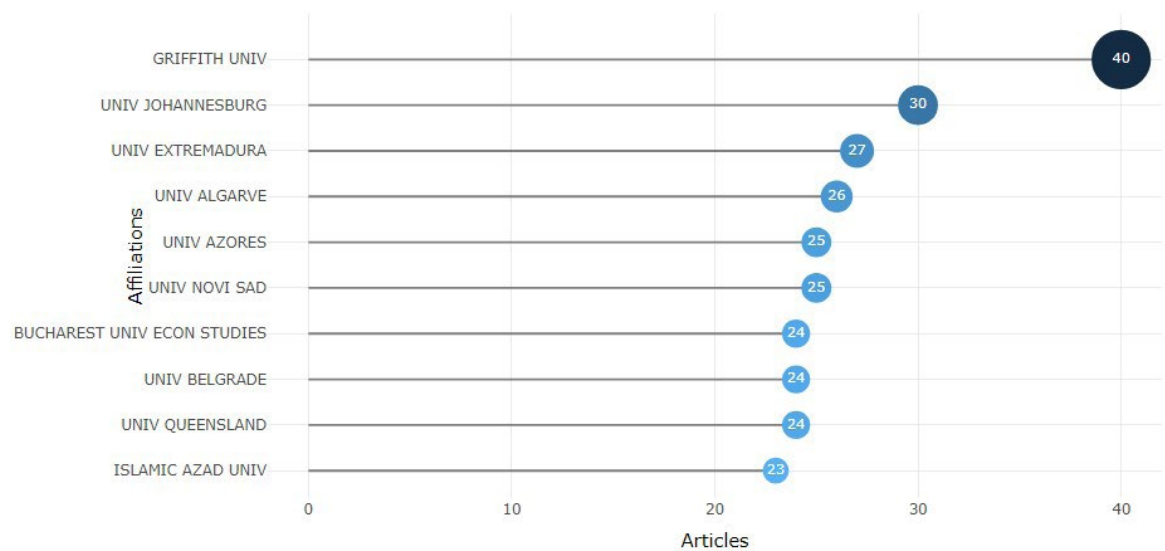


Figure 5. Most Relevant Affiliation

Figure 5 lists the institutions that have published the most on the subject based on the institutions of the authors responsible for the publications. The number of published articles was used as the evaluation criterion. When we examine the countries of the institutions that have published the most, we see that these include Australia, South Africa, Spa-

in, Portugal, Serbia, Romania, and Iran. The fact that countries such as Australia, Portugal, and Serbia are at the forefront institutionally may be a sign not only of their academic capacity but also that these countries prioritise sustainable tourism in their political agendas. Table 4 lists the countries with the highest number of publications.

Table 4. Country Scientific Production

Country	Article
China	709
Spain	310
USA	197
Italy	188
Portugal	182
Romania	170
Poland	167
UK	162
Australia	159
Serbia	128

The ranking is based on the countries of the authors. Accordingly, the 10 countries with the most publications on the subject are China, Spain, the United States, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Poland, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Serbia, respectively. Although China’s clear lead provides a quantitative advan-

tage, the content of these publications should be a separate subject of study. The fact that developing countries are also at the top of the list shows that sustainable tourism has become a common agenda not only for developed countries but also for the entire world.

Table 5. Country Scientific Production

Author(s)	Article	Sources	TC	TC per Year	Norm. TC
Hunter, C. (1997).	"Sustainable Tourism As An Adaptive Paradigm"	Annals of Tourism Research	443	15,28	1,50
Hall, C. M. (2019).	"Constructing Sustainable Tourism Development: The 2030 Agenda and the Managerial Ecology of Sustainable Tourism"	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	352	50,29	9,65
Briassoulis, H. (2002).	"Sustainable Tourism and the Question of the Commons"	Annals of Tourism Research	308	12,83	1,52
Lee, H. T., Jan, F. H. (2019).	"Can Community-Based Tourism Contribute to Sustainable Development? Evidence from Residents' Perception of the Sustainability"	Tourism Management	288	41,14	7,90
Lew, A. A. (2013).	"Scale, Change, and Resilience in Community Tourism Planning"	Tourism Geographies	254	21,17	8,65
Tao, T. C. H., Wall, G. (2009).	"Tourism as a Sustainable Livelihood Strategy"	Tourism Management	252	14,82	4,89
Tosun, C. (2001).	"Challenges of Sustainable Tourism Development in the Developing World: The Case of Turkey"	Tourism Management	236	9,4	1,52
Ramkissoon, H. (2023).	"Perceived Social Impacts of Tourism and Quality-of-Life: A New Conceptual Model"	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	233	77,67	22,67
Sharpley, R. (2020).	"Tourism, Sustainable Development and the Theoretical Divide: 20 years on"	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	224	37,33	9,58
Scott, D. (2011).	"Why Sustainable Tourism Must Address Climate Change"	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	216	13,50	7,54

Table 5 shows the 10 most cited articles among the scanned articles. The evaluation criteria include TC (Total Citation), TC per year (Annual Total Citation), and Norm. TC. (normalised total citation). The ranking was made based on TC. The abstracts of the 10 most cited articles were examined to determine the study topics. Hunter (1997) reconnected the concept of sustainable tourism with broader discussions on sustainable development, offering a more flexible paradigm that could adapt to different conditions. Hall (2019) examined the relationship between tourism and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In his study, he examined how tourism affected tourism policy despite being mentioned only three times in the UN 2030 SDG resolution. Briassoulis (2002) examined the central role of common-use resources in sustainable tourism development. Lee & Jan (2019) examined the impact of community-based tourism on sustainable development. Lew (2013) examined the concepts of scale, change, and resilience in community tourism planning, examining how resilience planning offers new perspectives as an alternative to sustainable development. Tao & Wall (2009) exami-

ned both the conceptual and practical shortcomings of sustainable development and its derivative, sustainable tourism. Tosun (2001) examined the challenges faced by sustainable tourism development in developing countries. Ramkissoon (2020) proposed a new conceptual framework for understanding how perceived social impacts of tourism and interpersonal trust can enhance the commitment of local people, thereby influencing their protection of tourism resources and quality of life. Sharpley (2020) examined the concepts of tourism and sustainable development, as well as the theoretical differences between the two concepts. Finally, Scott (2011) examined how tourism contributes to climate change, challenging the notion that the increasing interaction between sustainable tourism and climate change may not necessarily be in the interests of tourism sustainability. The fact that most of the most cited studies are theoretical and conceptually based suggests that the field is still in the process of establishing its theoretical framework. The relatively low number of citations to applied studies indicates a gap in this regard.



Figure 6. Word Cloud

Figure 6 shows the word cloud of the scanned studies. The word cloud was created using the most frequently used words in the abstract or full text of the scanned studies. The 10 most frequently used words in the studies are management (151 times), sustainable tourism (99 times), impact (76 times), tourism (75 times), indicators (64 times), model (64

times), attitudes (61 times), ecotourism (59 times), and perceptions (59 times). The prominence of concepts such as 'management', 'indicators', 'attitudes', and 'perceptions' indicates that research in the field is generally perception- and evaluation-based rather than applied. This suggests a gap between theoretical application and field practice.

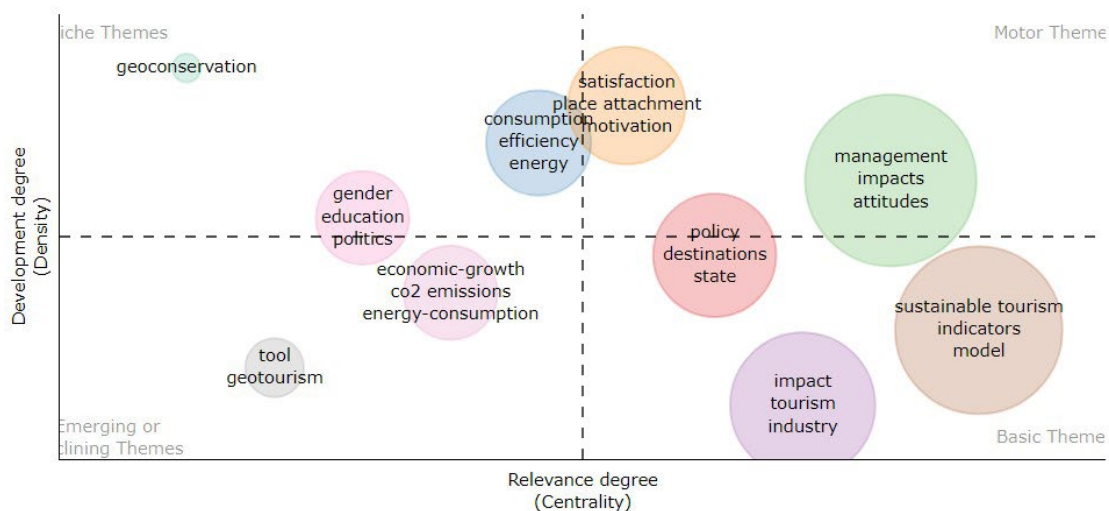


Figure 7. Thematic Map

A thematic map is essential for analysing the words used in studies, identifying emerging topics, and determining which topics authors will focus on (Agbo et al., 2021). While the thematic map consists of four quadrants, the words are placed in the appropriate area. While niche themes are located in the upper left, there are niche words related to the topic. While motor themes are located in the upper right, there are both central and widespread niche words. While emerging or declining themes are located in the lower left, some words emerge or disappear related

to the topic. Finally, while basic themes are located in the lower right, words related to the topic are less frequently used compared to the motor theme. The sizes of the circles increase and decrease according to the number of articles in which the word is used. The rise of themes in the 'emerging or declining' areas (e.g., CO₂ emissions, consumption) in the thematic map indicates that sustainability in the literature is no longer just about nature protection, but also encompasses more systemic issues, such as carbon footprint and consumption policies.

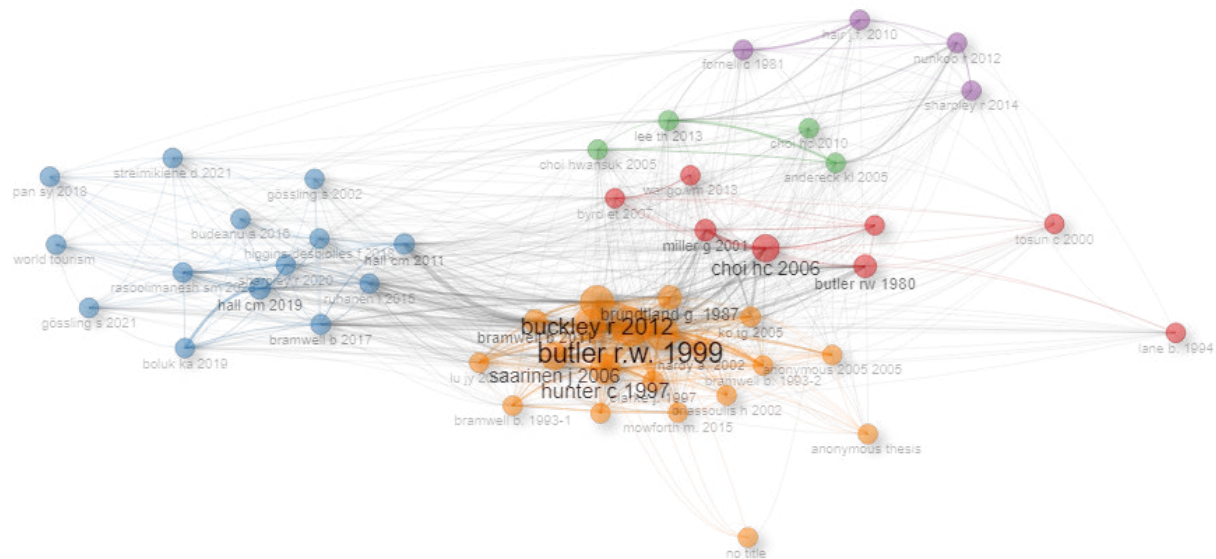


Figure 8. Co-Citation Network Papers

The co-citation network illustrates the shared citation patterns among authors. According to the analysis results, the most cited authors on the subject are Butler (1980), Choi (2006), Miller (2001), Byrd et al. (2007), UNWTO (2004), Lane (1994), Tosun (2000),

and Waligo (2013). The fact that authorities such as Butler, Tosun, and Choi are still among the most cited authors indicates that classical approaches continue to dominate the literature, and the space available for new paradigms is more limited.

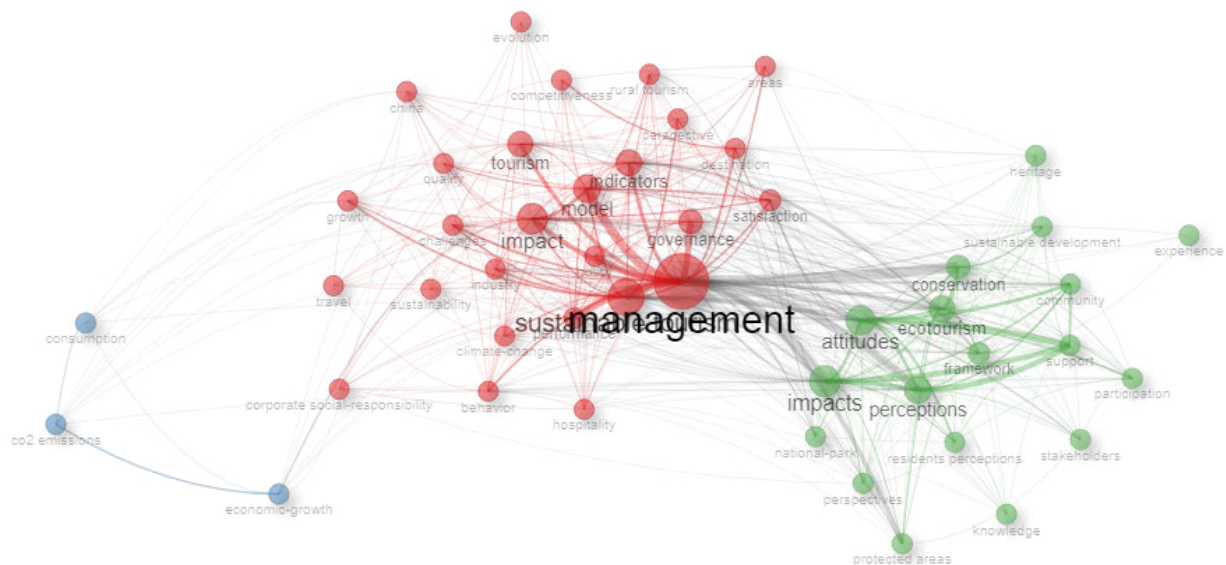


Figure 9. Co-Occurrence Keywords

Co-occurrence analysis was conducted for the keywords used in the articles. This analysis displays the network of keywords used in conjunction, helping us to identify the relationships between different keywords. The thickness of the connections between the words indicates the strength of the co-occurrence between the keywords. According to the analysis results, there are three distinct clusters of keywords in the studies. The first cluster consists of the words "management, sustainable tourism, impact, tourism, indicators, model, governance, challenges, policy, performance, satisfaction, destination, industry, climate-change, growth, behavior, perspective, quality, sustainability, areas, rural tourism, hospitality, china, competitiveness, travel, corporate

social-responsibility, evolution". The second cluster consists of the words "economic-growth, consumption, co2 emissions". The third cluster consists of the words "impacts, attitudes, ecotourism, perceptions, conservation, framework, support, community, sustainable development, participation, protected areas, stakeholders, perspectives, residents perceptions, national-park, experience, heritage, knowledge". The existence of three main clusters (governance and performance, environmental impacts, and community perception) reflects an interdisciplinary but thematically fragmented nature of the literature, suggesting that the field still focuses on micro-level issues rather than holistic policies.



Figure 10. County Collaboration

Country collaboration represents the collaboration between countries on a world map, while emphasizing the interconnection between countries. When collaborations between countries on the subject are examined, it is evident that the majority of collaborations are led by China (134 studies), followed by Spain (58 studies), Australia (43 studies), Italy (40 studies), and Poland (37 studies). The high level of international cooperation among countries such as China, Spain, and Australia demonstrates that these countries have become key players in sustainable tourism research, directing the circulation of knowledge.

5. Conclusion

This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of articles on the subjects of “sustainable tourism” and “sustainable development”. Within the scope of the study, the most relevant authors and most influential authors, the most relevant journals and most influential journals, the most relevant institutions, the most cited sources, thematic map, co-citation network, co-occurrence keywords and country collaborations will be determined, revealing the situation on the subject and shedding light on the deficiencies in the literature, so it is thought that the study will pioneer future studies.

When the analyses conducted within the scope of the study are examined, it is evident that although studies on sustainable tourism and sustainable development began in 1992, they experienced a significant increase starting in 2008 and continuing thereafter, particularly in 2019 and the subsequent years. This situation reflects both the global impact of the Sustainable Development Goals and the need to restructure tourism after COVID-19. Given the increasing importance attached to the concept of sustainability, it is anticipated that more studies will be conducted on the subject in the years to come.

When the three-field plot is examined, it is evident that the most commonly cited sources in the studies are Hall, C. M. (2019), Rasoolimanesh, S. M. (2023), Sharpley, R. (2000), and Boluk, K. A. (2019). Again, in this analysis, we determined that the most frequently used common words are sustainable development, sustainable tourism, tourism, Sustainable Development Goals, and sustainable tourism development. Since the Sustainable Development Goals are expected to be fulfilled by 2030 (United Nations, 2025), we anticipate that the importance attached to this issue will increase in the years to come.

The authors with the most publications on the subject were determined to be Wang, Y., Li, Y., Liu, Y., Wang, J., Hall, C. M., Ruhanel, L., Trisic, I., Castanho, R. A., Dube, K., and Stetic, S., respectively. Upon examining the impact ratios of the authors, it was observed that the 9 authors with the most publications were also included in this list. When the journals that published the most studies on the subject were examined, it was seen that these were Sustainability, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes, Land, Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Planning & Development, Tourism Review, Current Issues in Tourism, and Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Research, respectively. When the journals with the most impact were examined, it was determined that the 7 journals in this list were also among the journals with the most publications. When examined from this perspective, although it can be said that the number of publications and their impact are directly proportional, it is thought that studies published by different authors or journals can be pretty remarkable in terms of their subject matter, and the impact rate can be high. Furthermore, the analysis results reveal that knowledge production is concentrated around a limited number of authors, journals, and institutions, while thematic developments are increasingly focused on issues such as climate change, CO² emissions, and

digital transformation. These findings demonstrate that sustainable tourism is no longer a purely theoretical discussion but has become central to the academic and policy agenda within the context of sustainable development.

The institutions with the highest number of publications were determined to be Griffith University (Australia), University Johannesburg (South Africa), University of Extremadura (Spain), University of the Algarve (Portugal), University of the Azores (Portugal), University of Novi Sad (Serbia), Bucharest University of Economic Studies (Romania), University of Belgrade (Serbia), University of Queensland (Australia) and Islamic Azad University (Iranian). The countries with the highest number of publications were identified as China, Spain, the United States, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Poland, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Serbia, respectively. This result indicates that publications on the subject have garnered global attention.

When we examine the subjects of the most cited studies, it was determined that the studies were generally related to the conceptual and theoretical framework (Hunter, 1997; Tao & Wall, 2009; Sharpley, 2020), the impact of sustainable tourism on practice and policies (Tosun, 2001; Hall, 2019), and community-based tourism (Lee & Jan, 2019; Ramkissoon, 2020). When the thematic map is examined in comparison with these results, it can be observed that the tendency towards topics such as economic growth, CO2 emissions, and energy consumption is increasing, as indicated by the emerging or declining sections.

Ultimately, the findings of this study offer important implications for policymakers, industry representatives, and academics. Policymakers can leverage the data to develop more effective tourism strategies aligned with the SDGs; industry representatives can follow emerging best practices and trends; and academics can develop new theoretical frameworks based on identified gaps and strengthen interdisciplinary collaborations. For future studies, it can be suggested that researchers conduct research based on application to determine the level of application of sustainable tourism approaches and policies in the field, conduct theoretical and practical research on issues related to SDGs, and conduct more detailed research on issues such as climate change, adaptation to climate change, carbon footprint, sustainable tourism in developing countries and sustainable development. Finally, the study has some limitations as it only includes articles in the WoS database. It is thought that future studies, examining databases such as WoS and Scopus together and/or including other sources (such as books, book chapters, and papers) in the analysis process, will help obtain more comprehensive results.

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Research Article

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The Attitudes of Students at the Vocational School of Health Services Towards Blood and Organ Donation **Belgin Dilmen / Asst. Prof. Dr.** 

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Abstract

Students at vocational schools of health services are future healthcare professionals who can play a key role in promoting blood and organ donation (BOD) in society. This study aimed to assess students' attitudes toward BOD and examine the influence of demographic factors, donation experience, and educational backgrounds. This descriptive study was conducted with 396 students from at a university in Burdur between March 30 and May 5, 2024, using a questionnaire. Data were collected using validated attitude scales for blood and organ donation and a demographic questionnaire. Among the participants, 27.3% had donated blood, 3.3% had donated organs, and 68.7% had not received any prior education on BOD. The average attitude score was 3.41 for blood donation and 3.68 for organ donation (on a 5-point scale). No significant gender differences were found in overall blood donation attitudes. However, female students scored higher in the sub-dimensions of altruistic values, positive

outlook, and religious perspective on organ donation, while males showed higher levels of fear and anxiety. Students aged 20 years and above reported more anxiety about blood donation. Those with prior donation experience or education had more positive attitudes and stronger sense of social responsibility. Students demonstrated generally positive but somewhat indecisive attitudes toward BOD. Education and personal experience were associated with more favorable attitudes toward BOD. Implementing targeted and comprehensive educational programs is essential to increase awareness and motivation, enabling students to become informed advocates in their future healthcare roles.

Keywords: Blood Donation, Organ Donation, Attitudes, Vocational Health Students.

JEL Codes: I10, I12, D64

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1. Introduction

Despite rapid advancements in medicine, blood and blood products cannot be produced in a laboratory environment, necessitating reliance on donations from healthy individuals for blood transfusions. Increasing life expectancy has led to an increase in the demand for blood and blood products in many countries. Blood and blood components can be life-saving, particularly in medical emergencies, such as severe accidents, injuries, significant post-surgical blood loss, and hematological diseases, such as hemophilia, leukemia, and aplastic anemia, as well as in cancer patients and pregnant women (Heper, 2010). Similarly, organ transplantation involves replacing a dysfunctional organ or tissue with a functional and compatible organ obtained from a living or cadaveric donor (Kavurmacı et al., 2014). Transplantation of many vital organs, including the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas, small intestine, bone marrow, blood, skin, and cornea, is currently performed. However, one of the most critical stages of organ transplantation is the procurement of the organ (Çayırılı, 2002). In Türkiye, organ procurement for transplantation is largely met through donations from living donors, especially close relatives of the patient, whereas in developed countries, this need is primarily met by cadaveric donors (Aydın & Öztekin, 2020). According to the World Health Organization (2024), 135.860 solid-organ transplantations were performed in 2016, representing 10% or less of the global transplantation needs. According to data from the T.C. Ministry of Health (2023), 22,660 patients were awaiting organ transplants, indicating an insufficient number of donors despite the increasing organ transplant waiting list. The cadaveric organ donation rate in Türkiye is 2 per million, whereas in developed countries, this rate is 20-30 per million (Eren & Mermer, 2021).

Despite the long-standing presence of blood banks in Türkiye, blood donations remain insufficient (Kaya et al., 2007). While the voluntary blood donation rate reaches 5% of the population in developed countries, this rate is approximately 1.5% in Türkiye (WHO, 2016; TCCİB, 2024). This situation leads to many patients waiting for blood donors for treatment every day, and many individuals lose their lives because of their inability to procure blood in a timely manner (Bostancı Daştan et al., 2013). Misinformation, beliefs, and prejudices about blood donation are widespread. Some individuals are unaware of how their blood can be used to save others' lives, while some believe that blood donation jeopardizes their health, and many are unwilling to donate unless they are paid or their blood is given to a family member (Kocabaş & Eke, 2022). Similar problems have been experienced in organ donation. Organ donation efforts and practices in Türkiye are carried out in accordance with Law No. 2238 on "The Procurement, Preservation, Transplantation, and Implantation of Organs and Tissues" dated 29/05/1979

(resmigazete.gov.tr). The relevant law, for organs and tissues to be taken from a person who has reached the age of 18 and is mentally competent, a record signed by them declaring their consent in writing or verbally in the presence of at least two witnesses must be approved by a physician. For cadaveric organ procurement, brain death must have occurred, the organs must have been usable, and legal permission must have been obtained (resmigazete.gov.tr).

Blood and organ donation continues to be a highly important issue in the healthcare system in Türkiye. The number of patients awaiting organ transplantation annually in Türkiye, and the insufficient number of voluntary donors despite regular blood donation campaigns highlight the necessity of increasing efforts in this area. 22,660 patients were awaiting organ transplantation. Furthermore, while the cadaveric organ donation rate in Türkiye is 2 per million, this rate is 20-30 per million in developed countries (T.C. Ministry of Health, 2023). Previously, research has often focused on general medicine, nursing, or medical school students (Allahverdi et al., 2020; Robert et al., 2021). However, this study addresses a gap in the literature by focusing on the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes of students at a Vocational School of Health Services.

Vocational School of Health Services students, after graduation, will undertake critical roles in the healthcare system and directly interact with patients and the general public. Therefore, awareness and positive attitudes toward blood and organ donation are of great importance. As stated by Demir et al. (2016), these students have the potential to raise awareness among those around them beyond their own donation behaviors.

Despite the critical and growing need for blood and organ donations in Türkiye, there is a significant gap between demand and supply, largely influenced by public attitudes, misinformation, and insufficient donor rates. This study aims to address this by specifically investigating the attitudes of Vocational School of Health Services students, a key demographic poised to impact future healthcare practices and public health initiatives, towards blood and organ donation. Understanding these perspectives is crucial for developing targeted educational interventions.

This study aimed to investigate the following:

1. What are the current attitudes of Vocational School of Health Services students towards blood and organ donation?
2. How do demographic factors (e.g., gender and age) and prior donation experiences influence these attitudes?
3. What is the perceived impact of education on blood and organ donation attitudes among these students?

2. Literature Review

Research consistently indicates that while university students and healthcare professionals generally hold favorable attitudes towards blood and organ donation, notable gaps persist in their knowledge, various misconceptions endure, and specific concerns remain prevalent (Sarigöl Ordin et al., 2018; Kaur et al., 2015; Tarhan et al., 2015). Several misconceptions and motivations influence individuals' decisions regarding blood donation. Common myths include the belief that donating blood can lead to health problems such as HIV or hepatitis infections, side effects like weight loss, or even sudden death (Olaiya et al., 2004). Such misconceptions are among the primary reasons people refrain from donating blood. Additionally, many fear complications from donation, or they feel they are not physically fit to donate (Sachdev et al., 2016). These deficits are observed even among students in health-related disciplines, who, despite exhibiting more positive attitudes, still demonstrate areas for improvement (Kaur et al., 2015; Sarigöl Ordin et al., 2018; Symvoulakis et al., 2014).

A broad study involving university students from 16 countries, including Türkiye, revealed that blood donation rates among students can sometimes surpass the general population's rates. In this study, while 28.5% of the students had a good knowledge of blood donation, only 22.7% had donated blood at least once. Interestingly, students older than 20 years showed a greater likelihood of donating blood (Alkanj et al., 2024). While university students generally possess a strong understanding of blood donation, a gap often exists between their knowledge and actual donation behavior (Bostancı Daştan et al. 2013; Wiwanitkit, 2002). This highlights the complex interplay of factors—beyond just information—that influence an individual's decision to donate blood, including demographics like gender and age.

Gender is a significant factor influencing blood donation. Özpulat (2017) noted variations in blood donation rates among university students based on gender, with a majority of Health Vocational School students expressing a willingness to donate blood, and a substantial proportion also willing to donate organs. Adıgüzel et al. (2019) reported that in a university environment, 30.4% of students and 60.1% of staff had donated blood, with males and employed staff showing higher donation rates than females and students, respectively.

A study by Kaya et al. (2007) on university students revealed that 7.5% were regular blood donors and 16.5% were occasional donors. This participation rate was considerably higher than the national average of 1.5 per thousand at the time. Similarly, Bostancı et al. (2013) found that 12% of Health Vocational School students had donated blood, again surpassing the Turkish average. While 61.5% of stu-

dents in this study intended to donate blood in the future, 17.2% were medically ineligible. International studies corroborate these trends; for instance, a study by Wiwanitkit (2002) in Thailand indicated that although 80% of university students were aware of blood donation, only 11% had previously donated, suggesting that awareness alone does not guarantee donation behavior.

A comparable pattern was observed for organ donation. Kaya et al. (2015) found that only 1.5% of Atatürk University students had donated organs. Their research also highlighted that female students held a more positive perception of organ donation, whereas male students voiced concerns related to organ trafficking and religious objections more frequently. Çeliktürk Doruker et al. (2024) emphasized that gender disparities in organ donation attitudes can vary across sub-dimensions, including altruism, positive outlook, religious perspective, and fear/anxiety. Furthermore, age was correlated with donation anxiety, with older students occasionally reporting elevated anxiety levels. More detailed examinations of health sciences faculty students' organ donation knowledge and attitudes provide additional insights.

Karacan et al. (2024) reported that health sciences students possessed above-average organ donation knowledge and moderate attitudes. Their study noted that students who received organ donation education, had a family history of organ donation, or were influenced by religious leaders' explanations demonstrated enhanced knowledge and more positive attitudes. In Greece, Symvoulakis et al. (2014) discovered that only 3.6% to 8.7% of health sciences students carried donor cards. While over 78% were aware that kidney donation was possible after death, only 10%–39% felt adequately informed. Notably, nursing students (21.5%) were more inclined to consider opting out of organ donation than medical students (10.9%), underscoring the persistence of knowledge gaps and hesitations, even among future healthcare professionals. Specific knowledge deficits exist among medical students. Despite a general awareness of the irreversibility of neurological death among medical students, recent studies, including the survey by Robert et al. (2021), emphasize a knowledge gap, particularly regarding organ donation after circulatory death. This situation underscores the necessity for targeted educational interventions, which our methodology intends to evaluate among professional healthcare students.

In conclusion, despite generally positive attitudes towards blood and organ donation among university youth and healthcare professionals, significant knowledge deficits and reservations persist. Crucially, prior donation experience and thorough education have consistently been shown to positively impact social responsibility and reduce donation anxiety (Keten et al., 2025; Allahverdi et al., 2020).

Building on this existing body of knowledge, the present study seeks to further investigate these dynamics within the specific context of Health Services Vocational School students in Türkiye. The anticipated findings will contribute to the development of more effective health education programs and public health campaigns aimed at addressing these challenges.

3. Method

This descriptive research was designed to determine the attitudes of Vocational School of Health Services students towards blood and organ donation. This descriptive study, conducted between March 30 and May 5, 2024, aimed to determine the attitudes of students at Burdur blood and organ donation. The study included students from the school's active programs: First and Emergency Aid, Anesthesia, Physiotherapy, and Operating Room Services.

The population of the study consists of 660 students. The study group consisted of 396 students who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study utilizing a convenience sampling method. The survey was administered face-to-face. Before starting the study, written permission was obtained from the relevant vocational school administration and verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants. Approval for this study was obtained from the Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee with the decision number GO 2022/673.

3.1. Data Collection

In this study, a survey form was used to comprehensively collect relevant data. The first two sections of the survey utilized two scales whose validity and reliability had been previously established to measure attitudes towards blood and organ donation. The details and contents of these measurement instruments are explained in detail under the "Measurement Instruments" subheading.

The survey form used in this study was divided into three sections to comprehensively collect relevant data. The first section of the survey consisted of the 24 item Blood Donation Attitude Scale, which was developed to evaluate participants' attitudes towards blood donation. The second section comprised 20 items and was the Attitude Towards Organ Donation Scale, which measured participants' attitudes toward organ donation. Finally, the third section consisted of seven questions aimed at obtaining important details regarding demographic information and donation behavior. This section includes data on participants' age, gender, specific study program, current academic year, previous blood and/or organ donation participation, and

whether they had previously received formal education (seminars, conferences et al.) on blood and/or organ donation.

3.2. Measurement Instruments

The study utilized two validated scales to assess students' attitudes towards blood and organ donation, alongside a demographic questionnaire.

Blood Donation Attitude Scale: In this study, the Blood Donation Attitude Scale, a 24 item instrument validated by Çelik and Güven (2015), was used to measure students' attitudes toward blood donation. Participants responded on a 5 point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The scale measures attitudes across three dimensions: "Community and Social Responsibility" (12 items), "Anxiety" (4 items), and "Social Views and Understanding" (8 items). The scale contains no reverse-scored items, and a higher total score indicates a more positive attitude. Community and Social Responsibility, measures the individual's perception of blood donation within the framework of social responsibility values, such as civic duty, societal benefit, and helping others; a high score in this dimension reflects a strong sense of social responsibility. The second sub-dimension, Anxiety, determines the level of fear, worry, and apprehension felt regarding the blood donation process; consequently, a higher score indicates greater anxiety about the process. Finally, the Social Views and Understanding sub-dimension evaluates the general understanding, prevalent social perceptions, and common misconceptions concerning blood donation. Cronbach's alpha values of the scale were reported to be .84 for the first sub-dimension, .93, for the second sub-dimension .77 and .71 for the third sub-dimension (Çelik & Güven, 2015). In this study, the overall internal consistency of the scale was found to be .73 (Cronbach's alpha), with sub-dimension coefficients of .88, .74, and .75, respectively.

Attitude Towards Organ Donation Scale: This 20 item scale, with its validity and reliability established by Tokay Arğan (2007), assesses university students' attitudes towards organ donation. Participants responded on a 5 point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The scale consists of five sub-dimensions: "Positive Outlook" (8 items), "Altruistic Values" (5 items), "Legitimation in Religion" (2 items), "Religious Perspective" (2 items), and "Fear and Anxiety" (three items). Positive Outlook sub-dimension measures the belief and perspective toward the positive outcomes of organ donation, such as its life-saving potential, medical necessity, and success rates. The Altruistic Values sub-dimension reflects the individual's evaluation of organ donation in terms of humanitarian and moral values, such as self-sacrifice, compassion, and valuing the lives of others.

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Religious Legitimacy measures the views on the general acceptability and appropriateness of organ donation within the context of Islamic beliefs and by the collective religious authority. The Religious Perspective sub-dimension evaluates the role of personal religious beliefs and teachings that influence the organ donation decision, as well as the individual's spiritual thoughts on the matter. Lastly, the Fear and Anxiety sub-dimension measures the level of worry, fear, and apprehension felt regarding potential negative outcomes of organ donation, such as medical procedures, organ theft, or disrespect for the deceased body.

The lowest possible score on this scale is 20, and the highest is 100. The scale contains 3 reverse-scored items. A higher score indicates a positive attitude towards organ donation, while a lower score points to a negative attitude. Cronbach's alpha values of the scale were reported to be .81 for the first sub-dimension, .84, for the second sub-dimension .71, third sub-dimension .88, fourth sub-dimension .77 and .45 for the fifth sub-dimension (Tokay Arğan, 2007). In this study, the scale demonstrated strong overall reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .83, and sub-dimension reliability coefficients ranged from .61 to .84.

3.3. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows (Version 24.0). Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to determine the participants' demographic characteristics and the distribution of scale scores.

In this study, the Skewness and Kurtosis values of each scale sub-dimension were examined to assess whether they met the assumptions of a normal distribution. As a result of the analyses, it was determined that the Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients for the "Community and Social Responsibility" and "Altruistic Values" sub-dimensions fell outside the standard reference range of -1.96 to +1.96, indicating that they do not follow a normal distribution (Can, 2018). Accordingly, non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis) were used to compare the data for these sub-dimensions.

Furthermore, it was determined that the other sub-dimensions of both scales did meet the normal distribution assumption, and therefore parametric tests (Independent Samples t-Test and ANOVA) were applied to analyze these dimensions.

Independent sample t-tests and ANOVA were employed to analyze the scales and their sub-dimensions used by the participants. P-values ($p < 0.5$) were used to determine whether the difference between the group means was statistically significant.

4. Findings

The study cohort predominantly comprised females (73.7%), with the majority (72.9%) being aged < 20 years. The largest proportion of participants (36.3%) were enrolled in the Operating Room Services Program, and over half (50.8%) were in their second year. A significant majority of the participants reported no history of blood donation (72.7%) or organ donation (96.7%). Furthermore, most students (68.7%) had not received prior formal education on blood and organ donation. (Table 1)

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Study Group

		N	%
Gender	Female	292	73.7
	Male	104	26.3
Age	<20	170	42.9
	≥ 20	226	57.1
Program	First and Emergency Aid	96	24.2
	Anesthesia	100	25.3
	Physiotherapy	96	24.2
	Operating Room Services	104	36.3
Class	1. Class	195	49.2
	2. Class	201	50.8
Blood Donation Status	Yes	108	27.3
	No	288	72.7
Organ Donation Status	Yes	13	3.3
	No	383	96.7
Education About Blood /Organ Donation	Yes	124	31.3
	No	272	68.7

4.1. Attitudes Towards Blood and Organ Donation

The mean score for students on the Blood Donation Attitude Scale was $3.41 \pm .41$, indicating attitudes close to positive but with an ambivalent tendency. Within its sub-dimensions, "Community and Social Responsibility" had the highest mean score ($4.10 \pm .60$), while "Social Views and Understanding" ($2.67 \pm$

$.99$) and "Anxiety" ($2.73 \pm .72$) had lower ones.

The mean Organ Donation Attitude Scale score was $3.68 \pm .48$. The "Altruistic Values" sub-dimension showed the highest mean score ($4.33 \pm .78$), followed by "Positive Outlook" ($3.95 \pm .73$) and "Religious Perspective" ($3.7 \pm .99$). The "Legitimation in Religion" sub-dimension had a mean of $3.57 \pm .97$, and "Fear and Anxiety" recorded the lowest mean score ($2.73 \pm .9$). (Table 2)

Table 2. Mean Scores of the Blood Donation Attitude Scale and the Organ Donation Attitude Scale and Their Sub-Dimensions

Scale	Number of Items	Min-Max Score	Mean-Standard Deviation
Blood Donation Attitude Scale	24	1.67-5	$3.41 \pm .41$
Subdimensions			
Community and Social Responsibility	12	1.33-4.83	$4.1 \pm .6$
Social Views and Understanding	8	1-5	$2.67 \pm .99$
Anxiety	4	1-5	$2.72 \pm .72$
Scale			
Organ Donation Attitude Scale	20	1.2-4.5	$3.68 \pm .48$
Subdimensions			
Positive Outlook	8	1-5	$3.95 \pm .73$
Altruistic Values	5	1-5	$4.33 \pm .78$
Legitimation in Religion	2	1-5	$3.57 \pm .97$
Religious Perspective	2	1-5	$3.7 \pm .99$
Fear and Anxiety	3	1-5	$2.73 \pm .9$

4.2. Factors Affecting Attitudes

Gender: Significant differences were observed in overall organ donation attitudes by gender ($F=9.34$, $p=.00$). While males had a slightly higher mean total score on the Organ Donation Attitude Scale ($3.58 \pm .55$ vs. $3.41 \pm .43$ for females), females scored higher in the "Positive Outlook," "Altruistic Values," and "Legitimation in Religion" sub-dimensions. Conversely, males exhibited slightly higher "Fear and Anxiety" levels ($2.8 \pm .81$ vs. $2.70 \pm .94$ for females). For blood donation attitudes, no significant gender differentiation was observed in the overall score, but women showed stronger in the "Social Views and Understanding" sub-dimension (Table 3).

Age: A statistically significant difference related to age was detected in the "Anxiety" dimension of the Blood Donation Attitude Scale ($F=3.96$, $p=.04$). Students aged 20 years and over reported higher anxiety levels ($2.76 \pm .76$) than those under 20 ($2.67 \pm .66$) regarding blood donation.

Donation Experience: Prior blood donation experience significantly influenced attitudes across various dimensions of the Blood Donation Attitude Scale. Experienced donors showed higher scores in "Community and Social Responsibility" ($4.24 \pm .43$ vs.

$4.06 \pm .65$ for non-donors) and lower scores in "Social Views and Understanding" ($2.45 \pm .92$ vs. 2.76 ± 1.01 for non-donors) and "Anxiety" ($2.6 \pm .75$ vs. $2.76 \pm .71$ for non-donors). For organ donation, experienced blood donors showed lower "Fear and Anxiety" ($2.67 \pm .8$ vs. $2.75 \pm .94$ for non-donors). Similarly, organ donation status significantly affected attitudes, with differences observed in the "Anxiety" dimension of the Blood Donation Attitude Scale and "Legitimation in Religion" and "Fear and Anxiety" dimensions of the Organ Donation Attitude Scale.

Education: Receiving education on blood and organ donation positively influenced attitudes toward donation. A statistically significant difference was found in the "Community and Social Responsibility" dimension of the Blood Donation Attitude Scale ($U=13838.5$, $p=.00$), with educated participants scoring higher ($4.21 \pm .55$ vs. $4.06 \pm .62$ for uneducated participants). This suggests that education enhances individuals' perceptions of social responsibility. A significant difference was also found in the "Religious Perspective" dimension of the Organ Donation Attitude Scale ($F=6.57$, $p=.01$), where educated participants had a lower mean score ($3.86 \pm .88$) than uneducated participants (3.64 ± 1.04).

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Table 3. Mean Scores of the Blood Donation Attitude Scale and the Organ Donation Attitude Scale and Their Sub-Dimensions

Gender		F/Z	Sig.	t/U	df	Sig.(2)	Mean Diff.
Blood Donation Attitude Scale	Community and Social Responsibility	-2.07	-	13112.0	394	.06	-27.02
	Social Views and Understanding	5.91	.01	-.38	394	.69	-.04
	Anxiety	.86	.35	1.59	394	.11	.13
	Blood Donation Total	1.08	.29	-.40	394	.68	-.19
Organ Donation Attitude Scale	Positive Outlook	7.18	.00	-2.53	394	.01	-.21
	Altruistic Values	-3.02	-	12201.0	394	.00	-38.9
	Legitimation in Religion	.38	.53	-1.91	394	.05	-.21
	Religious Perspective	3.95	.04	-1.80	394	.07	-.2
	Fear and Anxiety	4.71	.03	.95	394	.33	.09
	Organ Donation Total	9.34	.00	-2.38	394	.01	-.13
Age		F/Z	Sig.	t/U	df	Sig.(2)	Mean Diff.
Blood Donation Attitude Scale	Community and Social Responsibility	-.35	-	18814.5	394	.72	-4.08
	Social Views and Understanding	.08	.76	.23	394	.81	.02
	Anxiety	3.96	.04	-1.18	394	.23	-.08
	Blood Donation Total	.69	.40	-1.34	394	.18	-.05
Organ Donation Attitude Scale	Positive Outlook	1.34	.24	-.59	394	.55	-.04
	Altruistic Values	-.57	-	18571.0	394	.56	6.59
	Legitimation in Religion	.11	.73	-1.71	394	.08	-.17
	Religious Perspective	.02	.87	-1.57	394	.11	-.15
	Fear and Anxiety	1.55	.21	-.22	394	.82	-.02
	Organ Donation Total	1.15	.28	-1.16	394	.24	-.5
Class		F/Z	Sig.	t/U	df	Sig.(2)	Mean Diff.
Blood Donation Attitude Scale	Community and Social Responsibility	-.04	-	19550.5	394	.96	.47
	Social Views and Understanding	.28	.59	-.65	394	.51	-.06
	Anxiety	.02	.88	-.29	394	.76	-.02
	Blood Donation Total	.02	.87	-.25	394	.80	-.01
Organ Donation Attitude Scale	Positive Outlook	3.82	.06	-.12	394	.90	-.00
	Altruistic Values	-.26	-	19305.5	394	.79	-2.95
	Legitimation in Religion	.05	.81	.58	394	.55	.05
	Religious Perspective	.25	.61	.64	394	.52	.06
	Fear and Anxiety	.02	.87	.22	394	.82	.02
	Organ Donation Total	.71	.40	.31	394	.75	.01

Donating Blood		F/Z	Sig.	t/U	df	Sig.(2)	Mean Diff.
Blood Donation Attitude Scale	Community and Social Responsibility	-2.55	-	12971.5	394	.01	32.85
	Social Views and Understanding	.49	.48	-2.84	394	.00	-.31
	Anxiety	2.30	.13	-1.99	394	.04	-.16
	Blood Donation Total	.01	.91	-.29	394	.76	-.01
Organ Donation Attitude Scale	Positive Outlook	.41	.52	.09	394	.92	.00
	Altruistic Values	-.00	-	15546	394	.99	-.08
	Legitimation in Religion	.01	.91	-.30	394	.76	-.03
	Religious Perspective	3.47	.06	1.36	394	.17	.15
	Fear and Anxiety	6.03	.01	-.78	394	.43	-.08
	Organ Donation Total	.01	.90	.34	394	.72	.01
Organ Donation		F/Z	Sig.	t/U	df	Sig.(2)	Mean Diff.
Blood Donation Attitude Scale	Community and Social Responsibility	-.96	-	2101	394	.33	30.89
	Social Views and Understanding	1.74	.18	-.94	394	.34	-.26
	Anxiety	8.05	.00	-1.87	394	.06	-.38
	Blood Donation Total	.56	.45	-.66	394	.50	-.07
Organ Donation Attitude Scale	Positive Outlook	.94	.33	1.38	394	.16	.28
	Altruistic Values	-.92	-	2120.0	394	.35	29.38
	Legitimation in Religion	.29	.58	2.63	394	.00	.72
	Religious Perspective	.8	.37	1.92	394	.05	.54
	Fear and Anxiety	1.21	.27	-2.56	394	.01	-.65
	Organ Donation Total	1.99	.15	1.0	394	.31	-1.39
Blood and Organ Donation Education		F/Z	Sig.	t/U	df	Sig.(2)	Mean Diff.
Blood Donation Attitude Scale	Community and Social Responsibility	-2.87	-	13838.5	394	.00	35.52
	Social Views and Understanding	.26	.60	-1	394	.31	-.10
	Anxiety	.04	.83	-.04	394	.96	-.00
	Blood Donation Total	.00	.96	1.25	394	.21	.05
Organ Donation Attitude Scale	Positive Outlook	.87	.35	1.17	394	.24	.09
	Altruistic Values	-1.31	-	15498.5	394	.18	16.03
	Legitimation in Religion	.10	.75	.08	394	.93	.00
	Religious Perspective	6.57	.01	2.09	394	.03	.22
	Fear and Anxiety	.43	.51	-.84	394	.40	-.08
	Organ Donation Total	1.80	.18	1.45	394	.14	.07

Note. F = F-value (Analysis of Variance), Sig. = Significance level (p-value), t = t-value (t-test), df = Degrees of freedom, Mean Diff. = Mean difference. U- value, Z = Z-value(Z-test)

According to Table 4, the students' academic program did not create a statistically significant differ-

ence in any dimension of either the blood donation or organ donation attitude scale ($p > .05$).

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Table 4. Mean Scores of the Blood Donation Attitude Scale and the Organ Donation Attitude Scale and Their Sub-Dimensions

	Program	SS	df	MS	F / χ^2	P
Community and Social Responsibility	Community and Social Responsibility	-	3	-	9.45	.06
	Social Views and Understanding	2.35	3	.78	.78	.5
	Anxiety	2.75	3	.91	1.77	.15
	Blood Donation Total	.05	3	.01	.09	.96
Positive Outlook	Positive Outlook	.58	3	.19	.35	.78
	Altruistic Values	-	3	-	9.9	.08
	Legitimation in Religion	2.16	3	.72	.75	.52
	Religious Perspective	4.25	3	1.41	1.43	.23
	Fear and Anxiety	5.93	3	1.97	2.43	.06
	Organ Donation Total	.12	3	.04	.16	.91

Note. SS = Sum of Squares, df = Degrees of freedom, MS = Mean Square, F = F-value, P = p-value, χ^2 = Kruskal-Wallis Test

5. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that students of the Vocational School of Health Services hold largely positive attitudes toward blood and organ donation, as indicated by the mean scores on the Blood Donation Attitude Scale and the Organ Donation Attitude Scale. However, this positive stance is accompanied by an underlying ambivalence. This is a critical observation, suggesting that while students acknowledge the importance of donations, certain barriers or uncertainties prevent a more definitive positive stance. This ambivalence is evidenced by the lower mean scores in specific sub-dimensions of the scales, particularly 'Social Views and Understanding' and 'Anxiety' for blood donation, and 'Fear and Anxiety' for organ donation. These lower scores indicate that despite a generally positive view, students still harbor significant concerns and uncertainties. This finding aligns with previous studies on the attitudes of students in the health field. (Akram et al., 2024; Vicdan et al., 2011; Kaur et al., 2015; Eren & Mermer, 2021; Kulakçı Altıntaş, 2018; Adigüzel et al., 2019; Saeed et al., 2024). The effect of factors such as gender, donation experience, and education on attitudes particularly supports the findings in the literature.

In our study, the finding that female students scored higher in the "Positive Outlook," "Altruistic Values," and "Religious Perspective" sub-dimensions related to organ donation is consistent with Kaya et al. (2015) finding that female students have a more positive perception of organ donation. Conversely, the fact that male students scored higher in "Fear and Anxiety" aligns with Çeliktürk Doruker et al. (2024) statement that gender differences may vary across sub-dimensions such as sacrifice, positive outlook, religious perspective, and fear/anxiety. These gender differences once again highlight the complex structure of attitudes.

In addition to gender, individual experiences are also seen to shape attitudes. The finding that students with blood donation experience scored higher in the "Social and Societal Responsibility" dimension of the blood donation scale compared to those without experience indicates that experience creates a positive effect. Furthermore, these students having lower levels of "Fear and Anxiety" towards organ donation supports the findings of Keten et al. (2025) and Allahverdi et al. (2020) that previous experience increases social responsibility and reduces anxiety.

Finally, the power of education has once again been confirmed by our findings. The fact that participants who received education related to donation scored higher in the "Social and Societal Responsibility" sub-dimension of the Blood Donation Attitude Scale reveals the positive impact of education on donation attitudes. These results are consistent with the findings of sources such as Karacan et al. (2024), Sarıgöl Ordin et al. (2018), and Tarhan et al. (2015).

A closer examination of the similarities between our findings and previous research suggests a persistent indecisiveness among health service students towards donation, potentially due to a lack of targeted educational interventions or deeply ingrained societal beliefs (Kurtoğlu Olgunus & Kayabaşı, 2021; Agus et al., 2015). This observation highlights the need for curriculum reforms that incorporate comprehensive donation education, moving beyond mere factual dissemination to address emotional, social, and religious concerns (Allahverdi et al., 2020).

Gender emerged as a significant factor, particularly in attitudes towards organ donation (Çeliktürk Doruker et al., 2024). While males showed a slightly higher overall positive attitude, females scored higher in the Altruistic Values," "Positive Outlook," and "Religious Perspective" sub-dimensions, whereas males exhibited higher "Fear and Anxiety". This suggests that although men may be generally inclined to do-

nate, underlying anxieties may act as barriers. Conversely, women's higher scores in altruistic and positive outlooks indicate a strong prosocial motivation that could be leveraged in targeted campaigns. The finding that older students reported higher anxiety regarding blood donation may be attributed to their increased awareness of potential health risks or a greater sense of personal vulnerability as they age. This highlights the need for age-appropriate educational content that addresses specific concerns and provides accurate information to mitigate unwarranted fear (Al-Drees, 2008).

Significantly, prior experience with blood and organ donation consistently correlated with more positive attitudes and lower anxiety. This suggests that direct engagement with the donation process, whether as a donor or through exposure to successful outcomes, reinforces altruistic values and reduces donors' fear. This underscores the importance of promoting initial donation experiences through accessible and supportive donation drives within educational institutions. Furthermore, receiving formal education on blood and organ donation positively influenced students' perception of "Community and Social Responsibility" (Can, 2017; Fontana et al., 2017; Karacan et al., 2024; Kulakçı Altıntaş, 2018; Sarıgöl Ordin et al., 2018; Tarhan et al., 2015).

Our findings confirm that receiving formal education on blood and organ donation positively influences students' attitudes, particularly by enhancing their perception of "Community and Social Responsibility". This result aligns with extensive research showing that comprehensive education can lead to more favorable donation attitudes among students. For example, studies by Karacan et al. (2024), Ordin et al. (2018), and Tarhan et al. (2015) all corroborate the idea that targeted educational interventions improve knowledge and attitudes.

However, a critical nuance emerged from our data that warrants further investigation, as educated participants had a lower mean score in the 'Religious Perspective' sub-dimension of organ donation attitudes compared to their counterparts who had not received any prior education on organ donation. Therefore, while education is crucial for disseminating factual information, this finding highlights the need for a more comprehensive approach that moves beyond simple data sharing to encompass the emotional, social, and cultural dimensions of donation (Kavurmacı et al., 2014; Şipkin et al., 2010).

In conclusion, strengthening future health professionals' attitudes towards blood and organ donation is paramount for increasing societal donation rates. This necessitates not only increasing their knowledge but also empowering them to serve as informed role models for society, in alignment with professional ethical values. Future interventions should focus on comprehensive educational pro-

grams tailored to address gender-specific concerns, age-related anxieties, and culturally sensitive aspects, including religious perspectives. Emphasizing the tangible benefits of donation and facilitating initial donation experiences could further cultivate a more committed and positive stance among these vital healthcare workers.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to students at a specific university's Health Services Vocational School. Thus, generalizing the findings to all health vocational school students in Türkiye is limited. The cross-sectional design of this study did not allow us to examine the dynamics of attitude changes over time. Furthermore, using self-reported questionnaires as a data collection method may introduce factors such as social desirability bias. Finally, the finding that the study program did not create a significant difference in attitudes needs to be supported by broader and more diverse samples in future studies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research reveals that the attitudes of Health Services Vocational School students towards blood and organ donation remain indecisive. As future healthcare professionals, it is critical to enhance students' knowledge and awareness. Our study identified significant effects of demographic factors, such as age and gender, as well as blood/organ donation experience and educational status, on attitudes. Notably, students who had received education and had experienced donors exhibited more positive attitudes toward organ donation. Our research findings confirm that education has a positive effect on donation attitudes. Further research on the cultural and ethical values that are expected to influence these attitudes will contribute to the existing literature.

Future research should conduct longitudinal studies with broader sample groups to examine the long-term effects of attitude changes. Comparative studies involving students from different health disciplines should be conducted. Additionally, qualitative research methods can be employed to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying motivations, anxieties, and religious and cultural perceptions that influence students' attitudes. Such detailed studies will provide a solid foundation for developing more effective educational programs and public health campaigns aimed at increasing organ donation awareness.

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Exploring University Students' Interactions with Chatgpt in Education: An Examination of Usages Based on the UTAUT Model

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Abstract

Recent advancements in AI have led to educational chatbots like ChatGPT, enhancing student engagement through personalized, interactive experiences. These tools provide tailored assistance and immediate feedback, improving learning outcomes. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model identifies four key factors—PE, EE, SI, and FC—that influence technology adoption. In ChatGPT's case, these factors affect students' perceptions of the tool's usefulness, ease of use, and available support. This study explores PE, EE, SI, and FC in ChatGPT use, focusing on differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students. 40 participants were interviewed using snowball sampling. Data were analyzed descriptively, with key statements quoted for insight. PE factors for undergraduates include task efficiency, convenience, academic productivity, and reliability issues, while

postgraduates emphasized academic support, research applications, and reliability issues, with perceived usefulness and reliability common across both groups. EE factors for undergraduates include ease of use, prior experience, and educational assistance, while postgraduates emphasized prior experience, over-reliance, and self-reliance, with prior experience as the common theme. SIs for undergraduates are driven by "social pressure," while postgraduates are influenced by "misuse anxiety" and "independent usage." FC for both groups are centered on "accessibility," focusing on free availability.

Keywords: UTAUT, Chatgpt, AI Education, Undergraduate Students, Postgraduate Students.

JEL Codes: L86, I120, I123

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1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence has begun to reshape educational practices, complementing traditional approaches with personalized and adaptive systems. Applications such as ChatGPT provide learners with immediate feedback, individualized guidance, and interactive experiences that enhance both engagement and achievement. As one of the most widely used language models, ChatGPT serves diverse functions ranging from academic writing and research assistance to tutoring support. Nevertheless, its growing presence in education raises concerns related to academic integrity, dependence, and data privacy, underscoring the importance of responsible and balanced use. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) offers a useful framework for examining the factors that shape technology adoption. It emphasizes four dimensions: performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI), and facilitating conditions (FC). In the context of ChatGPT, these correspond to perceptions of usefulness, ease of use, social encouragement, and access to resources. Prior research demonstrates that these factors significantly influence students' adoption of AI-based tools. For instance, postgraduate students tend to value ChatGPT for its efficiency and contribution to learning, though issues such as accuracy and over-reliance remain points of hesitation. In addition, elements such as trust, social support, and infrastructural conditions appear critical to its sustained integration. Despite increasing scholarly attention to AI acceptance, relatively little is known about how undergraduate and postgraduate students differ in their perceptions and use of ChatGPT. This study seeks to address that gap by comparing the two groups across the UTAUT dimensions. Specifically, it explores: (1) how performance expectancy is shaped and whether it varies between undergraduates and postgraduates; (2) what influences effort expectancy and how these perceptions diverge across groups; (3) which aspects of social influence encourage or discourage ChatGPT use; and (4) the conditions that facilitate or hinder adoption. To investigate these questions, snowball sampling was employed to recruit 40 participants (20 undergraduates and 20 postgraduates). Data were collected through in-depth email interviews and analyzed descriptively by categorizing similar responses, presenting findings in tabular form, and incorporating direct quotations to capture participants' perspectives more fully.

2. ChatGPT: An AI Tool for Enhancing Education

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly influenced education by accelerating the adoption of digital technologies that en-

hance both teaching and learning. Once viewed as a futuristic concept with untapped potential, AI is now a transformative force that reshapes university operations, teaching practices, and students' learning experiences (Özbay et al., 2025). Through intelligent systems—often described as AI-assisted teaching or AI-based learning—it provides innovative solutions to long-standing educational challenges. McCarthy (2007) defines AI as the creation of machines capable of intelligent, human-like behavior, while Naqvi (2020) emphasizes its focus on simulating such behavior to extend human capacities. In this sense, AI seeks to imitate natural intelligence by perceiving, analyzing, and responding to human actions (Nilsson, 1990; Chowdhary, 2020), thereby influencing both computational and human intelligence (Fjelland, 2020). Technologies such as machine learning and neural networks enable systems to perform tasks traditionally associated with human cognition—including speech recognition, visual perception, and decision-making (Tsz et al., 2021; Ferrara, 2022). With these capabilities, AI is positioned to play a transformative role in education. Projections indicate that the global AI user base will expand by 414.7 million between 2024 and 2030, reaching 729.11 million users (Statista, 2024). Parallel to this, the AI education market is expected to grow to \$53.11 billion by 2032, reflecting rising investment in educational technologies (Shahzad et al., 2024). This expansion is driven by technological advances, economic shifts, lifestyle changes, and evolving student needs, while also sparking increased public, academic, and policy interest in digital learning (Asthana & Hazela, 2020). AI's role in education is not entirely new. Its roots trace back to the 1920s, when Pressey developed feedback machines (Petrina, 2004). Today, its applications range from software and mobile apps to robotics and recognition, decision-making, and translation systems (Hwang et al., 2020). AI offers solutions to common limitations in traditional lectures, such as one-size-fits-all pacing and limited feedback, though challenges remain in large-class settings (Kestin et al., 2024). Effective implementation of AI tools—particularly chatbots—relies on core principles such as goal setting, progress monitoring, self-assessment, personalized feedback, and adaptive algorithms (Chang et al., 2023; Hajian et al., 2023). These mechanisms enhance e-learning by tailoring content to individual strengths and weaknesses, rather than delivering uniform material. Personalization extends to both instruction and assessment, addressing learners' specific needs. Examples include social robots, intelligent platforms, and adaptive tutoring systems that adjust content according to student difficulties (Rodrigues et al., 2019). AI-powered assessment tools also improve the efficiency and accuracy of evaluations while providing individualized feedback. Similarly, AI-based libraries and learning environments enrich higher education by offering

tailored resources that align with students' preferences and characteristics (Walkington & Bernacki, 2020). Recent innovations such as educational chatbots highlight AI's potential to foster motivation and engagement. By providing immediate feedback, interactive experiences, and personalized assistance, chatbots expand learning opportunities (Kuhail et al., 2023). Initially designed as text-based systems for natural language interaction, chatbots now incorporate speech-to-text and text-to-speech functions, enabling real-time, multimedia communication (Able-Kader & Woods, 2015; Barış, 2020; Um et al., 2024). Empirical studies demonstrate that chatbots support learning by enhancing motivation, active participation, peer interaction, and performance through adaptive and metacognitive feedback. They also help increase students' self-confidence and emotional engagement (Kuhail et al., 2023; Studente et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2022). While learners often associate chatbot use with positive emotions, some confusion persists, pointing to the need for further improvements in their design (Qu et al., 2022; Gkiniko & Elbanna, 2022).

ChatGPT, one of the most advanced AI chatbots, illustrates the wide scope of AI applications (Kohnke et al., 2023). Using machine and deep learning, it generates human-like text that supports lesson planning, delivery, and grading (Kovačević, 2023). Released by OpenAI in November 2022, it builds on earlier GPT models and specializes in conversation, explanation, and coding. OpenAI also developed DALL-E 2 for text-to-image generation (Eke, 2023). In education, ChatGPT is used for tutoring, research, and academic discussions (Dwivedi et al., 2023). It quickly became the fastest-growing AI tool, reaching 100 million users within two months and 400 million weekly by February 2025, with expectations of 1 billion by year's end (Andriansyah, 2023; Duarte, 2025). It has transformed academic practices by assisting with text production, assignments, grammar, vocabulary, tone, and feedback (Ivanov & Soliman, 2023; Barrot, 2023). Through self-supervised learning, it identifies patterns without manual labeling (Brown et al., 2020) and produces contextually relevant text from large datasets (Radford et al., 2019). It also helps outline essays, adapt material to learning progress (Cao et al., 2023), personalize content (Zhong et al., 2020), and support research through data analysis (Koltovskaia et al., 2024). Its abstracts can rival human-written ones (Casal & Kessler, 2023), though reliability concerns remain (Hill, 2020). Despite these benefits, ChatGPT lacks the nuanced feedback and emotional support provided by educators (Al Faruq et al., 2023). Its human-like text generation also raises ethical concerns over authorship and integrity (Eke, 2023; Cotton et al., 2023), with risks of academic dishonesty (Gamage et al., 2023). Universities must therefore adapt teaching strategies to balance AI use and dependence (Ivanov &

Soliman, 2023). Research shows ChatGPT-generated exam answers can surpass student work and remain undetected (Scarfe et al., 2024), highlighting the importance of ethical integration to protect critical thinking, privacy, and fairness (Halaweh, 2023).

3. Integrating ChatGPT with the UTAUT Model

Worldwide initiatives increasingly emphasize educational technology, and its acceptance and adoption have become central research themes under Educational Technology Acceptance (ETA) (Şumak et al., 2011). By the early 2000s, studies had already explained user behavior in technology adoption (Hu et al., 1999). Venkatesh et al. (2003) compared widely used frameworks—such as TAM, TRA, TPB, Diffusion of Innovation, the Motivational Model, and Social Cognitive Theory—and integrated fourteen constructs into the UTAUT model, which has been shown to outperform earlier approaches (Oliveira et al., 2014). UTAUT highlights four main dimensions: performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI), and facilitating conditions (FC), shaped by demographic factors (Venkatesh et al., 2003). PE refers to the perceived usefulness and impact of a system (Cox, 2012; Brachten et al., 2021). In the case of ChatGPT, it reflects beliefs about efficiency and compatibility with academic practices (Menon & Shilpa, 2023). EE, which denotes perceived ease of use (Twum, 2021), is influenced by prior experience, complexity, and support systems (Muriithi et al., 2016) and plays a decisive role in adoption (Menon & Shilpa, 2023). SI, defined as the effect of others' opinions, can strengthen user confidence when positive but may increase ethical or reliability concerns when negative (Joa & Magsamen-Conrad, 2021; Astuti et al., 2023). ChatGPT's global spread underscores the significance of SI (Menon & Shilpa, 2023). FC refers to the availability of resources, training, and technical support (Jain et al., 2022; Oye et al., 2014). For ChatGPT, this includes access to devices, reliable internet, and troubleshooting, all of which facilitate routine integration (Menon & Shilpa, 2023). Together, these four dimensions generally encourage a positive attitude toward adoption (Donmez-Turan, 2019). Applications of UTAUT in higher education have extended to AI and digital platforms (Kalinkara & Özdemir, 2023). Factors such as outcomes, cost, and accessibility shape adoption (Nazri et al., 2023), while ethical awareness prevents misuse (Gupta et al., 2004). ChatGPT acceptance is further influenced by user experience, PE, and established habits (Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2023). Trust, privacy, SI, EE, and PE predict adoption intentions, while FC and behavioral intention determine actual use (Rana et al., 2024). Studies on Moodle confirm that PE and EE affect intentions, although SI may not (Abbad, 2021). AI anxiety mediates the relationship between EE

and intention (Yin et al., 2023), and EE is particularly crucial for novices (Strzelecki, 2023). Recent findings indicate that students' attitudes toward ChatGPT are shaped by usefulness, ease, feedback, and social norms (Almogren et al., 2024; Astuti et al., 2023; Supianto et al., 2024). Less confident learners tend to use it more but often experience anxiety about detection (Bin-Nashwan et al., 2023). FC has been shown to strongly predict intention (Habibi et al., 2023), while PE positively affects acceptance in assessments (Budhathoki et al., 2024). Trust emerges as the strongest predictor, whereas moral obligation and perceived risk act as barriers, though risk does not mediate between trust and intention (Lai et al., 2024). Students generally prefer user-friendly, efficient tools that reduce workload (Lai et al., 2024). Graduate students report higher levels of engagement with ChatGPT due to academic requirements (Bonsu & Baffour-Koduah, 2023; Chia et al., 2024), while positive perceptions overall enhance motivation and achievement (Shoufan, 2023). Both undergraduate and postgraduate students value its usability and time-saving benefits, though undergraduates express greater willingness for future use, whereas postgraduates remain more cautious given their expertise (Elkhodr et al., 2023). These dynamics reveal not only theoretical implications but also the lived realities of students who balance innovation with concerns over trust, ethics, and academic integrity.

4. Research Gap and Questions

Integrating ChatGPT into education has become increasingly important, yet significant challenges remain (Yang et al., 2021). As AI tools are still in the early stages of adoption, their full potential and benefits are not yet fully understood (Venkatesh, 2022). Although prior research has examined factors shaping AI acceptance, particularly in relation to ChatGPT, little is known about how undergraduate and postgraduate students differ in their use of such tools. While the UTAUT model emphasizes performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions, variations between student groups remain underexplored. In-depth interviews offer an effective way to uncover how these dimensions operate differently across contexts. Moreover, issues of trust and privacy require closer examination, especially in relation to effort expectancy and facilitating conditions. Against this background, the present study investigates these dynamics through comparative in-depth interviews. It aims to provide deeper insights into technology acceptance in education by examining how performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions shape the adoption and use of ChatGPT among undergraduate and postgraduate students. The research questions are structured accordingly.

RQ1: What factors influence the PE regarding the

perceived contributions of ChatGPT for educational purposes among undergraduate and postgraduate students, and how do these factors differ between the two groups?

RQ2: What factors influence the EE regarding the perceived ease of use of ChatGPT among undergraduate and postgraduate students, and how do these factors vary between the two groups?

RQ3: What factors contribute to the SI that either encourage or discourage ChatGPT use for educational purposes among undergraduate and postgraduate students, and how do these factors differ between the two groups?

RQ4: What factors are perceived as supporting or hindering ChatGPT use for educational purposes, in terms of FC, among undergraduate and postgraduate students, and how do these factors differ between the two groups?

This study aims to deepen understanding of technology acceptance in education by examining UTAUT factor differences in ChatGPT use between undergraduate and postgraduate students, highlighting barriers and opportunities for AI integration.

5. Method

Snowball sampling was employed to recruit participants, starting with individuals reached through social media and similar networks who were then encouraged to share the study link (Thompson, 1997). This semi-automatic process continued until the required number of participants was achieved (Sadler et al., 2010), a method particularly effective for groups that are difficult to access or hesitant to disclose their identity (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Participants provided demographic information such as age, education level, and gender, but no personal identifiers were collected due to ethical concerns surrounding ChatGPT use. Recruitment began with one undergraduate student, who referred peers using ChatGPT in their studies, and the same approach was applied with postgraduate students, allowing the sample to expand through peer referrals. As snowball sampling was employed, participants' disciplines or institutions were not prioritized, since this information was not central to the study's aim. Instead, the focus was placed on whether participants were undergraduate or postgraduate students, which was directly relevant to the research objectives. After providing consent, participants completed in-depth interviews via email, and their responses were transcribed verbatim and reviewed for language consistency before analysis. Because of the nature of snowball sampling, gender and age balance could not be fully ensured. Data collection was carried out between January 4 and January 22, 2025. The study included 40 participants (N = 40): 20 undergraduates and 20 postgraduates. Among

undergraduates, 12 were male (60%) and 8 female (40%), aged 19–23 ($M = 21.2$). Of these, 30% were aged 19–20, 50% aged 21–22, and 20% were 23. Among postgraduates, 9 were male (45%) and 11 female (55%), aged 26–33 ($M = 29.8$). Here, 25% were aged 26–28, 45% aged 29–30, and 30% aged 31–33. After collecting demographic data, participants answered 8 interview questions—two for each UTAUT construct—adapted from Venkatesh et al. (2003). Items from validated scales related to PE, SI, and FC were adapted to fit the study context. The questionnaire was reviewed by 7 experts, as recommended by Aung et al. (2021), and refined based on their feedback. A pilot interview with 5 participants ensured

clarity. Data analysis involved repeated transcript reviews to identify themes. Common first-order codes like “ease of use” and “reliability issues” were grouped into the four UTAUT dimensions. A table was created to align quotes and themes, ensuring a clear and consistent analysis.

6. Findings

Table 1. shows the themes of undergraduate and postgraduate students’ experiences and perceptions of using ChatGPT based on the four main dimensions of the UTAUT model.

Table 1. UTAUT-Themed Overview for University Students

S/n	First-order Concepts (UG Students, n = 20)	Second-order Concepts	Dimensions
1	Speed access to information (n = 19)	Task efficiency	PE
2	Accessibility (n = 15)	Convenience	PE
3	Positive perception of usefulness (n = 11)	Perceived Usefulness	PE
4	Usage for homework (n = 10)	Academic Productivity	PE
5	Concerns about reliability (n = 8)	Reliability Issues	PE
6	Easy to use and understand (n = 16)	Ease of Use	EE
7	Familiarity with AI tools (n = 12)	Prior Experience	EE
8	Exploring Educational Functions (n = 8)	Educational Assistance	EE
9	External pressure to use (n = 18)	Social Pressure	SI
10	Free of charge usage (n = 18)	Accessibility	FC
S/n	First-order Concepts (PG Students, n = 20)	Second-order Concepts	Dimensions
1	Assistance in academic writing (n = 18)	Academic Support	PE
2	Positive perception of usefulness (n = 17)	Perceived Usefulness	PE
3	Usage for thesis and publications (n = 15)	Research Applications	PE
4	Concerns about reliability (n = 14)	Reliability Issues	PE
5	Familiarity with AI tools (n = 16)	Prior Experience	EE
6	Concerns about over-reliance (n = 12)	Over-reliance	EE
7	Limited need for assistance (n = 9)	Self-Reliance	EE
8	Concerns about misuse/academic integrity (n = 16)	Misuse Anxiety	SI
9	No external influence (n = 14)	Independent Usage	SI
10	Free of charge usage (n = 19)	Accessibility	FC

Below are the themed responses from the open-ended questionnaire. Participants, identified as “P1,” “P2,” etc., answered all eight questions. Undergraduate students are labeled UGP, and postgraduate students as PGP. This section highlights similarities and differences between these groups, with multi-theme responses categorized for further analysis.

Determinants of Performance Expectancy for ChatGPT Among University Students

The factors influencing performance expectancy (PE) regarding ChatGPT’s educational benefits were grouped into five themes for undergraduates: task efficiency (90%), convenience (75%), academic productivity (50%), perceived usefulness (55%), and

reliability issues (40%). For postgraduates, themes included academic support (90%), perceived usefulness (85%), research applications (75%), and reliability issues (70%). Both groups shared perceived usefulness and reliability issues, while other themes differed.

"Perceived usefulness" was a key shared theme: about half of undergraduates praised ChatGPT's speed and effectiveness in providing quick, reliable answers, reflecting its learning enhancement potential (e.g., UGP9). Likewise, most postgraduates valued ChatGPT for research and academic tasks, highlighting its accuracy and ability to simplify complex concepts (e.g., PGP17).

UGP9: *"I think ChatGPT is really useful. It's not always possible to get such quick and effective responses from other sources, it seems like it's pretty handy."*, PGP17: *"I genuinely perceive ChatGPT as a highly useful tool for my research and academic work. I expect it to provide quick and accurate responses that help me grasp complex concepts much faster. I don't have to waste time searching through multiple sources, and I can get concise and relevant information. It's really an efficient way to enhance my learning and productivity, especially during crunch times with deadlines."*

Another shared theme in the PE category was "reliability issues." Undergraduates expressed concerns about inconsistent answers from ChatGPT, questioning its reliability (e.g., UGP2). Postgraduates similarly noted accuracy problems, warning that over-reliance might cause missing critical information, emphasizing caution in its use (e.g., PGP6).

UGP2: *"The other day, our professor asked a concept in class, and at the same time, 2-3 of us asked ChatGPT. Two of us got the same answer, but one of us got a different one. Now, which one are we supposed to trust?"*, PGP6: *"I asked ChatGPT if there was an article on a specific topic, but it couldn't find one. Instead, it suggested some articles, but they weren't that high-quality, not even peer-reviewed journal articles. Then I searched on Google myself and found what I was looking for. If I had fully trusted ChatGPT, I might have thought there was no article available. That's why I remain cautious because it doesn't always provide accurate and reliable results."*

Undergraduates in the PE category highlighted fast information access, easy accessibility via internet-enabled devices, and heavy use for writing assignments, all contributing to greater task efficiency and academic productivity.

Determinants of Effort Expectancy for ChatGPT Among University Students

The factors affecting EE for ChatGPT's ease of use among undergraduates were ease of use (80%), prior experience (60%), and educational assistance

(40%). For postgraduates, the themes were prior experience (80%), over-reliance (60%), and self-reliance (45%). The only common theme was prior experience. Over half of undergraduates noted their familiarity with similar AI tools helped them use ChatGPT efficiently (e.g., UGP11), while most postgraduates also reported minimal adjustment needed due to prior AI use (e.g., PGP19).

UGP11: *"Having used similar tools in the past, I was already familiar with how AI works, so using ChatGPT felt very natural and efficient."*, PGP19: *"As a PHD student, having used various AI tools for research purposes before, I didn't find ChatGPT difficult to use. I was able to quickly understand its features and use it efficiently for academic tasks. Given my previous experience with AI applications, I expected ChatGPT to be straightforward, and the learning curve was minimal."*

Undergraduates in the EE category found ChatGPT easy to use and understand, enabling quick, efficient use. They also highlighted that exploring its educational features helped them access content suited to their academic needs.

Social Influence Factors Affecting ChatGPT Use Among University Students

Undergraduates' SI factors focused on "social pressure" (n=18, 90%), with peers encouraging use and a sense of widespread adoption (UGP4). In contrast, postgraduates emphasized "misuse anxiety" (n=16, 80%) and "independent usage" (n=14, 70%), expressing concerns about plagiarism detection and noting a lack of peer influence (PGP3).

UGP4: *"It just felt like everyone was relying on it for assignments, and I thought if they're using it, I should be using it too. I remember my friend telling me, 'Come on, you should use it too, I did my assignment with it the other day, and the professor gave me a great grade!'"* After hearing that, I decided to give it a try.", PGP3: *"No one really told me to use or not use ChatGPT. Most of us were just worried about plagiarism software or professors noticing it while writing our thesis. We had to be careful, so we mostly used it independently without telling to each other."*

No common SI themes appeared between undergraduates and postgraduates, highlighting a clear difference unlike other categories.

Facilitating Conditions Influencing ChatGPT Use Among University Students

For undergraduates and postgraduates, the sole FC theme was accessibility (90% and 95%), with both groups highlighting ChatGPT's free access, as seen in UGP6 and PGP8.

UGP6: *"It's free to use, so I can access ChatGPT whenever I want without worrying about costs. That ma-*

kes it really helpful for me.”, PGP8: “There is a paid version of ChatGPT, but honestly, the free version is more than enough for me. I have other applications at my disposal for doing more detailed analyses, so the free version works perfectly for my needs.”

7. Discussion and Conclusion

Recognizing the importance and challenges of integrating ChatGPT into education is crucial, especially as AI adoption and benefits remain unclear. While factors influencing ChatGPT use have been studied, differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students are less explored. This study examines how PE, EE, SI, and FC affect ChatGPT use and how these vary by student group, guided by four research questions.

The first research question aimed to identify factors influencing Performance Expectancy (PE) regarding ChatGPT’s perceived educational contributions and differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students. Undergraduate students highlighted fast information access, convenience of use anytime and anywhere, and increased academic productivity, mainly using ChatGPT for homework. Some, however, questioned its reliability. Postgraduate students also emphasized PE, focusing on academic support, especially academic writing, thesis, and research tasks, but similarly raised concerns about reliability and accuracy.

Both groups identified “perceived usefulness” and “reliability concerns” as common themes. Undergraduates focused on short-term goals like quick information access and homework use, while postgraduates prioritized long-term academic activities such as writing and research. Postgraduates expressed greater anxiety over reliability due to higher accuracy demands. This comparison reveals similarities and differences between groups. Literature highlights PE as key in technology acceptance: students adopt technologies when they perceive improved task performance (Budhathoki et al., 2024), value accessibility and cost-effectiveness (Nazri et al., 2023), and are motivated by perceived usefulness (Bonsu & Baffour-Koduah, 2023). Reliability concerns hinder adoption (Rana et al., 2024; Lai et al., 2024), especially among postgraduates requiring accuracy (Elkhodr et al., 2023). Research use of ChatGPT aligns with Chia et al. (2024), who stress its role in thesis and publication support. Undergraduates’ PE themes—task efficiency, accessibility, usefulness, academic productivity—reflect positive learning impacts and strong intention to use ChatGPT. Postgraduates emphasize academic support and research applications, with reliability concerns reflecting advanced academic needs.

The second research question explores factors influencing Effort Expectancy (EE) regarding ChatGPT’s

ease of use among undergraduate and postgraduate students. Undergraduates found ChatGPT easy to use, helped by familiarity with AI tools and its educational functions, making it a valuable academic resource. Postgraduates also noted prior AI experience but worried that over-reliance on ChatGPT might reduce problem-solving skills. Some preferred relying on their own expertise. “Prior experience” was the only common theme across both groups, while other themes differed. EE is crucial for AI adoption. Strzelecki (2023) highlights EE’s importance for students lacking prior AI experience, reflected in undergraduates’ ease-of-use perceptions here. Undergraduates emphasized familiarity with AI and ChatGPT’s user-friendliness, consistent with literature (Rana et al., 2024; Almogren et al., 2024). For postgraduates, prior AI experience also influenced EE (Yin et al., 2023), but they expressed caution about over-dependence and limited need for assistance, reflecting greater self-reliance (Bonsu & Baffour-Koduah, 2023). Overall, findings align with literature on the significance of ease of use and prior experience in ChatGPT adoption, with postgraduates demonstrating more caution and independence.

The third research question explored factors influencing Social Influence (SI) on ChatGPT use, revealing contrasting themes between undergraduate and postgraduate students. Undergraduates emphasized social pressure from peers encouraging ChatGPT use, while postgraduates expressed “misuse anxiety,” fearing negative impacts on academic integrity and preferring independent use without external influence. Ethical concerns about ChatGPT facilitating cheating and undermining integrity align with literature (Eke, 2023; Gamage et al., 2023; Gupta et al., 2004). Postgraduates’ self-reliant approach reflects findings by Bonsu and Baffour-Koduah (2023), highlighting graduate students’ autonomous engagement due to academic demands. Literature underscores SI’s role in technology adoption in education, with peer influence prominent for undergraduates (Astuti et al., 2023; Supianto et al., 2024), and negative SI linked to concerns about ethics and misuse among postgraduates (Menon & Shilpa, 2023), emphasizing their focus on academic integrity and research accuracy.

To answer the final research question on factors supporting or hindering ChatGPT use in terms of Facilitating Conditions (FC), both undergraduate and postgraduate students emphasized “free usage” as a key enabler, removing financial barriers and enhancing accessibility for educational use. This aligns with Venkatesh et al. (2003), who noted that access to resources and support influences technology use. Similarly, Menon & Shilpa (2023) and Rana et al. (2024) highlighted those adequate resources, including cost-free access, promote adoption. Astuti et al. (2023) and Habibi et al. (2023) further emphasized the role of FC in AI and e-learning adoption, with

Habibi et al. (2023) identifying FC as a strong predictor of students' intention to use ChatGPT. These findings reinforce that accessible, low-barrier conditions—especially free access—play a vital role in supporting educational engagement with AI tools.

In conclusion, ChatGPT has transformed education by offering personalized learning, writing, research, and data analysis support, while also raising ethical concerns around academic integrity and responsible use. Guided by the UTAUT model—comprising PE, effort expectancy, SI, and FC—this study explored how these factors influence ChatGPT use among undergraduate and postgraduate students. While prior studies emphasize these factors (e.g., PE, familiarity, accessibility), limited research compares different educational levels. This study addressed that gap, revealing that undergraduates see ChatGPT as enhancing task efficiency and academic productivity, despite concerns about reliability. Postgraduates value its support in academic writing and research but also question its accuracy. Both groups find it easy to use; undergraduates benefit from AI familiarity, while postgraduates worry about over-reliance affecting critical thinking. SI varies: undergraduates report peer influence, while postgraduates highlight independent use and integrity concerns. Both agree that free access, as an FC, significantly facilitates adoption and usage in educational settings.

This study offers practical insights for integrating ChatGPT into education by highlighting how PE, effort expectancy, SI, and FC influence its use among undergraduate and postgraduate students. Educators can enhance adoption by improving accessibility, addressing reliability concerns, and tailoring support for students with limited AI experience. The findings provide practical implications for integrating ChatGPT into education. Enhancing accessibility, addressing reliability concerns, and offering tailored support for students with limited AI experience can encourage effective adoption. Insights from this study can inform policy development for curriculum integration while safeguarding academic integrity. Moreover, future research should explore how issues of trust and privacy affect students' willingness to adopt AI. From the authors' perspective, these results highlight the importance of balancing the pedagogical benefits of ChatGPT with the risks of overreliance, underscoring the need for educators to adopt a critical and guided approach in classroom practices.

However, the study has limitations. Snowball sampling may have restricted participant diversity and failed to ensure balanced representation across demographics like gender, age, and education level. Email interviews may also have limited data depth due to the lack of direct interaction. Future studies should use broader sampling methods, increase sample size, and adopt richer qualitative approaches,

such as face-to-face or virtual interviews, to better understand how demographic factors affect ChatGPT use in education.

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The Cultural Politics of Advertisements in the Context of Wallerstein's World-System Analysis: A Global Examination

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Abstract

The world-system analysis, which takes shape from the capitalist world-economy, examines global relations in political, historical, sociological, and cultural contexts. In this study, cultural effects are evaluated through advertisements, an important tool of this system. Advertisements are both a tool for the circulation of cultural policies and an opportunity to analyze the cultural consequences of the world-system. A total of 49 advertisements sent from Türkiye, a semi-periphery country, to 60 core, periphery, semi-periphery countries during the years 2021-2022-2023 were analyzed. This analysis aims to reveal how Türkiye frames the cultural component of the world-system in the core, periphery and semi-periphery countries through advertisements. The advertisements were examined under 4 categories using 31 sub-codes. The global cultural policy reflected in advertisements tends to favor modernity. The findings show that traditional values are unequally distributed, utilitarian values are decreasing,

and symbolic values are represented at the lowest rate in all country groups. In addition, the subcodes differ according to the core, semi-periphery, and periphery positions of the countries. Although the country groups are in similar value groups, they are not equal in terms of cultural subcodes. There is a hierarchical order in which the periphery follows the semi-periphery in the following year, and the semi-periphery follows the center. This reveals a monitoring system from the center to the other country groups. The most significant aspect is that the approach of world-systems analysis, which tends to avoid specific cultural connotations, is distorted through advertisements.

Keywords: Advertising, Culture, Cultural Policy, Capitalist World-Economy, World-System.

JEL Codes: D83, M37, Z13

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1. Introduction

Studies that comparatively examine cultural content play a prominent role in determining the place of cultural values within society (Lin, 2001). In 24% of studies comparing cultural content, two countries are examined; in 11%, three countries; and in 53%, fewer than ten countries (Franke & Richey, 2010). A significant portion of studies in the field of advertising focuses on comparing Eastern and Western cultures (Chan & Cheng, 2002). However, it has been noted that comparative studies of cultures through advertisements mostly include North America and EU member states, with a limited number of studies on recently joined EU member states and very few on the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa (Okazaki & Mueller, 2007). A recent study also tracked developments in cross-cultural advertising research examining two or more countries over the past 40 years. It was observed that while North America, Western Europe, and Asia have made progress, studies focusing on Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa remain insufficient (Ford, Mueller & Mueller, 2022). Despite critical views suggesting that advertisements are predominantly analyzed within a small number of countries and that some regions lack sufficient focus, Immanuel Wallerstein offers a holistic approach in his "world-system" analysis, considering the world as a single entity.

Wallerstein views the world as a whole, composed of numerous interconnected social groups, even if they have different characteristics (Oktik & Kökalan, 2001). He argues that continents and communities developing within capitalism should be studied from a comprehensive world-system perspective (Ragin & Chirot, 2022). Social cohesion operates within a mechanism defined as a "single capitalist world." The world economy is capitalist, and capitalism emerges only within a world-economy. Therefore, the modern world-system is a capitalist world-economy (Wallerstein, 2011). This structure involves unrestricted and unbounded flows of elements such as division of labor, commodities, and labor. It also necessitates the permeability of state/national borders. Through these flows, national differences must be eliminated based on a simple expansion strategy. The elimination of differences is achieved through the regular internationalization of culture (Wallerstein, 1993). Thus, the singular capitalist world-system, grounded in economic foundations, forms a systematic structure interconnected through the relationship of ideological and cultural phenomena (Avcıoğlu, 2014).

In his analysis, which he bases on the capitalist economy and calls the "world-system," Wallerstein classifies countries into three categories. The world-system consists of core countries that hold the operation and control of the global system, periphery countries exploited for their raw materials

and cheap labor, and semi-periphery countries that connect the core and periphery (Göksel, 2019). Although countries are represented in a tripartite structure as core, semi-periphery, and periphery, there is a hierarchical relationship between the core and semi-periphery, as well as between the semi-periphery and periphery. Despite the structures, boundaries, and rules of country groups (Wallerstein, 2015), a global social system with systematic and singular connections within the core, periphery, and semi-periphery complexes has been established (Gills & Frank, 2003; Wallerstein, 2015).

Certain methodological outcomes are expected for such an approach that considers a singular social system. If there is a single case definition as a singular social system, we cannot explore it by comparing it to other economic mechanisms. This approach, which relies on examining the world-system as a single case, does not imply that social units like nation-states are excluded from world-system analysis. However, the differences or similarities of these units are not particularly significant on their own. When parts form a whole, explaining the nature of the system becomes crucial and intriguing (Ragin & Chirot, 2022). In the world-system, every part belongs to the "world," and the world-system insists on viewing the whole (Wallerstein, 2000). Sherry (1987) states that among all perspectives, the most effective way to interpret the world is through advertising. According to him, advertisements are cultural documents that reveal and define the existing world. However, while culture is an extremely flexible and fluid structure, an important issue is that to understand the traditions of the near future, one must look at the traditions of the recent past (Wallerstein, 1993). This study aims to understand the cultural consequences of the world-system through advertisements, which are a significant mechanism in the capitalist world-economy. Our study questions the role of the cultural component of the world-system analysis in advertisements. In this context, the study examines cultural values in 49 advertisements sent from Türkiye, a semi-periphery country (Babones, 2005; Dunaway & Clelland, 2017; Ruvalcaba, 2020; Cairó-i-Céspedes & Palacios Civico, 2022; Saraç & Yağlıkara, 2022), to 60 countries representing core, periphery, and semi-periphery positions during the years 2021-2022-2023.

2. The Basic Structure of the World-System

The world-system consists of a combination involving (a) uninterrupted capital accumulation, which drives the system, (b) a division of labor characterized by unequal exchange and tension between the core and the periphery, (c) the existence of a semi-periphery, (d) the continuous role of both waged and unwaged labor, and (e) the expansion of the capitalist world-economy, which largely began in what

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is marked as Europe and spread through integration over time (Wallerstein, 1997). Within this framework, a systematic connection is established, portraying a large and unified society in which country groups defined as "core, periphery, and semi-periphery" are interconnected in economic, political, and cultural fields to create and maintain a singular system across the world (Gills & Frank, 2003).

In the world-system, core and periphery countries are initially perceived through economic indicators. Core countries are undoubtedly strong and wealthy, whereas periphery countries are weak (Aydın, 1996). The system is primarily structured between

core countries, which possess diversified production, high profits, and advanced technology, and periphery countries, which have limited production, low profits, and constantly lagging technology (Wallerstein, 1979). Periphery countries are considered "necessary" for maintaining the continuity of the capitalist world-system of the core countries (Avcıoğlu, 2014), "indispensable" for ensuring the core countries' position in the system, and "rewards for the core" (Ragin & Chirot, 2022). Therefore, the periphery countries must be suppressed through underdevelopment to preserve the position of the core countries in the system (Avcıoğlu, 2014).

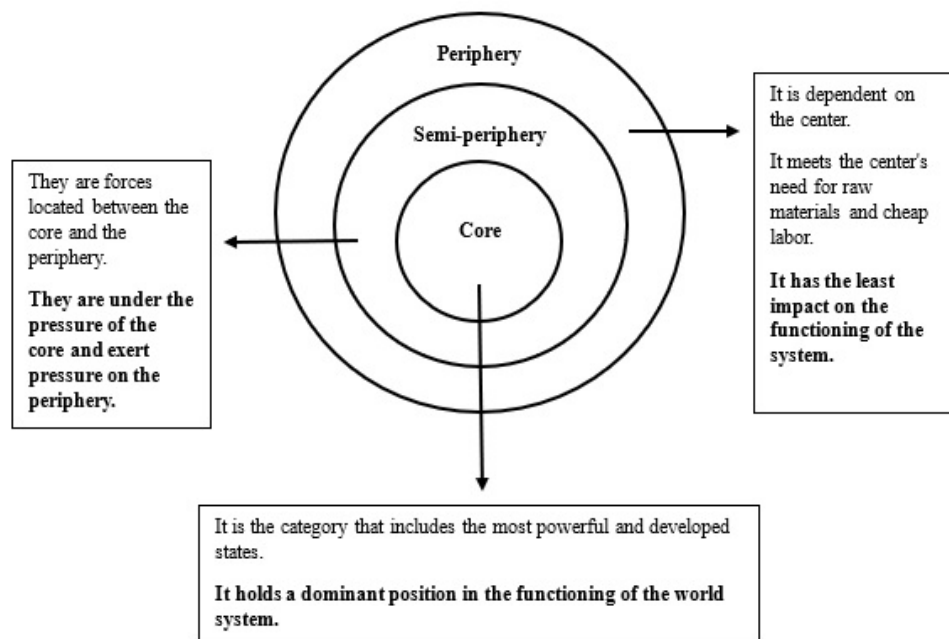


Figure 1. Core, Semi-Periphery, Periphery Mechanism

Source: Canan Eyigün, 2020, "Medyanın Jeopolitiği Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme," Karadeniz İletişim Araştırmaları Dergisi, 10(2) p.205.

There is another group of countries that falls between these two country groups and is suggested to be specifically examined, known as the semi-periphery (Wallerstein, 1979). Semi-peripheral countries, defined as "under the pressure of core countries" and "exerting pressure on peripheral countries" (Wallerstein, 2011: 61), and described as "developing," have not been able to develop as much as core countries nor have they been as exposed to absolute exploitation as peripheral countries (Göksel, 2019). The importance of semi-peripheral countries in the functioning of the world-system is more than just a general statement that they constitute the middle point of a structure extending from the core to the periphery (Wallerstein, 2015). Semi-peripheral countries play an important role and have a special political function in the functioning of the world-system (Wallerstein, 2011). They are structural regions necessary for the world-economy and act as intermediary groups that try to direct the pressure from the core to the other group, that is, partly to the periphery (Wallerstein, 2015). From another perspective,

semi-periphery plays an important role in understanding the mobility within the world-system, despite the perceived sharp differences (Terlouw, 2003). The idea that it is necessary to distinguish the function of the semi-periphery in providing dynamism between the core and the periphery (Gills & Frank, 2003), and especially the transformation of the world-economy under capitalist globalization, has reinforced the need for semi-peripheral countries to be defined as an analytical category within the world-system (Caíró-i-Céspedes & Palacios Civico, 2022).

In such a system that seeks a singular structure in the world, there is a centrality that suppresses the social formation of others. The core shares an ideological potential within a value system that it shares with the others in the system. This core is the core of the space in which actions that can influence others emerge. Cores, which represent a space of action, are also the core of the belief systems, values, and symbol structures that govern society. The core shares a sanctity with others, and this sanctity is considered final and irreducible by many of its members. The-

refore, the reference space from the core operates more through the relationship of influence and integration among its members, with little relation to social formations, space, or geography (Shils, 1982). Thus, a system grounded in an economic foundation takes shape in a systematic structure where ideological and cultural events are linked through their relationship (Avcıoğlu, 2014).

3. The Cultural Component of the World-System

In the world-system, countries grouped as core, periphery, and semi-periphery not only form a structured material space but also create the social space of the economy, the political space, the connection between societies, and the cultural space based on symbolic representations (Terlouw, 2003). Among these, there is a hidden premise regarding the temporality of the cultural space (Wallerstein, 2012). Culture has always been *"the ideological battleground of the modern world-system"* (Wallerstein, 1993: 215), *"the battlefield of interest groups"* (Kumar & Welz, 2001: 225-226), and *"the weapon of the powerful"* (Wallerstein, 1993: 256). When it is considered that people have a deep connection to one another and cannot be separated, the transformation of cultural patterns becomes a claim to transform the society that is the living space of people. This battleground is not just a space for the expression of a cultural claim for economic gain and political power; it can be considered as part of the process of transforming life and changing the geoculture (Kumar & Welz, 2001).

Wallerstein places the cultural component of the world-system within a historical process rooted in the French Revolution. The French Revolution reflects the cultural history of dealing with the chaos created by something that has now become inevitable and occurs regularly. The theorist suggests that it is sufficient to highlight the acceptability of the *"normalization"* of the modern arena of the French Revolution, such as innovation, change, and transformation. The French Revolution changed mentalities and established modernity. In a world where progress exists at every point in life, *"modernity"* is based on the feeling that the new is desirable and good. In the political realm, it is the acceptance of the *"normality"* against the *"temporary"* and *"abnormality"* of change (Wallerstein, 2003).

In terms of the world-system, cultural pressures are created on the states that either join the growing capitalist world-economy through the globalization of the economic structure or are restricted by this system. Behind this imposed pressure are two motives: economic efficiency and security. For the achievement of economic efficiency, certain cultural norms must be taught, and some competing cultural norms must be suppressed. In peripheral regions, the Wes-

ternization of certain elite layers is ensured, reducing the likelihood of uprisings by separating them from the masses there (Wallerstein, 2012). Thus, a mindset compatible with the structure of the capitalist world-economy becomes widespread, and even those who are disturbed by it must reckon with it in the public sphere (Wallerstein, 2003). Wallerstein states that this formation, called modernization, is important for the sustainability of the system (Öktik & Kökalan, 2001). As can be seen, culture, which cannot be treated as a process or derivative independent of economics and politics, essentially becomes the language and primary domain of how an integrated process will be developed (Kumar & Welz, 2001). In a system where interests are evidently fundamentally different, cultural constructions are naturally not neutral but become the *"key ideological battleground"* (Wallerstein, 1993: 222).

4. The Role of Advertisements in the Cultural Component

It is argued that those who are economically and politically behind are also behind in cultural terms (Wallerstein, 2012). Along with political, military, economic, technological power and progress, a cultural prestige chain has concentrated in the core. The periphery, rarely mentioned and known, is far from the core in every aspect. The semi-periphery, which was influenced more recently compared to the periphery, encompasses an area characterized by dependency, weakness, relative economic backwardness, relative technological backwardness, and relatively low cultural prestige (Wilkinson, 2003). The secret of the core's improvement of exploitation in other regions is the idea of culture being copied and absorbed as much as possible in many ways, which will pave the way for economic-political ideas (Kumar & Welz, 2001). Thus, the way to ensure the stability of the capitalist world-system will turn into a consent-based domination (Wallerstein, 2003). Although it is stated that each culture has its own unique cultural sensitivities (Retnowati, 2015), it is quite clear that people can be together, consistent, and goal-oriented as long as they develop a worldview from a common perspective (Wallerstein, 2015). A contrary situation would lead to a culturally separatist path, zigzags between countries, and disruption in the functioning of the world-system (Kumar & Welz, 2001).

Each society is constructed within a system framework, and there are institutions where social movements are directed and constrained. These institutions do their work in a way that individuals within society will socialize as much as possible in harmony with the system. Although these institutions may be referred to as economic, political, or socio-cultural institutions, each of them act simultaneously in all three ways—economically, politically, and socio-culturally. Otherwise, their effectiveness is

not to be expected (Wallerstein, 2000). Before the industrial era (in agrarian society), family, religion, communities, and ethnic origin were the dominant institutional creators and intermediaries regarding how cultural form should be. With the transition to industrial society, a marketplace institution was established in social life, giving rise to a consumer society movement. Through this transition and movement, old institutional forms such as family, religion, and communities began to lose influence, and the vacant cultural space was occupied by the marketplace institution. Before long, public discourses were dominated by “discourse through and about objects,” and advertisements became one of the main institutions concerned with daily existence and the public sphere (Jhally, 2003: 250).

Through these institutions, a widespread and extensive participation in the central system occurs, and contact is made with the value system of the core. This contact, meaning the inclusion of a large portion of the population into society, leads to an unprecedented level of sensitivity and a sense of acceptance that these values belong to the individuals' own value system (Shils, 1982). According to Wallerstein, the capitalist structure of the world-system requires channels to sustain it and facilitate moving to other regions, create preferences, and control unrest (Wallerstein, 2000; Wallerstein, 2012). Advertising, as a purposeful communication (Retnowati, 2015), undoubtedly influences the shaping culture (Pollay, 1986). At the same time, advertisements are “distorted” and “deceptive” mirrors. As a “distorted mirror,” they shape only certain values and lifestyles. And as a “deceptive mirror,” they amplify attention to specific values, reinforcing them and driving cultural evolution in line with these values (Pollay, 1987). The increase in communication intensity also contributes to narrowing the perceived inequality gap. Thus, the peak, considered the core, is no longer as unreachable, and the periphery is not as far from the core (Shils, 1982). The main problem statement of this study in the context of world-systems analysis is as follows:

RQ: As a semi-peripheral country, how does Türkiye position the cultural component of the world-system in its advertisements?

5. Methodology

5.1. Research Design and Data Collection Procedure

In this study, a qualitative research approach with a case study design was adopted from an interpretive theoretical framework. In a case study, the development of a current situation within a specific time series is examined (Creswell, 2013). This study aims to explore which cultural values are represented in advertisements transmitted from Türkiye, a

semi-periphery country, to other countries in the years 2021-2022-2023, from the perspective of the world-systems analysis. To align as closely as possible with the theoretical foundation that discusses the capitalist economic system in a singular world structure, purposive sampling was employed. The data set forming the unit of analysis was based on an examination of the Felis Awards, organized annually by Kapital Medya since 2004 in November/December. The Felis Awards is a long-established competition that rewards agencies, advertisers, and media outlets contributing to the advertising and marketing industries with innovative and creative work (<https://felisodulleri.com/>). In this study, the “Felis Global” category was analyzed. This category includes creative works, campaigns, strategies, and projects produced for broadcast in foreign countries or created in Türkiye and used in other countries. Thus, this category and its scope are suitable for examining works transmitted from semi-periphery Türkiye to other countries. The participation conditions of the competition required three files: the advertisement, a case video explaining the advertisement, and a written brief. The condition of collecting information through multiple sources such as observations, documents, interviews, visual and auditory materials, and reports (Creswell, 2013) was met through advertising materials, case videos, and text files.

The documents were obtained through a membership and paid review-data download process from Kapital Medya's website, which archives all award-winning works up until the relevant time (<https://arsiv.felisodulleri.com/login>). Although the works have been published in the media and presented to the public, the website serves as an archive that provides a comprehensive historical and categorical presentation of the works. Therefore, ethical procedures were ensured by obtaining written permission from Kapital Medya via email.

5.2. Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, a process referred to as concept coding or analytical coding has been followed. This type of coding is considered suitable for socio-political questions, critical theory, and cultural studies. It is valuable for researchers to bring what is visible in the content to a visible context within the theoretical framework (Saldana, 2022).

Before analyzing the data, the literature was reviewed in the first phase to create a conceptual coding guide. Pollay (1983) identified 42 cultural values. Mueller (1986) studied 10 values under two groups: traditional and modern/Westernized. Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) adapted 20 values from Pollay (1983) and 5 values from Mueller (1986), adding 7 more values, resulting in a total of 32 cultural values grouped into utilitarian and symbolic categories (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996). Khairullah and Khairul-

lah (2013), based on these studies, presented a new guide consisting of 4 themes (modern, traditional, symbolic, and utilitarian) and 26 codes. In the first phase of this research, Khairullah and Khairullah's (2013) study was used as the basis. Additionally, the definitions, notes, and examples provided by the researchers for the concepts were expanded by referring to the works they cited, and efforts were made to create a detailed guide. In this first cycle, primary cycle data coding was carried out with the guide.

In the first cycle of the examined advertisements, the existence of codes such as "sustainability, belonging, universality, hedonism, multiculturalism" was found, which were not in the guide. When using a pre-formed code guide, researchers are encouraged to be open to additional codes encountered in the first cycle (Creswell, 2013). The new concepts emerging from the dataset have led to the advancement, development, and restructuring of the coding guide. As for linking the codes emerging from the data to themes, the codes "hedonism, multiculturalism, universality, sustainability" were assigned to the modern values theme. Sustainability, especially as a dominant global discourse of capitalist politi-

cal economy, assumes the attention of political and economic institutions to environmental issues in the context of ecological modernization (Hajer, 1995; Dryzek, 2013); hedonism, with the societal dynamics emerging from individualism, capitalism, and the instant pleasures, excitement, and happiness brought by capitalism in modernization (Audi, 1999; Şengül & Aydınalp, 2021); multiculturalism, which reflects an ideological form of global capitalism that includes respect for local cultures not based on one's own culture (Zizek, 1997); and universality, as a discourse practice from the grand narratives of modernity (Lyotard, 2013; Kılıç, 2015), were assigned to the modern values theme. The belonging code, assigned to the traditional values theme, is present in Pollay's (1983) study, which was not included in Khairullah and Khairullah's (2013) work but from which both their guide and this study are derived. In the second cycle, definitions, notes, and example explanations for the developed codes were revisited with a third cycle of code assignment to prevent data loss. The data were analyzed in the Maxqda program, and the tables and maps presented in the findings were obtained from the program.

Table 1. Code Guide

Modern values (a)	Brief description
Beauty (d)	It emphasizes the individual's beauty, elegance, attractiveness, in other words, having a socially desirable appearance. (b-d) If beauty carries a sexual implication/purpose/attribute, it should be coded as "sexuality." (b) body proportions such as weight, height, posture, as well as hair and facial beauty.
Modernity (b)	It emphasizes the product's advancement, progressiveness, innovation, and up-to-date nature. (b) a bit ahead of our time, newly designed (b), a journey of transformation, innovative approach.
Sexuality (b)	Emphasizes intense emotional, sexual, and sensual behaviors such as holding hands, kissing, and hugging. (b-e) sensual models, kissing lovers(d) nudity, images focusing on specific body parts.
Technology (b)	Emphasizes advanced and developed technical skills in designing and producing the product. (b) data visualization, digital-first approach, patented detection point technology, ... optimization features, all technology at your fingertips.
Uniqueness (b)	Emphasizes special, rare, uncommon, unusual, unique, and unmatched features. (b-d) only..., the best..., the most exclusive (b-e), unique, describing the connection with the rare, things that are priceless.
Individualism (c)	Emphasizes an individual's self-sufficiency, self-confidence, autonomy, and being different and unique from other members of society. (b-c) you decide, your style, unique to you, distinguishing you from others.
Youth (b)	It highlights the importance of rejuvenation or being young while also emphasizing a small, immature, underdeveloped structure. (b) feel young again, don't miss out on youth (b-e)
Sustainability (j)	It emphasizes awareness, action, measures, and recommendations for the preservation of all resources at all levels of society, today and in the future. (g-h) combating pollution, preserving habitats, protecting biodiversity, climate change... for our present and our future, we have the power to conserve tomorrow's water

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Multiculturalism (j)	Emphasizes the integrity of plurality, diversity, and distinctive characteristics with an approach that advocates for the coexistence of human communities from different ethnic backgrounds, while preserving their cultural identities. (f-j) If there is an acceptance of plurality where cultural identities coexist, it is coded here. A singular unity, stemming from the spirit of oneness that disregards cultural identities, is coded as "universality." people, places, and colors that demonstrate the coexistence of different cultures...
Universality (j)	It emphasizes unity that encompasses all people by ignoring experiences, established differences, and lives resulting from language, religion, race, region, and cultural differences (i) If there is a unity where cultural identities are disregarded, it is coded here. If there is an acceptance of the coexistence of cultural identities, it is coded as multiculturalism. the power of collective action, wherever you are in the world, ...the universal language
Hedonism (j)	Emphasizes that all current and future motivation should be directed towards the expectation of pleasure, the attainment of pleasure, and the pursuit of pleasure (f) heartbeats quicken, pulse rises, the pleasure of having it comes from the difficulty of acquiring it, the same exquisite experience every time
Traditional values (a)	Brief description
Family (b)	Emphasizes kinship, marriage, togetherness, and mutual assistance within the family. (b) If there is an emphasis on lineage, it is coded as "traditional." (b) any content related to mother, father, and children
Naturalness (b-d)	It refers to unprocessed, organic, nutritious, healthy agricultural products along with animals, vegetables, minerals, and elements. It implies the harmony between nature and humans. (b-d) In Pollay's (1983) study, nature is evaluated alongside healthy living arguments. In Cheng and Schweitzer's (1996) study, the integrity of humans and nature is emphasized. In this code and definition, the descriptions of both researchers are combined, considering both material and spiritual integrity (b-d). Healthy living from field to table (e), flavors and strength from plants
Health (b)	Emphasizes being lively, fit, strong, active, athletic, and healthy, as well as staying away from illness and addictions. (b) exercise, healthier (e) healthy living, healthy future
Helpfulness (b)	Emphasizes protection, help, love, support, comfort, gifting, and assistance for inexperienced, disabled, tired, young, elderly, etc. individuals. (b) Always there to help you (e) your biggest supporter
Patriotism (b-d)	It emphasizes individuals' love and loyalty to their own nation. Society, the spirit of unity, national politics, and patriotism are highlighted. (b-d) national imagery and heroic songs, flag visuals, The homeland is not what you leave behind, but what you take with you.
Tradition (b-d)	Emphasizes respect for the traditions, customs, and values of the past. Historical, classical, legendary, nostalgic, valuable, and antique content and emotions are highlighted. (b-d) ...years of experience, ...years with you (b-d-e), for years, symbolic indicators like heritage brand
Belonging (b)	It emphasizes the coming together of a small group of individuals within a solidarity group, being social, participatory, inclusive, friendship, comradeship, collaboration, neighborhood, and being colleagues. (b) If the content is related to mother, father, and children, it is coded as "family." If there is an emphasis on close contact between a woman and a man, it is coded as "sexuality." The best gatherings are the ones we spend together, the times when all our loved ones are together

Symbolic values (a)	Brief description
Adventure (b)	It emphasizes being courageous, fearless, and in pursuit of excitement. (b) catch this excitement, explore with, for those who are not afraid of being brave
Enjoyment (b)	It emphasizes being happy, laughing, celebrating, and enjoying feasts, games, parties, and festivities. (b) unlimited fun, a bit of joy, increase the rhythm of fun
Leisure Time (b)	It emphasizes being relaxed, retreating, resting, and relaxing. (b) enjoy the pleasure of retirement, savor the tranquility (e) for those who can escape the city
Ostentation (b)	Decorative, beautiful, aesthetic, adorned, designed, and style are emphasized (b) designed for you (e) its value comes from its aesthetics, endlessly stylish
Status (b)	It emphasizes prestige, power, dominance, pride in ownership, status, competitiveness, receiving compliments, and trendsetting. (b) It also includes elevating the status and reputation of an employee (d) raise your fame, feel the prestige inside you (d-e)
Wealth (d)	It emphasizes the encouragement of having a rich and prosperous life (d) the diamonds used in the X product or the elegance of the models (e)
Utilitarian values (a)	Brief description
Convenience (b)	It emphasizes useful, time-saving, easy, accessible, and versatile features. (b) everything is much easier with... (e) or No need for...
Economic (b)	Affordable, discounted, great value, cost-saving features. (b-d) now much more economical, at ... price for a limited time, for its cost (b-e)
Effectiveness (b)	Emphasizes useful, functional, practical, efficient, effective features and longevity. (b) waterproof, stain-resistant, easy ironing feature, effective even in everyday wear (b-e), skip the rinse, soft, strong, and absorbent
Orderliness (b)	Emphasizes being neat, tidy, clean, unsoiled, fragrant, shiny, and free from stains, dirt, and odors (b) There is more order and organization in the image than usual, and the emphasis on order is striking. (e)
Durable (b-d)	It emphasizes high performance, durability, strength, power, and long-lasting features (b-d) strong grip on the road, unbeatable over time, more durable, its value comes from its performance The "quality" cultural value in Cheng and Schweitzer's (1996) study is content-wise similar to the "durability" cultural value in Pollay's (1983) study. The definition has been derived from the explanations of both researchers.
Safety (b)	Emphasizes avoiding dangers, protection against external threats, potential risks, and injuries. (b) Warranty conditions are also considered under this rule. The assurance provided by manufacturers is taken into account (b-e) free from harmful substances, reduces risk, guaranteed (b-e) reliable, safe experience
Wisdom (b)	Emphasizes awareness, intelligence, curiosity, understanding, knowledge, common sense, expertise, and experiences. (b) Instructions, recipes, and detailed information can also be considered supporting arguments for the wisdom code within this context. (b) experts agree, we provide creative solutions to your problems (b-d-e), we are familiar with these

a Khairullah & Khairullah (2013), b Pollay (1983), c Mueller (1986), d Cheng & Schweitzer (1996), e Çelik (2004), f Audi (1999), g Baker (2006), h Dryzek (2013), i Marshall (2005), j WCED (1987). The tabulation belongs to the researchers of this study.

5.3. Validity and Reliability Procedure

The first method used to ensure the validity and reliability of the research is peer review. The codebook, which includes 16 advertisements with assigned numbers and a code chart, was shared with an academic with a Doctorate in Advertising. Initially, the reviewer was asked to examine and understand the

definitions, notes, and examples in the codebook. Then, they were instructed to write the appropriate codes for each advertisement on the provided chart. The individual shared the completed charts for each advertisement, stating that the current codes worked for the advertisements. The charts obtained from the researchers' codes were compared, and a consensus was reached.

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Number of agreements}}{\text{Total number of agreements} + \text{disagreements}} \quad R = \frac{88}{88 + 16} = 84,6$$

According to the formula proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), an internal consistency of 84.6% was achieved in inter-coder agreement. The researchers recommend an agreement close to 80%. During the consensus process, the peer coder suggested that the codes he indicated as hedonism, universality, and sustainability should also be defined in the codebook. This researcher's peers also encountered the codes hedonism, belonging, sustainability, universality, and multiculturalism. These codes and their conceptual definitions were evaluated during the peer consensus and subsequently added to the codebook.

Secondly, the process of preparing the data for analysis was transparently and clearly conveyed step by step to create evidence of reliability for the study. Additionally, data uploaded by agencies participating in the competition, including (a) advertisements, (b) case videos describing the advertisement, and (c) brief files, were evaluated in three frameworks, ensuring triangulation, a qualitative research validity technique. During the presentation of the findings, maps were provided so that readers could see the distribution and intensity of the codes and categories in a detailed and holistic manner.

The analysis consisted of three country groups: core,

periphery, and semi-periphery. In cases known as multiple case studies, repetition (following the same procedure for each case) is recommended. In our study, a repetition procedure was followed for each country group. This situation, also defined as replication, is considered important in providing a rich theoretical framework (Yin, 2009).

6. Findings and Discussion

In our study, an analysis was conducted across 4 cultural value categories for 3 country groups, covering 60 countries over a 3-year period. The cultural values over time for each country group were analyzed by considering the semi-periphery as a mediator, and the contexts of core and semi-periphery, periphery and semi-periphery were linked to the theoretical framework. The need for a comparative cross-case reading between the country groups by year (Yin, 2009) justifies the combined management of findings and discussion.

The findings were presented based on the analysis of 20 advertisements in 11 sectors in 2021, 8 advertisements in 5 sectors in 2022, and 21 advertisements in 10 sectors in 2023. A total of 49 advertisements were analyzed within the scope of the study.

Table 2. Distribution of Advertisements by Year and Sector

2021		2022		2023	
Cleaning Products	4	Cleaning Products	3	Transportation and Tourism	5
Durable Consumer Goods	4	Food	2	Cleaning Products	4
Telecommunication Services	2	Financial Products-Services	1	Durable Consumer Goods	3
Beverages	3	Jewelry and Accessories	1	Automotive	2
Food	1	Retail	1	Media	2
Financial Products-Services	1			Food	1
Automotive	1			Beverages	1
Electronic Hardware	1			Financial Products-Services	1
Jewelry and Accessories	1			Home Goods	1
Retail	1			Global NGOs	1
Global NGOs	1				
Total	20	Total	8	Total	21
				Total Sum	49

In the years 2021-2022-2023, 49 advertisements reached 19 core countries, 28 semi-periphery countries, and 13 periphery countries. In 2021, 40 advertisements were sent to 12 core countries, 30 to 20 semi-periphery countries, and 15 to 11 periphery countries; in 2022, 17 advertisements were sent to 7 core countries, 10 to 10 semi-periphery countries; in 2023, 52 advertisements were sent to 17 core countries, 16 to 14 semi-periphery countries, and 4 to 4

periphery countries. Over the three-year period, a total of 49 advertisements sent from Türkiye to 60 locations were analyzed within the scope of the study. Looking at the distributions, the least number of advertisements were sent to periphery countries. Core and semi-periphery countries were relatively closer, but the number of advertisements sent to core countries was significantly higher.

Table 3. Distribution of the Data Set by Countries¹

Core						Semi Periphery						Periphery				
Advertisement Distribution						Advertisement Distribution						Advertisement Distribution				
	COUNTRY	2021	2022	2023	Σ		COUNTRY	2021	2022	2023	Σ		COUNTRY	2021	2023	Σ
AU	Australia	2		2	4	NAM	Mexico	2			2	SEU	Albania		1	1
NAM	USA	8	2	7	17	SAM	Argentina	1		1	2	WAS	Iraq	3		3
	Canada	2		1	3		Brazil	1		1	2		Lebanon	2		2
WEU	Germany	7	5	7	19	SEU	Portugal	2		1	3		Yemen	1		1
	France	3		7	10		Greece	2	1		3		Iran	1		1
	Netherlands	1		3	4	NEU	Estonia			1	1		Syria	1		1
	Austria			2	2	EEU	Poland	2	1	1	4		Jordan	1		1
	Switzerland			1	1		Romania	1	1	2	4		Azerbaijan		1	1
	Belgium			1	1		Russia	1		1	2	SAS	Pakistan	2	1	3
SEU	Italy	4		6	10		Hungary	1			1		Bangladesh	1		1
	Spain	5	3	4	12		Bulgaria		1		1	NAF	Egypt	1	1	2
NEU	UK	4	4	5	13		Ukraine	1	1		2		Tunisia	1		1
	Sweden	1		1	2	WAS	UAE	5	1	2	8		Libya	1		1
	Norway	1	1		2		Bahrain	1			1		Total	15	4	19
	Finland		1		1		Saudi Arabia	2		1	3					
	Denmark		1	1	2		Oman	1			1					
WAS	Israel	2		1	3		Qatar	1			1					
EAS	Japan			2	2		Kuwait	1	1		2					
	South Korea			1	1		Cyprus		1		1					
Total	40	17	52	109		SAS	India	1	1		2					
							Malaysia			1	1					
							Thailand			1	1					
						CAS	Kazakhstan		1		1					
						EAS	China			1	1					
						SEAS	Indonesia	1			1					
							Philippines			1	1					
						NAF	Morocco	2		1	3					
							Algeria	1			1					
	Total	30	10	16	56											

¹ The numbers indicate the number of advertisements delivered to a specific location. For example, 8 out of 20 advertisements in 2021 were delivered to the USA. The distribution of countries into core, semi-periphery, and periphery is based on Babones 2005, world-economy; Dunaway and Clelland 2017, economic, political, and transformative potential; Ruvalcaba 2020, geographically, international structure; Eyigün 2020, the geopolitics of media; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Cívico 2022, global capitalism; Saraç and Yağlıkara 2022, human development index; Ruvalcaba 2023, World Power Index, El Tinay 2024, international political economy. For detailed information, see Appendix1.

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Core and Semi-Periphery

In the three-year composition of the categorical distribution of cultural values, in 2021, utilitarian (33.6%) and modern values (31.6%) form the largest group with close proportions, followed by traditional values (24.6%), and the smallest group is formed by symbolic values (10.2%). In 2022, modern values (37.5%) form the largest group with a more distinct

difference, while symbolic values (25.8%) decreased compared to the previous year, with traditional values (26.7%) following modern values. The smallest group again consists of symbolic values (10.0%). In 2023, utilitarian values (19.8%) further decreased, symbolic values (21.3%) increased, modern values (33.6%) again formed the largest group, followed by traditional values (25.2%).

Table 4. Distribution Composition of Cultural Value Groups by Core Countries ²

	2021 Core	2022 Core	2023 Core	Total
Modern Values	31,6%	37,5%	33,6%	33,3%
Traditional Values	24,6%	26,7%	25,2%	25,2%
Symbolic Values	10,2%	10,0%	21,3%	14,8%
Utilitarian Values	33,6%	25,8%	19,8%	26,7%
Σ SUM	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
# N = Documents	1 (33,3%)	1 (33,3%)	1 (33,3%)	3 (100,0%)

The findings show that core country advertisements carry a high code density for modern values, with traditional or utilitarian values accompanying modern values at times. Additionally, while there has been an increase in symbolic values over time, there has been a decrease in utilitarian values. A noteworthy point is that in 2023, while modern values remain predominant, the distribution of all four cultural value categories was relatively more balanced. This suggests that there may be almost a combination of cultural values in the last year. This situation recalls the theoretical debate that the core has long been "causally united" rather than "meaningfully united" (Wilkinson, 2003). The core has absolutely modern characteristics, with the sensational culture described as modernization being dominant, continuing to expand from the core. On the other hand, centrism is actually expected to avoid a specific geography or cultural reference, with a foundation based on a more cultural mosaic and the creation of strong bonds with this mosaic (Wilkinson, 2003). In the advertisements published in core countries in 2023, the distribution of cultural values approached the concept of meaningful unity, resembling a cultural mosaic. Tikkanen (2021) concluded that the use of foreign cultural symbols did not change attitudes towards the advertisement or the brand in his

research conducted in Germany and Finland, which are considered as two different countries but in our study are included in the core country group. A parallelism was observed between Wilkinson's (2003) theoretical framework emphasizing the avoidance of a dominant cultural change in core countries and Tikkanen's (2021) field research findings in terms of attitudes towards foreign cultural symbols. This led to the idea that the cultural tendency and social life experiences presented in advertisements based on fiction overlap with the world-system analysis perspective. From another perspective, Choi (2022) examined whether online video advertisements in the United States (core) and South Korea (semi-central) reflect their cultural values in the same way as traditional advertisements. Despite the cultural differences between the two countries, popular online video ads in South Korea were not significantly different from those in the United States. According to the researcher, although the two countries are culturally different, in our study, South Korea is part of the lower level of the core country groups (Saraç & Yağlıkara, 2022; El Tinay, 2024). From a world-system perspective, this basic structural interconnectedness makes South Korea's similarity to the United States seem usual.

Table 5. Distribution Composition of Cultural Value Groups by Semi-Periphery Countries

	2021 Semi-periphery	2022 Semi-periphery	2023 Semi-periphery	Total
Modern Values	32,5%	51,7%	34,5%	36,0%
Traditional Values	20,7%	11,7%	32,1%	21,8%
Symbolic Values	12,2%	18,3%	13,1%	13,4%
Utilitarian Values	34,6%	18,3%	20,2%	28,9%
Σ SUM	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
# N = Documents	1 (33,3%)	1 (33,3%)	1 (33,3%)	3 (100,0%)

² When creating the table, the column indicator symbol size command in the Maxqda program was selected. The ratios reflect the distribution of cultural values within each year.

In 2021, the distribution of cultural value groups between core and semi-periphery countries is quite similar. However, in 2022, there is a significant difference in the cultural value indicators of these two country groups. The concentration in modern codes (51.7%) and the decrease in traditional codes (11.7%) are particularly striking. By 2023, a similar distribution between core and semi-periphery countries reappears. In the last year, a synthesis resembling the combination seen in core countries can be observed. Over the three years, modern values constitute an important group in the semi-periphery, while traditional values show a rather inconsistent trend. Li and Ye (2022) argue that the pleasure code, considered a typical Western tradition prohibited in Confucian tradition, is the second most frequently used value in China (semi-periphery) and is reinforced by advertisements. This finding by the researchers aligns with the fluctuations in traditional codes in semi-peripheral countries mentioned in our study. Similarly, Czarnecka et al. (2018) examined differences and similarities in the use of value appeal in print advertisements in Hungary, Ireland, and Poland (semi-peripheral) and in the United Kingdom (core). Hungary, Ireland, and Poland (semi-periphery) in their study focusing on differences and similarities in

the use of value appeal in print advertisements and the compatibility of cultural meanings in advertisements with the national cultures of target countries, found that national cultural representations were partially reflected and that advertisements shaped social values rather than reflecting them, similar to previous studies. Another study argues that the lack of a standard definition of Indian (semi-peripheral) cultural values reflects the absence of a standardized international value model or cultural model (Limbu & Mukherjee, 2024). Khairullah and Khairullah (2021) expanded on previous research examining dominant cultural values depicted in print magazine advertisements in the United States (core) and India (semi-periphery), finding that despite differences in product categories and frequency, there was a similarity in the dominant values frequently depicted in magazine advertisements in both countries. This finding is consistent with the findings of researchers advocating a middle-ground approach in the debate between standardization and adaptation of advertising messages. In this context, focusing on the subcodes of cultural value categories in center and semi-peripheral countries appears critical for a better understanding of this potential.

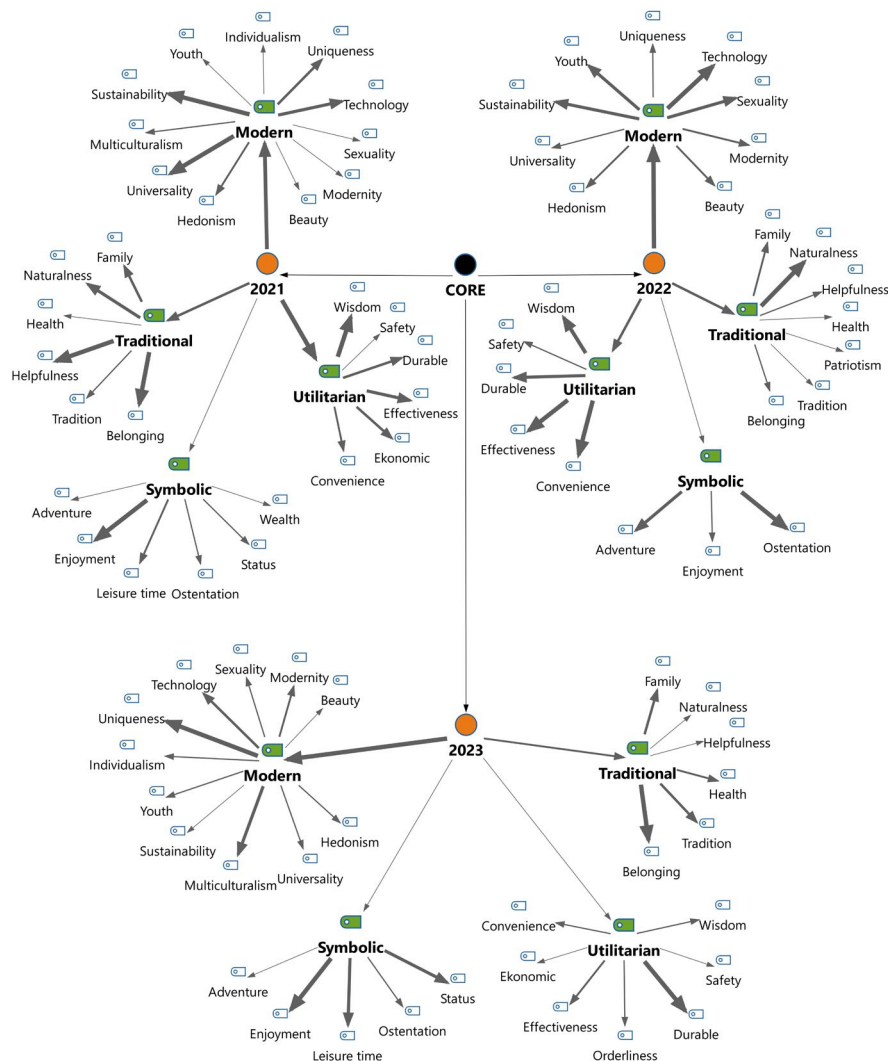


Figure 2. Core Countries Category – Code Sub-Model

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As shown in Figure 2 and 3, almost all of the four categories and sub-codes in the code guide have been identified in both country groups. However, the sub-codes that gained intensity show some differences. For example, in 2021, when the category distribution of both country groups is quite similar, the sub-codes "sustainability and universality" for core countries and the sub-code "technology" for semi-periphery countries are more intense in the advertisements. On the other hand, in 2023, the intensity of the "uniqueness" code is similar in both country groups, but the "multiculturalism" code accompanies the "uniqueness" code in core countries, while the "individualism" code accompanies it in semi-periphery countries. Even when countries en-

counter a similar code, the subsequent dense codes differ. A similar situation is observed in traditional values. There is an intensity in the "belonging" code for both country groups. However, this code is related to the "helpfulness" code in core countries and the "family" code in semi-periphery countries. In 2022, the "ostentation" sub-code in symbolic values is prominent in both country groups. However, in the core countries, "ostentation" is followed by the "adventure" sub-code, while in the semi-periphery countries, "ostentation" is combined with "adventure," followed by "enjoyment." Accordingly, even though both country groups show intensity in similar sub-codes, the subsequent code sequences are different.

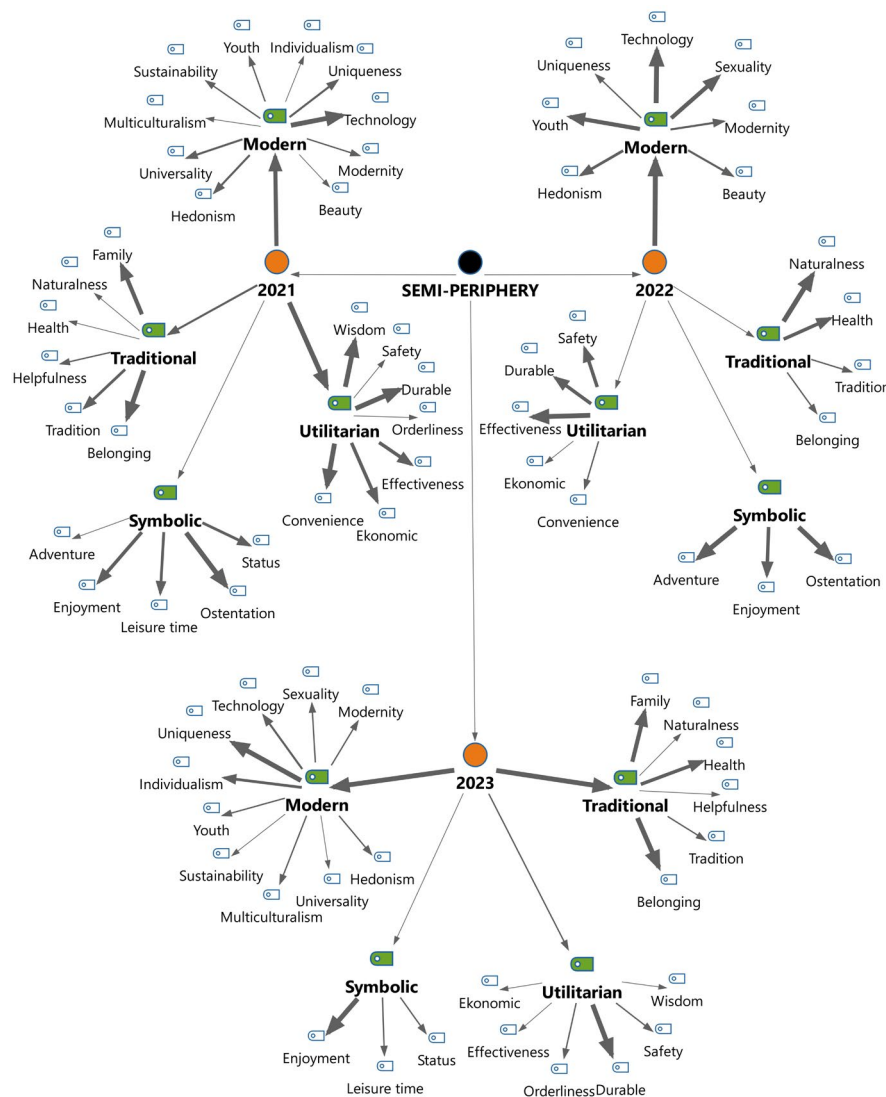


Figure 3. Semi-Periphery Countries Category - Sub-Code Model

According to the findings, while there are similarities in cultural value categories between core and semi-periphery countries in the context of 2021 to 2023, the distribution of sub-codes within the categories is not the same, or even if similar sub-codes are intense, the following code differs. The similarity of the categories is, of course, an important finding

in the study, but the differences in the sub-codes of the categories also suggest that the cultural tendencies between core and semi-periphery may differ. In this case, it can be understood that there is a dynamic interaction between the core and periphery countries, but they are not completely identical. This structural arrangement between the core and

semi-peripheral country groups is clarified by an example provided by De Benedictis, Rondinelli and Vinciotti (2023: 265).

Imagine there are two countries, and two cultural traits, with each trait taking two possible values (e.g.: belief in God (yes/no) and trust in others (yes/no)). Imagine that in both countries, half the people believe in God and half the people trust others. The two countries would appear to be at a cultural distance of zero. However, suppose that in the first country everyone who believes in God also trusts others, while in the second country everyone who believes in God does not trust others. Then, the two countries are actually culturally different because the pattern of interdependence between cultural traits across individuals within each country is different.

Semi-peripheral countries, which are under pressure from core countries but also exert pressure on peripheral countries, have a dual structure: on the one hand, they try to avoid falling into a peripheral position, and on the other hand, they are motivated to move closer to core countries (Wallerstein, 2011). However, as Gills and Frank (2003) emphasize,

highlighting the confusing nature of the system, semi-peripheral countries are always at the core of this dilemma. Within this framework, as argued by Wallerstein (2000) in his world-system analysis, while countries are part of a single system, it is increasingly difficult to argue that country groups are both part of a single world system and distinct from one another, a finding supported by the results of our study.

Periphery and Semi-Periphery

Communication with peripheral countries was established in 2021 and 2023. The distribution of cultural value categories in peripheral countries is distinctly different from that in core and semi-periphery countries. In 2021, there was a higher focus on utilitarian values first, followed by modern values, while in 2023, there was a significant shift towards modern values first, then utilitarian values. Traditional values (3.6% - 16.0%) were reflected in advertising messages to a very limited extent. There is an approach towards modern and utilitarian values in peripheral countries. The combination observed in core and semi-periphery countries in 2023 does not appear to be applicable to peripheral countries.

Table 6. Distribution Composition of Cultural Value Groups by Peripheral Countries

	2021 Periphery	2023 Periphery	Total
 Modern Values	35,7%	48,0%	39,5%
 Traditional Values	3,6%	16,0%	7,4%
 Symbolic Values	12,5%	12,0%	12,3%
 Utilitarian Values	48,2%	24,0%	40,7%
 SUM	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
 N = Documents	1 (50,0%)	1 (50,0%)	2 (100,0%)

The information suggesting that peripheral countries work to direct the pressure that the core exerts onto the periphery (Wallerstein, 2015) indicates that from Türkiye, as a semi-peripheral country, modern values were transmitted with a dominant intensity to the periphery. Despite differences, Türkiye, as a semi-peripheral country playing an important role in understanding the mobility in the world-system (Terlouw, 2003), facilitates a movement of modern values towards the periphery. Traditional values are only marginally associated with the periphery. This suggests that the advertisements directed towards peripheral countries are distantly related to traditional values. Ognjanow et al. (2023) examine the positive role of advertising in socio-economic development and modernization, analyzing the cultural influence of European and American foreign brands in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (periphery) and the most influential national daily newspapers of the period during the interwar period. Following

the example of more developed countries such as France and the United Kingdom (core), they concluded that advertising had developed significantly in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia during the period under examination. They concluded that the cultural transfer that took place through the promotion of foreign brands' products and services in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia contributed to the adoption of new consumption patterns and the country's overall economic development and modernization in the first half of the 20th century. The researchers also view advertising as an inevitable cultural transmission tool in the local adoption of foreign cultures, values, and behavioral patterns between developed and underdeveloped countries. This situation observed in our study—where modern values were supported in core and semi-peripheral regions in 2021—also applies to peripheral regions in 2023. This indicates that peripheral countries are following the lead of other countries. The nearly modern-traditional combinati-

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on observed last year in both core and peripheral countries is not present here. As previously mentioned, an upward trend in modern values was observed in semi-peripheral countries in 2022. The same trend follows in the periphery in 2023, suggesting that the periphery follows others in the subsequent year.

In addition, although the distribution of sub-codes based on categories in peripheral countries appears to be quite different and with fewer codes compared to the core and semi-periphery, some similarities have been observed between the periphery and semi-periphery.

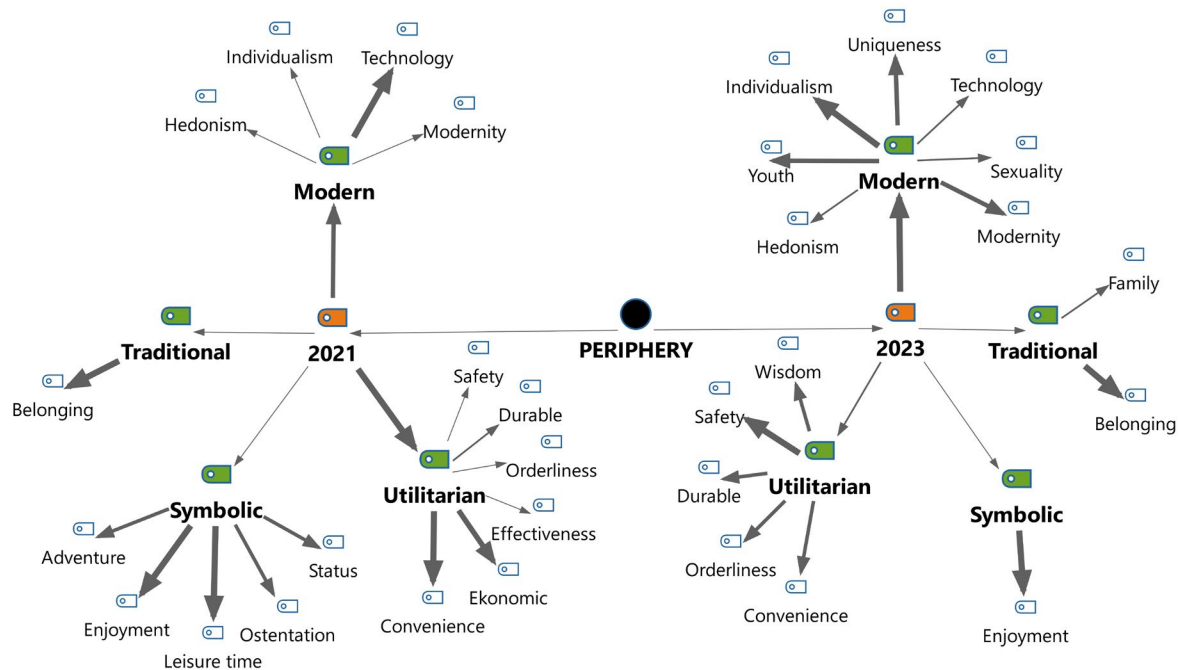


Figure 4. Peripheral Countries Category - Sub-Code Model

The sub-codes of modern, traditional, and symbolic value groups in peripheral countries are similar to the sub-codes in semi-peripheral countries. The "technology" code in 2021 and the "individualism, uniqueness" modern codes in 2023, the "belonging" traditional code in 2021 and 2023, and the "enjoyment" symbolic code in 2021-2023 show similarities. This finding suggests that although there are categorical distribution differences between the periphery and semi-periphery, similar cultural trends are reflected in the advertisements. Utilitarian values, however, differ from the other two country groups. In peripheral countries, the "safety, economy, convenience" sub-codes exhibit differences.

Another important finding of this study is the similarity between the semi-periphery and the periphery in the years when there was no advertising communication with peripheral countries in 2022, and between the periphery and the semi-periphery in the years when the periphery was present. Wallerstein (1979) suggests that the semi-periphery, located between the core and the periphery, should be examined specifically. This group, positioned between the two country groups, experiences deviations in its spatial structure. The semi-periphery sometimes acts as the periphery for the core, and sometimes as a core country within the periphery (Wallerstein,

1979). In our study, it is observed that the semi-periphery occasionally experiences deviations. The claim that the semi-periphery is functionally positioned as the main periphery (Gills & Frank, 2003) seems to be supported by the findings. This suggests that the situation of semi-peripheral countries, located between the core and the periphery, is determined by the presence of peripheral countries.

When we evaluate the data within the context of the world-system, advertising serves as a tool for making invisible and legitimizing the asymmetrical power relations within the world-system by exporting the values of the core countries, which control not only economic production but also the production of meaning, to the periphery. At the same time, advertisers have been raised with the values and beliefs of the system they live in, or in other words, they have been socialized within this mindset. Turkish advertising was initially influenced by American advertising agencies, and admiration for "Western" systems developed among Turkish advertisers on an industry-wide basis. Therefore, they consciously or unconsciously reproduce and disseminate the ideal values of this system through marketing. In other words, advertising and marketing communication do not merely promote products; they also perpetuate the mindset of the existing (Ger, 2024).

7. Conclusion

Within the scope of the limitations of this study, the cultural component of the world-system reflected in advertisements is, in its "most general form," aligned with modernity. Symbolic values form the group with the lowest intensity in all three years and across all country groups. Utilitarian values have been increasingly underrepresented in advertisements since 2021 across all country groups. The placement of traditional values in advertisements varies by year and country group, and the intensity distribution is also not balanced. Modernity represents the most intense code across all country groups in all three years. According to Wallerstein's (2012) view that the glorification of modernization is more of an idea about participating in and continuing in the world-system rather than a real social action, advertisements seem to serve the world-system with the glorification of modern values. Furthermore, although modern values appear as an important cultural category in each of the three years and across all country groups, an important issue that stands out is that modern values are more associated with peripheral countries first, and semi-peripheral countries second. Frank (1966) points out that the idea that every country in the world will undergo the same stages and achieve the so-called development through modernization is a misconception. In world-system analysis, core countries are already modern. In this case, other countries, wishing to be modern, had to adopt the modern culture by imitating the advanced ones, with their help (Wallerstein, 1993). Semi-peripheral countries exert some cultural pressures on the states that have joined or are constrained by the capitalist world-economy (Wallerstein, 2012). Türkiye, taking on the role expected of semi-peripheral countries, reflects the modern values attributed to core countries in advertisements.

The sub-codes of modernity reflected in advertisements differ depending on the country's position. While semi-peripheral cultural value categories resemble those of the core, the sub-codes reflected in advertisements are similar to those of peripheral countries. In other words, although semi-peripheral countries seem to have a similar categorical distribution to core countries, the cultural trends in which intensity occurs in sub-codes are related to the sub-codes of peripheral countries. In this context, this study shows that, while the data analyzed quantitatively suggests similarity between the core and semi-periphery, when the sub-codes are examined qualitatively, the similarities diverge. Although there is a modernity-oriented world-system appearance, the modern content changes depending on the country's position, and therefore, the country groups are not the same. Additionally, considering that the cultural trends in the sub-codes are reflected in advertisements in the periphery one year after the semi-pe-

riphery and two years after the core, a hierarchical order between the country groups is observed. According to world-system analysis, there are boundaries, rules, and connections between the core, periphery, and semi-periphery complexes (Terlouw, 2003), suggesting that there is an interaction between the country groups, but they are not entirely the same, forming a hierarchical sequence.

According to the view that there is a tendency toward a single human society and thus a single world culture, which is formed by slow and gradual merging of political, economic, and cultural worlds across the earth (Wallerstein, 1993), this study reveals that Türkiye, through advertisements, represents a semi-peripheral country supporting the capitalist world-system with modernity. However, following the approach that the specific cultural connotation expected from the core should be avoided (Wilkinson, 2003), it can be said that in 2023, a near convergence in cultural value combinations was achieved in core countries, but modern values still take precedence. The approach of the world-system analysis in the direction of avoiding a specific cultural connotation is distorted through advertisements.

8. Literature Contribution

As evolving entities, it is possible to examine each civilization as a cultural cluster, consisting of communities that form relationships in partially harmonious, partially contradictory, and partially neutral ways within themselves, and with many small or large systems. Based on this assumption, rather than identifying cultural uniqueness, a fundamental principle, or a primary symbol for each civilization, the civilization can be studied by determining the relationships of convergence and divergence, challenge and response, domination and loss of dominance of these principles that have existed together and in unity within the civilization. In this context, research aiming to compare the cultures of different civilizations would have key questions such as (a) Is there a core culture that is predominantly dominant in civilization most of the time, or always? (b) To what extent is the dominance maintained? (c) How is cultural dominance affected when civilizations come into contact? (d) After the contact, is there a secondary integration, and how long does it take? (Wilkinson, 2003). In this study, (a) the dominance of modernity in core countries, (b) the reflection of the process starting from the French Revolution according to the world-system analysis within the research time limits, (c) the intersection of modernity in core, semi-periphery, and periphery countries in the selected advertisements, but with differing sub-cultural tendencies, and (d) the continuation of the contact, where the core is followed, have been holistically addressed. Thus, it can be said that this study creates a theoretical and practical framework in a holistic

structure as expected in literature. Additionally, the study aims to reiterate the importance of the opinion that the cultural domains, which are the variables of this study, can also be defined as identity objects that are analytically distinguishable in a certain time and scale (Terlouw, 2003).

It seems to contradict the idea that "the more culturally different the target market is from the source culture where the advertisement is produced, the more localized the strategies are" (Wei & Jiang, 2005: 838) because the findings of this study, which adopts the world-system perspective, suggest that the dominant culture follows the modernity or cultural combination presented by the core.

This study is proof that advertisements are also cultural documents. Our study also highlights that advertisements are an important unit of analysis. We can also state that Türkiye, categorized as a semi-periphery, is an important unit of analysis in international literature.

The world-system analysis, which critically approaches the intercultural effects of the global economic-political structure, has gained significant importance in the fields of politics and international relations and has gradually found a broad space in disciplines such as economics, sociology, and history. We hope that our study, which integrates the world-system analysis with advertising, will offer interdisciplinary literature to the field and provide a new perspective.

9. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study is limited to the advertising inventory and countries where the advertisements were published that constitute the sample group. The findings cannot be generalized to countries included in the system and advertisements in these countries. Additionally, the study is limited to presenting data that reveals the overlapping or diverging patterns of cultural values from a world-systems perspective. However, the relationship between culture and other social, economic, and political domains, as well as its historical background, is excluded from the scope of this research. In this context, the study carries a certain degree of contextual limitation.

For future research, we suggest examining this study, which focuses on advertisements transmitted from Türkiye, a semi-periphery country, to other core periphery, and semi-periphery countries. While it can be assumed that competition exists among core countries, they share a common interest in maintaining the modern world-system (Wallerstein, 2011), so it would be valuable to examine what the core countries are doing. Furthermore, we strongly recommend investigating the cultural content of advertisements designed for transmission from the core to the semi-periphery and periphery.

Wallerstein (1993) states that people who do not wish to be assimilated tend to see themselves as carriers of the world culture, which, in reality, means being carriers of the cultures of the dominant groups in the world-system. In this context, future studies can investigate the reflections of this view within the masses, and the results obtained can be compared with the findings of this study. Additionally, with the same approach, investigations could be carried out on the relationship between cultural content in advertisements and the popularity of those ads.

This study approaches the subject solely from a cultural perspective, seeking to understand the current cultural dimensions of the existing structure. Since the aim of the research is to reveal the current cultural reflections of the phenomenon from a world-system perspective, historical processes, economic dynamics, or political factors have been excluded. Therefore, future research is recommended to include in-depth comparisons that take into account socio-economic, socio-political, and historical contexts.

Explanation Statement

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest.

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Appendix-1.

CORE COUNTRIES

Region	Country	Reference
Australia	Australia	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
North America	USA	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Eyigün, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
	Canada	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
Western Europe	Germany	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Eyigün, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
	France	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
	Netherlands	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Austria	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Switzerland	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
Southern Europe	Belgium	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Italy	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
	Spain	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
Northern Europe	UK	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Eyigün, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
	Sweden	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Norway	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Finland	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Denmark	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
Western Asia	Israel	Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; (sub-core) El Tinay, 2024 (semi-core)
Eastern Asia	Japan	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Eyigün, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
	South Korea	Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; (sub-core) Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022; El Tinay, 2024 (semi-core)

SEMI-PERIPHERY COUNTRIES

Region	Country	Reference
North America	Mexico	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Eyigün, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
South America	Argentina	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
	Brazil	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Eyigün, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
Southern Europe	Portugal	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Greece	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
Northern Europe	Estonia	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
Eastern Europe	Poland	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
	Romania	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Russia	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Eyigün, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
	Hungary	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Bulgaria	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Ukraine	Babones, 2005; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
Western Asia	UAE	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Bahrain	Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Saudi Arabia	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Oman	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020
	Qatar	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Kuwait	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
Southern Asia	Cyprus	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	India	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Eyigün, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
	Malaysia	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Thailand	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
Central Asia	Kazakhstan	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
South-Eastern Asia	Indonesia	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
	Philippines	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
Eastern Asia	China	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2020; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
Northern Africa	Morocco	Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Civico, 2022
	Algeria	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022

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PERIPHERY COUNTRIES

Region	Country	Reference
Southern Europe	Albania	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023
Western Asia	Iraq	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Cívico, 2022; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023
	Lebanon	Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023
	Yemen	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023
	Iran	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023
	Syria	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022
	Jordan	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023
	Azerbaijan	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023
Southern Asia	Pakistan	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Saraç and Yağlıkara, 2022; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Cívico, 2022; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023
	Bangladesh	Babones, 2005; Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023
Northern Africa	Egypt	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Cairó-i-Céspedes and Palacios Cívico, 2022; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023
	Tunisia	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Eyigün, 2020; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023
	Libya	Dunaway and Clelland, 2017; Eyigün, 2020; Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023

Research Article

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The Virtual Manifestation of Indifference: The Normalization of Cancel Culture as Offensive Humor on Social Media

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Abstract

Social media has evolved beyond merely influencing everyday life to become an indispensable part of the social fabric. Similar to real life, human emotions and behaviors such as happiness, enthusiasm, love, anger, hatred, sadness, pain, and peace emerge within social media environments, and these emotions collectively create a new ecosystem and culture. An important element of this new culture is the phenomenon of "lynch" (mob) culture, which also finds its place on social media. This study examines the lynch culture on social media, focusing specifically on Platform X. Following the announcement of the 2025 Higher Education Institutions Exam (YKS) results, posts related to a student who ranked first in Turkey in the equal-weight and verbal fields were analyzed. The analysis yielded three main findings: First, the subje-

ct was completely detached from its original context. Second, the student's image and mode of communication were used manipulatively and disrespectfully toward personal rights within social media interactions. Third, it demonstrated how insensitive, ruthless, and malevolent the lynch culture—also referred to as "offensive humor" and emerging as a product of popular culture on social media—truly is. This study contributes important awareness and insights regarding lynch culture in the new media environment.

Keywords: Social Media, Cancel Culture, Offensive Humor, Digital Lynching, Online Hate Speech.

JEL Codes: L82, L86, Z1

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1. Introduction

This study analyzes the conceptual framework of the phenomenon of lynching through various disciplines such as history, sociology, ethics, and law, while specifically focusing on the culture of lynching on social media within the context of humor. The study examines the process by which an ordinary individual suddenly becomes a trending topic on social media. M.İ.K.¹ is a recent high school graduate, largely unknown outside his immediate circle, who took the Higher Education Institutions Exam (YKS) on 21-22 June 2025. As of 18 July 2025, M.İ.K. was an ordinary individual; however, following the announcement of the YKS results on 19 July 2025, he became a trending topic on platform X and a figure discussed by thousands. According to the YKS results, M.İ.K. ranked first in Turkey in the equal weight and verbal fields (Ayhan & Candan, 2025). While his exam success was the initial reason for coming to public attention, the primary elements emphasized on social media were his physical appearance, behaviors, mannerisms, and speech style. Interviews conducted by traditional and new media outlets following the announcement of the exam results increased M.İ.K.'s visibility on these platforms. However, after the interview was shared on X, users began commenting predominantly on the student's appearance, manner of speaking, and behaviors rather than his academic achievement. The vast majority of these comments contained hate speech and involved serious attacks on his personal rights. Conversely, the presence of conscientious users who supported M.İ.K. and characterized these comments as irrational, violating personal rights, and lacking in empathy was also observed. These users emphasized the necessity of initiating legal processes, thereby taking a stand against the culture of lynching.

The study, which addresses the manifestation of lynching culture on social media, has three primary objectives. First, it argues that lynching culture on social media is more easily perpetrated than its real-world counterpart. Second, it demonstrates that lynching culture on social media is at least as ruthless as that in real life. Third, it examines how the phenomenon of humor—often used to comfort people during processes of justification—is inverted and repurposed within the actions and discourses of lynching on social media. These developments reveal how such dynamics not only erode fundamental values such as ethics, morality, and law, negatively

impacting individual and societal life, but also destroy human emotions, relationships, and social fabric. This underscores the critical importance of the study.

The study first outlines the literature review and methodology. Subsequently, comments on the post by the X (formerly Twitter) account that received the most interactions during the period when the YKS results were announced were subjected to content analysis, and visualizations were generated using the MAXQDA program. In the results section, the findings were interpreted in detail. The core emphasis of the study is that lynching culture on social media is attempted to be legitimized under a humorous guise. This tendency progresses alongside a detachment from values or a simplification of the emerging concerning situation. The phenomenon of "offensive humor," frequently encountered on social media, is particularly noteworthy in this context. Although humor serves functions such as amusement, entertainment, and provocation of thought, the propagation of attitudes that undermine human dignity—such as hatred, insult, and attack—through "offensive humor" constitutes a significant issue that warrants further discussion.

This study makes significant contributions to understanding and bringing visibility to the culture of lynching, which spreads rapidly on social media and threatens individuals' psychological, social, and legal rights. In the new communication environments brought about by digitization, recognizing the underlying dynamics of lynching and its methods of legitimization through humorous tools is of vital importance for raising societal awareness and developing effective intervention strategies. In this context, the study establishes a robust foundation for raising awareness among social media users, reviewing legal regulations, and reopening discussions on ethical values.

2. Literature Review

Lynching culture emerges as a complex social phenomenon based on the extrajudicial punishment of individuals by societal collectivity, eroding human rights and the principles of the rule of law. When considered as a part of social life, it appears to have accompanied humanity throughout history. However, its conceptualization and systematic use began in the post-modern era (Çubukçu, 2006). Etymologically rooted in 18th-century American history, the

¹ This study has been prepared in accordance with ethical principles, as per the decision of the Firat University Social Sciences Ethics Committee (Document Date and Number: 05.09.2025-38613). Within this context, the initials of the individual's first and last name (M.İ.K.) have been used instead of their full name, with the aim of protecting their personality rights from both an ethical and legal perspective. Furthermore, in line with these precautions, the photograph of M.İ.K. has been blurred to ensure privacy and anonymity.

term “lynching” is derived from the phrase “Lynch’s Law” (Nişanyan, 2022).² Over time, it has evolved into a global form of social violence, manifesting as a practice of collective extrajudicial punishment. In conceptual terms, it can be defined as “the application of physical or psychological violence by a community against an individual without due legal process, based on an accusation of wrongdoing” (Baki, 2013: 165). In dictionaries, it is described as “the act of multiple people beating and killing someone without trial or legal authority, using tools such as stones or sticks due to a behavior they consider criminal” (TDK, 2005: 1466). However, modern literature extends beyond this definition, treating lynching as a parallel punitive system that poses an alternative to the supremacy of law (Gambetti, 2007: 12). Additionally, it is important to note that lynching is often motivated by a quest for justice that holds social legitimacy, rather than being merely an act of violence—a nuance that should not be overlooked (Yılmaz, 2012: 34). On the other hand, the Turkish term “yargısız infaz” (extrajudicial execution) holds the same semantic meaning as the Western-origin lynch concept (Boyras, 2023).

Thinkers who have studied the concept and practice of lynching have demonstrated that this phenomenon, examined across various contexts, operates through interrelated and multidimensional mechanisms. Le Bon argues that crowds dissolve individual consciousness, giving rise to a “temporary entity dominated by primitive instincts.” According to Le Bon, crowds driven by lynching culture transform rational individuals into a conscience-less mob (Le Bon, 1997: 45). In other words, it can be argued that participants in lynching suspend their individual moral judgment and transfer their responsibility for “administering justice” to the collective structure known as the crowd (Peker, 2006: 31). Freud, on the other hand, explained this transfer as the individual’s surrender of superego control to a leader figure within the crowd (Freud, 2015: 68). Consequently, actions in lynching incidents are directed by the guidance of individuals capable of mobilizing the crowd. All of this indicates that lynching excludes rational understanding and behavior.

One of the most important motivations underlying the legitimization of lynch culture and lynching acts is the demand to fill the void created by the loss of legitimacy and trust in the state’s monopoly over punishment and its security-judicial mechanisms. Ku-

çuradi describes this situation as a “revenge spiral caused by the law’s failure to protect human dignity” (Kuçuradi, 2018: 89). The reasons for the emergence of this phenomenon vary across countries and encompass a wide range of factors, including economic conditions, traditions, authority vacuums, cycles of spontaneous violence, rigid religious interpretations, norms granting privileges to certain groups, cultural elements, and ideological positioning (Gambetti, 2007: 19). Therefore, lynching emerges in a vacuum of authority and continues to function as an uncontrolled authority.

Kuçuradi defines acts of lynching as “collective violations of human dignity,” emphasizing that these actions not only harm the victim but also deprive society as a whole of its humanity and moral integrity (Kuçuradi, 2018: 45). Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the prominent figures of modern thought, highlighted the potential of collective will to suppress the individual, stating, “The tyranny of the majority is more dangerous than that of a single tyrant” (Rousseau, 2012: 56). Hannah Arendt, who argues that violent actions such as lynching culture have the potential to destroy the political sphere, characterizes this phenomenon as a “crisis of public space” (Yılmaz, 2012: 89). According to Arendt, the public sphere tends to erode when freedom and responsibility are abandoned, and in this process, the expanding bureaucracy and media’s activities—such as disinformation, manipulation, and propaganda—play a highly effective role. The crisis and collapse of the public sphere also blur the boundaries between public and private domains. In such a context, private initiatives begin to make public decisions, and truth is sacrificed to fiction (B., 2025). In this framework, individuals participating in acts of lynching operate under the belief that their actions are justified and legitimate. In other words, lynching is perceived as the “righteous reaction of the people.” This perception carries the risk of transforming lynching from a legitimized act into a collective moral value (Baki, 2013: 172), thereby raising significant legal concerns. Lynching, which often involves physical violence, is in a sense a form of torture, and legal systems define it as incompatible with human dignity. States based on the rule of law constitutionally safeguard this principle, and it is unequivocally supported by international structures and conventions. For instance, Articles 3 and 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as Articles 2 and 3 of the European Convention on

² Tanil Bora, who refers to the expression “lynch law” as “lynch justice,” traces the origin of the term to four different individuals bearing the surname “Lynch.” The common characteristic among these figures is their ruthless approach to punishment: “According to various sources, three of the four individuals claimed to have given their name to the term were judges. In 1493, in the town of Galway, Ireland, the notoriously cruel judge James Lynch convicted his own son of murder and personally hanged him from the window of his house. Judge Charles Lynch, during the American War of Independence, punished both ‘enemies’ loyal to Britain and any suspect of ordinary crime without trial, often by ordering them to be whipped. Another, Judge John Lynch, gained notoriety in late 16th-century North Carolina for his extraordinary severity. The only candidate for the term’s origin who was not a judge was William Lynch, a man who, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, organized a militia in Pittsylvania to personally punish a gang of bandits” (Bora, 2014: 8). Bora’s use of the expression “lynch justice” is problematic, as the concept of justice, in addition to being a scientific discipline, represents a broader category encompassing the entire process from the enactment of laws to their implementation (TDD, 2012: 785).

Human Rights, establish the right to life and the prohibition of torture as fundamental principles (United Nations, 1948; Council of Europe, 2021).

In classical literature, the phenomenon of lynching has been approached as a process of physical interaction, possessing the semantic dimensions outlined above. In other words, from its earliest emergence to the 21st century, it has been evaluated in relation to the tangible existence of humans. However, since the 2000s, the internet and information technologies, which have gained global prominence and increasingly pervasive influence, have transformed lynching into a different dimension. A process has begun in which human interactions are abstracted from the physical realm and transferred to a virtual environment. As with all human-related issues, lynching has also begun to manifest in virtual spaces, acquiring a digital dimension. This approach, referred to as digital lynching, is a continuation of classical lynching culture. Following these developments, lynching culture—which historically manifested through physical violence and social exclusion—has, with the rise of social media, become a phenomenon occurring on digital platforms. On these platforms, individuals can be subjected to public execution through a post, video, or news story (Lewis & Marwick, 2017). Social media, in particular, constitutes the most critical axis of this transformation. The viral mechanisms of social media platforms both accelerate these executions and disseminate them to broad audiences (Puryear, 2024). The most crucial aspect of this shift, which transforms traditional lynching mechanisms, is the evolution of violence from the physical to the symbolic (Korkmaz & Yazıcı, 2025). Digital lynching operates through reputational assassination, social exclusion, and hate speech, constituting a mechanism whose destructive impact is comparable to, if not exceeding, that of physical violence.

The literature on digital lynching indicates that lynching behaviors are shaped by crowd psychology, distrust in the legal system, and the transformative impact of social media. One of the most significant findings is that although lynching culture has deep historical roots in social structures, it has acquired a new and distinct dimension with digital transformation (Erem & Hasdağ, 2024). Research reveals that the profiles individuals create on social media often differ significantly from their real-life personas (Davidowitz, 2018). In the comfort provided by the internet, users tend to reveal their subconscious selves or transform into the individuals they aspire to be. In other words, people express their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors on social media with fewer restraints than they would in physical life (Bauman, 2012). This phenomenon is underpinned by psychological issues rooted in attention-seeking and dissatisfaction, such as the desire for acceptance, visibility, and popularity, as well as negative impulses like self-discontent and inferiority complexes

(Babacan, 2017). Over time, this dynamic transcends the boundaries of desensitization, unveiling the primitive, ruthless, and savage aspects of the human subconscious. What is defined as lynching culture in real life has thus become an inseparable element of social media, leading to violations of privacy and personality rights, as well as material losses and/or psychological victimization (Gönüllü, 2023).

Anonymity, which allows individuals to share content while concealing their identities, is one of the most critical factors sustaining this process. Demir and Özcan have demonstrated that while social media rapidly permeated daily life with its promises of free expression and unrestricted sharing, it has also evolved—through anonymity and mobile technologies—into a conducive environment for mass hate speech and lynching behaviors. In this regard, while social media creates a space for freedom, it simultaneously becomes part of a process that fuels lynching culture (S. T. Demir & Özcan, 2021). Yaşa analyzed how X (formerly Twitter) accelerates lynching culture through tweets containing the hashtag #YoncaEvci-mik. According to content analysis results, lynching content on X exhibits a structure that is both “quickly produced and reshared” and “disseminated to broad audiences, damaging the target’s reputation and psychosocial health” (Yaşa, 2024). Demir and Özcan emphasize how social media’s initial emancipatory promises have transformed into “mass hatred and insecurity.” The authors conclude that “as lynching culture rises, the psychosocial and institutional repercussions of virtual causes in real life cannot be ignored” (S. T. Demir & Özcan, 2021). In his study on the dimension of ageism within lynching culture, Gönüllü revealed that discriminatory language and othering practices on social media reinforce the exposure of elderly people to public outrage and marginalization, creating both sociological and legal challenges (Gönüllü, 2023). Aslan Düzgün and Özkan’s study emphasizes that lynching is not merely a social psychological phenomenon but also a form of societal violence rooted in distrust of the legal system and violations of individual rights. In this context, lynching often manifests as a practice that undermines legal processes, disregarding evidence and the right to defense (Aslan Düzgün & Özkan, 2017). Akmeşe and Taşçioğlu compared the concepts of lynching culture and cancel/cancellation culture—often conflated in literature—and demonstrated that lynching culture involves more radical processes. Their study highlights that lynching culture focuses on “targeting, discrediting, and marginalizing practices in virtual environments,” noting that “although the dynamics of the two phenomena differ, lynching culture more frequently refers to rapid, collective acts of virtual violence” (Akmeşe & Taşçioğlu, 2025).

Unlike the examples cited above, this study focuses on the execution of lynching culture under the gu-

ise of humorous motivation. In one of the few studies addressing lynching culture within this context, Kutlu analyzed the “Luppo-buying uncle” case on Twitter (X) using a case study methodology and discourse analysis. The study demonstrated that lynching behaviors are not individual reactions but are shaped by dynamics of othering and punishment within an “organized crowd psychology” (Kutlu, 2023). In a study linking digital trolling movements to cyberbullying and lynching culture through the analysis of the film **The Hater**, Gönülşen concluded that humorous provocations (“trolling”)—especially when transformed into unexpected reactions by social media crowds—lay the groundwork for lynching campaigns (Gönülşen, 2022). These evaluations illustrate that users, in their activities on social media, can turn virtually any subject into an element of humor while producing content. This tendency not only reflects the normalization of discriminatory and violent behaviors under the pretext of entertainment but also highlights how humorous discourse can serve as a tool for the systematic mobilization of collective aggression.

Digital lynching, categorized within the framework of social media language as “offensive humor,” is among the foremost manifestations of this phenomenon. Gürler, who examines the phenomenon of offensive humor as a comedic element within a class-based framework, highlights its marginal language and destructive aspects, discussing its potential to either promote political correctness and address social inequalities or, conversely, to achieve the opposite (Gürler, 2020). In a study evaluating the concept specifically in the context of social media, offensive humor is defined as follows: *“Although offensive humor is observed across all new media applications, it is particularly prevalent on sharing sites. Within this framework, morally and ethically abnormal situations—such as people being offended, wronged, humiliated, harmed, or subjected to hate speech and violence—are normalized by being reinterpreted through a humorous lens. The most significant feature of offensive humor is the reduction of all these negative phenomena to entertainment and pleasure-seeking”* (Altıntop, 2024: 159). As evident from this, social media is a dynamic space where individuals and groups express themselves, share information, and engage in social interaction, yet it is also a platform where phenomena such as “lynching culture” and/or “offensive humor” intensively occur. In this context, while lynching culture is defined as psychological or behavioral attacks targeting individuals or groups through criticism, humiliation, or marginalization (Englander, 2024), offensive humor is characterized as an unbounded form of entertainment that pushes boundaries, often addressing taboo topics to attract attention or create a shocking effect (Phillips, 2016). In digital environments where such entertainment becomes normalized, combined with the veil of anonymity, individuals may develop

“online disinhibition,” making them more prone to verbal attacks and humiliating behaviors (Suler, 2004: 321–322). This situation inflicts serious harm on the psychological well-being of targeted individuals, leading to psychological stress, anxiety, and even outcomes as severe as suicide (Schoenebeck et al., 2023; Doe & Roe, 2022: 207).

Offensive humor is fundamentally based on the strategy of “addressing discomfort through laughter.” This type of humor engages with social norms, the boundaries of political correctness, and taboo subjects, possessing the potential to be both provocative and thought-provoking (Martin, 2017: 55–56). Some researchers argue that offensive humor serves to deconstruct social taboos, expose systems of oppression, or satirize repressive norms (Billig, 2005: 23–24). On the other hand, such humor can also marginalize targeted individuals or groups. Particularly when minority communities are involved, this form of humor can render them even more vulnerable psychosocially (Bicknell, 2007). Consequently, actions carried out under the guise of offensive humor on social media fall within the scope of lynching culture.

The notable relationship between offensive humor and lynching culture is clearly observable on social media platforms. When the offensive nature of humor elicits audience reactions and is persistently maintained despite these reactions, such responses can escalate into a top-down wave of lynching. If humor continues at the expense of the target’s vulnerability, it risks evolving into a frightening mechanism of “social pressure” or “collective lynching” (Shifman, 2007). On the other hand, employing elements of offensive humor within lynching culture carries the danger of legitimizing aggressive discourse. Lynching, when blended with a destructive style of humor, can take the form of an “agenda-setting execution,” targeting not only the individual but also their social identity (Wagner & Schwarzenegger, 2020). Lynching experienced on social media can lead to severe psychological consequences for individuals, manifesting as symptoms such as shame, loneliness, anxiety, and depression (Lee & Nguyen, 2022: 233–234). Furthermore, this process can weaken an individual’s relationships within their social circle, damage their professional reputation, and lead to social isolation in their lives (Ayeni et al., 2022). At the societal level, lynching culture can create an imbalance between freedom of expression and the right to harm. Extending beyond criticism, this culture leads to the dominance of a social pressure formed through mobbing effects rather than a “collective conscience” (Thompson, 2020: 63–64). This phenomenon, which can also be defined as cyberbullying, may push legitimate criticism into a discouraging context. Additionally, the study reveals that the digital version of lynching culture, which utilizes tools such as offensive humor, normalizes lynching by making it commonplace and internalized.

It is essential to develop strategies at both individual and institutional levels to counteract lynching culture and the destructive effects of offensive humor. At the individual level, it is important for social media users to enhance their ability to question aggressive content, respond critically, and establish ethical boundaries (Smith & Storrs, 2023). Shifting public education toward content that raises online ethical awareness and expanding digital literacy programs will be beneficial in this context (Reynolds, 2022: 14–15). At the institutional level, it is critically important for social media platforms to strengthen their policies for monitoring and intervening against hate speech, harassment, and abusive content (Gillespie, 2018: 89–90). Additionally, recognizing the tendency of social platforms to promote anger-driven and lynching-related content through algorithms, taking measures to reduce algorithmic biases will also be advantageous (Zuboff, 2018: 250–251).

3. Methodology

The study employed the content analysis method, which offers researchers the opportunity to systematically examine complex social phenomena using diverse analytical sets and tools. In this context, statistical data and visualizations were obtained using the MAXQDA program. To ensure reliability in the analyses conducted with MAXQDA, the authors independently developed themes and performed coding. The validity of the research was ensured through systematic coding and analytical methods applied by the researchers during the content analysis process. Themes and codes were reviewed by each researcher, verified for shared semantic domains, and consensus was achieved. The visualization and statistical analysis features provided by the MAXQDA software served as tools enhancing the reliability of the study. Furthermore, the involvement of multiple researchers in the data collection and analysis stages minimized potential subjective interpretations.

Content analysis is a significant technique among qualitative research methods, aiming for the systematic examination of textual, visual, or symbolic materials. This method, which enables the structural investigation of datasets, is widely used across various fields in the social sciences, such as communication, history, psychology, ethnology, sociology, and anthropology. Communication is the field where content analysis—aimed at uncovering implicit/hidden meanings—is most frequently applied, and it is commonly employed in analyzing written, audio, and visual media content (Aziz, 2014: 123; Altıntop, 2024: 110). Through content analysis, researchers convert large volumes of qualitative data into quantitative data, facilitating the identification of thematic patterns and categories (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008: 234). This process utilizes measurement and evaluation-based techniques such as text categorization and coding,

thematic coding, and numerical comparison (Ö. Demir, 2019: 106). Different methodological strategies may be adopted, including predefined coding categories by the researcher (a deductive approach) or allowing categories to emerge naturally from the data (an inductive approach).

The implementation stages of content analysis encompass systematic steps, beginning with the clarification of research questions, followed by sample selection, definition of coding units, development of a coding scheme, intercoder reliability tests, and final analyses (Gökçe, 2019: 78). Ensuring intercoder reliability during this process is of critical importance, and specific criteria for it have been established by leading scholars in the field (Bilgin, 2006: 112). Without this, the validity and reliability of the findings may become questionable. Among the strengths of the method are its ability to facilitate the economical analysis of large datasets, its reproducibility, and its potential to minimize cultural biases (Karasar, 2013: 91).

In the content analysis process of this study, a total of 340 post contents were analyzed across different variables. The limited size of the dataset can be explained by several technical reasons. First, to achieve a clearer semantic domain, only comments (interactions) made directly on the relevant post were included in the analysis. The primary reason for this approach is the difficulty in tracking and coding indirect comments and interactions associated with the post. Second, as a natural consequence of the rapid flow of agendas on social media, the number of comments and/or interactions tends to remain low. In other words, the fast-changing nature of social media agendas means that interactions and comments on a given post occur within a short timeframe, after which the topic is largely “forgotten.” Third, connected to the second reason, only comments and/or interactions occurring within a single day were used within the scope of the study. Consequently, the dataset remains limited due to the technical and subjective dynamics of the research topic.

In the current era of digitalization, the analysis of social media content constitutes one of the emerging applications of this method. Particularly, analyses conducted through X messages or Instagram posts enable the real-time measurement of societal attitudes and trends (Yoğurtçu & Ünal, 2019). However, adhering to ethical boundaries, respecting data privacy, and protecting human participants are fundamental principles that must be carefully considered in such studies. In this context, utmost care has been taken to ensure that the study does not raise any ethical or legal concerns. Accordingly, approval was obtained from the Firat University Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Committee during the preparation of the study, confirming compliance with ethical guidelines.

Table 1. Themes and Codes Used in the Study

Theme	Code
Gender Distribution	Female
	Male
	Gender Not Specified (Unknown)
Identity Information	Real
	Anonymous
Comment Distribution	Positive
	Negative
Comment Content	Hate Speech
	Praise/Swear
	Insult
	Image
	Humor
	Neutral
	Support

3.1. Explanation of Themes and Codes

Under the theme of Gender Distribution, the codes Female and Male were designated to identify accounts where the gender of the commenter is explicitly evident. The code Unknown was created for cases where the commenter's gender cannot be determined directly—due to lack of gender indicators in profile pictures, names, comment content, or if the account is explicitly institutional.

Under the theme of Identity Information, the codes Anonymous and Real were developed to classify the name used by the commenting account.

Within the Comment Distribution theme, the codes Positive and Negative were assigned to capture the overall positive or negative sentiment of each comment's content.

The codes under the Comment Content theme were designed to categorize comments based on their specific content. Coding within this theme differs from the others in that multiple codes can be applied simultaneously to the same comment. For instance, a comment containing hate speech may be coded with only one code from the Gender Distribution, Identity Information, or Comment Distribution themes, but it can be simultaneously assigned multiple codes under the Comment Content theme. This is because a comment with an attached image can also be humorous, contain hate speech, and include slang or insults all at once.

It is important to specifically highlight the Humorous code here, as it is directly related to the concept of offensive humor explained in the introduction of the study. Indeed, the parts coded as humorous in the comments align with the definition of offensive humor presented earlier.

In the comments, any visual content, slang, direct swearing, insults, or expressions that attack personal rights, disregard ethical and moral values, show a lack of empathy, or ignore legal rights are used under the guise of humor. The clearest indicator of this inference is the presence of symbols, images, names, texts, and nonsensical letter groups commonly used on social media to denote laughter or amusement.³

4. Findings

In Turkey, the placement of high school graduates into higher education institutions is carried out by the Student Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM) through an annual examination called the Higher Education Institutions Exam (YKS). The 2025 YKS was held on June 21–22, 2025. Each year, ÖSYM announces the results by publicly disclosing the names of top-performing individuals in core fields such as numerical, verbal, equal weight, and language. The results of the 2025 exam were announced on July 19, 2025, and the names of the top-ranking students in these core fields were publicized in the me-

³ In social media language, a common interaction tool called "random typing" involves pressing random keys on the keyboard to create the impression of a laughter effect. The context of the text usually makes it clear that the intent is to convey laughter. Although random typing messages are similar, they can vary according to country and/or culture. For example, in Turkey, the most commonly used random typing expression is "asdfghjkljhgfds" and its variations (Yakar, 2022).

dia. Among the top-performing students, M.İ.K. was announced as the first-place winner in the equal weight and verbal fields. On the same day, interviews were conducted with some of these high achievers through traditional and new media outlets. M.İ.K. was among the students interviewed. This study focuses on the content of comments that emerged abruptly on Platform X following the publication of the interview recording with M.İ.K. in the media. The majority of these comments were found to contain hate speech targeting M.İ.K., including expressions that amounted to insults violating personal rights.

To analyze the comments, a search was conducted on X (formerly Twitter) on July 20, 2025—the day following the announcement of the YKS results on July 19, 2025—using the keyword “M.İ.K.”.⁴ From the search results, the post and its associated comments under the first institutional media profile listed in the “Popular” tab were accessed (Figure 1). The analysis of the comments was performed using the MAXQDA program. During this process, statistical data on the words used in the comments were first extracted, followed by the creation of interaction maps for the comments based on the themes and codes specified above.



Figure 1. Analyzed News and Source⁵
(Source: <https://x.com/>)⁶

According to the search results, all comments made on the main post within a single day were recorded and their texts were analyzed. Only the comments directly attached to the post shown in Figure 1 were included in the analysis. In other words, “reposts” and “comments on comments” were excluded from the analysis. Accordingly, a total of 340 posts were included in the analysis. As a noteworthy detail, the metrics displayed at the bottom of the post in Figure 1—“2K” (two thousand replies), “4K” (four thousand retweets), “8K” (eight thousand likes), and “41M” (forty-one million interactions)—indicate that the post received hundreds of times more interactions than the number of comments analyzed. As elaborated in the methodology section, the scope of the

research data was narrowed due to the impracticality of comprehensively analyzing such a vast volume of data in a study of this nature, as well as the risk of deviating from the research focus. In this context, the study exclusively encompasses direct comments on the relevant news post.

The analysis conducted using the MAXQDA software emerged through several distinct contextual processes. In the initial phase, all 340 comments made directly on the news post were recorded along with user information. In the second phase, the recorded data were cleansed of all extraneous information except the comment content, and the total word count across the comments was obtained. Accordingly, it was determined that 3,895 words were used ac-

⁴ The search was conducted using the unabbreviated version of the student’s name.

⁵ According to the YKS results announced on August 25, 2025, M.İ.K. was admitted to the law faculty at Galatasaray University, which was their desired program (Anadolu Agency, 2025).

⁶ Will be shared by the author upon request.

ross all 340 comments. The third phase involved a second round of filtering to remove words without standalone or contextual meaning, such as prepositions, numbers, adjectives, conjunctions, and random letter clusters. In the fourth phase, words were lemmatized (stripped of suffixes) and consolidated based on their root forms, with careful attention to

their semantic and contextual meanings within the text. During this process, priority was given to words with higher frequency counts. According to the analysis results, the top 60 most frequently used words (with the highest frequency counts) are as follows (Table 2):

Table 2. Words with a Frequency Count of 5 or More in the Comments (Top 60 Words)

S. No	Word	Frequency	S. No	Word	Frequency
1	child	81	31	eyes	11
2	study	65	32	to read	10
3	hour	54	33	question	9
4	frig (slang)	44	34	well	9
5	success	31	35	bro (slang)	8
6	human	28	36	man	8
7	looks	26	37	family	8
8	I am scared	25	38	God	8
9	comment	25	39	education	8
10	what is he/she saying	21	40	movement	7
11	young	21	41	friend	7
12	serial killer	21	42	solve questions	7
13	exam	21	43	bad	7
14	lesson	19	44	hell (slang)	7
15	life	18	45	normal	7
16	brother	17	46	social	7
17	resembles	15	47	video	7
18	psychological	15	48	YKS ⁷	7
19	type	15	49	open	6
20	school	14	50	asocial	6
21	congratulations	14	51	lawsuit	6
22	to want	13	52	degree	6
23	first	13	53	real	6
24	head	13	54	grok	6
24	turned	12	55	work	6
25	appearance	12	56	camera	6
26	law	12	57	talk	6
27	good	12	58	lie	6
28	fuck (slang)	12	59	hard	6
29	intelligence	12	60	pity	6
30	guy (slang)	11			

⁷ YKS: University entrance exam in Türkiye.

According to the word frequency analysis, the most frequently used word is "child" (f: 81). The top ten words in the list continue as follows: "study" (f: 65), "hour" (f: 54), "frig (slang)" (f: 44)⁸, "success" (f: 31), "human" (f: 28), "looks" (f: 26), "I am scared" (f: 25), "comment" (f: 25), "what is he/she saying" (f: 21), "young" (f: 21), "serial killer" (f: 21), "exam" (f: 21), and "lesson" (f: 19).

When the top ten words are examined, it is evident that, except for "success," most are contex-

tually neutral terms. However, the expressions “frig (slang)”, “I am scared” and “serial killer” carry directly negative connotations. When contextual proportions are taken into account, three out of every four words are associated with negative content. Applying the same logic to the other words in the table, assuming a negative contextual frame, a similar semantic field emerges. The word cloud of the table is presented below (Figure 2).

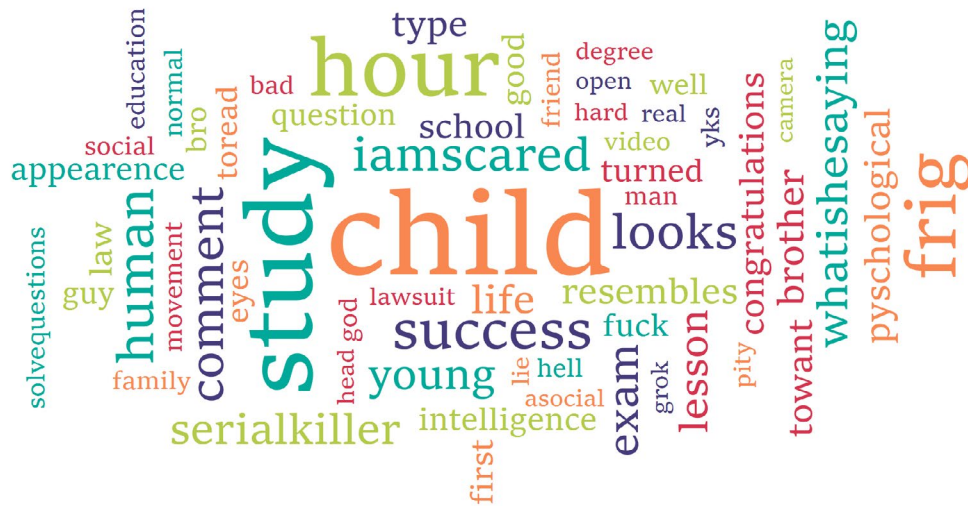


Figure 2. The Word Cloud of the Comments

When examining the words with a frequency of five or fewer that were consequently excluded from the table, the most salient observation concerns the negative remarks in user comments targeting the student's physical appearance, including facial features, expressions, ears, hair, and attire. Therefore, the overall negative trend of the comments related to the news article exceeds what is reflected in the above table. Additionally, this negative trend is supported by the visuals used. Some of these fear-themed images associated with the student's appearance

rance include fictional characters, while a significant portion feature photos of actual criminals. This issue is further elaborated in the later section of the study. Although certain words are absent from the above list, further analyses on the language used in the comments clarify the nature of the discourse. One such analysis concerns the references to M.I.K.'s physical characteristics. Among the most notable examples is the request by some users to ask and analyze M.I.K.'s video with Grok (f: 6) (Table 3).

Table 3. Example of an Analysis Request to Grok⁹

i...	"Can you analyze the face of the person in the video for me and tell me whether they are lying or not?"
Grok	"The facial expressions of M.İ.K. in the video appear natural, consistent, and sincere: slight smiles, direct gazes, and no signs of stress. No micro-expressions indicating lying (such as an asymmetric smile) are observed. His success has been confirmed by ÖSYM and news sources; his claim of studying 1–2 hours is supported by his family. He seems to be telling the truth."

Some of these expressions appear in the list, while others fall below the frequency threshold of 5 and are thus excluded. For example, several users disre-

garded the exam results and dared to analyze whether M.I.K.'s appearance was normal (Table 4).

⁸ This profane expression, which is frequently used in the colloquial language of society, has appeared in the comments in various direct forms. In the table, two words containing slang or vernacular usage have been censored by the authors.

⁹ In the examples here, the identities of the commentators, such as their names and usernames, along with the profane obscenities and severe insults contained in their comments, have been censored in accordance with ethical standards and the publication policies of Romaya Journal. This information will be made available by the authors upon request.

Table 4. Example of an Analysis Conducted with Expert Confidence Based on M.İ.K.'s Appearance

G...	"Honestly, he doesn't look like a normal person at all. His eyes and facial expressions give off some crazy psycho shit."
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Expanding on this, many users made comments alleging that M.İ.K.'s eyebrows (f: 4), ears (f: 4), mouth (f: 4), brain (f:), lips (f: 3), face (f: 3), hair (f: 2), fore-head (f: 1), beard (f: 1), and physiognomy (e.g., Asperger syndrome, scoliosis f: 1, etc.) were abnormal (Table 5).

Table 5. Example of Discourse Framing M.İ.K. as 'Dangerous' Based on Appearance

P...	"The messy hair, beard, and eyebrows, that weird smile at the camera, the dead stares, the f...-up eye contact — this kid needs to be watched by the cops on a regular basis."
-------------	--

The expressions based on his appearance—such as zombie (f: 5), ugly (f: 4), FETÖ supporter (f:), dangerous (f: 3), idiot (f: 2), scary (f: 2), pervert, stupid, sociopath, moron, monster, devil, moron, imbecile, etc.—reach the level of outright insults. Some users went even further by insinuating illness based on his speech, facial expressions, and movements, accusing him of alcohol (f: 2) and drug (f: 4) use (Table 6). Calls from certain users urging authorities to intervene illustrate the extent of digital lynching culture—or in other words, the ignorance and cruelty of offensive humor culture.

Table 6. Discourse Claiming M.İ.K. Has a Psychological Disorder

....	"There's something wrong with this p..., he's got the potential to turn into a serial killer."
Q...	"These guys usually pop 2–3 different pills — prescription ADHD meds — just to focus."

As illustrated in Table 1, the word-based analysis provides a clear picture of the use of offensive humor in the comments. Indeed, the example comment sentences above confirm this observation. Consequently, offensive humor operates at a more advanced level when examined in full sentences. Upon reviewing the comments, it is evident that the constructed sentences contain hate speech—including explicit profanity, insults, and degradation—without any restraint (Table 7).

Table 7. Examples of Offensive Humor Comments

B...	"S... it up your eyebrows, stop flexing, a...."
R...	"You, f.... rotten from reading, hair hasn't even seen a comb — and you're on TV. How many times is this gonna happen to you?"
@n...	"That m...f... g... couldn't even get a haircut from studying too much, and now he's bulls-hitting, f..."
L...	"Look at his face, f..., in his spare time, r... puppies and drinks their b.... you wouldn't trust him with the corner shop."
R...	"If everyone's saying the same thing, you gotta stop and think — it looked weird to me too, his expressions and that look in his eyes, like he's on something."

While the comments on the news article largely frame a predominantly lynching culture, as seen above, a significant portion of the comments also express opposing views. These comments emphasize that the insults and profanity directed at a young individual constitute a major legal, ethical, and moral problem. This insensitivity, which manifests as digital bullying and uses humor as a shield, is a manifestation of virtual-social decay. Furthermore, within these comments, there are suggestions that M.İ.K. and his family should resort to legal avenues against the insults and profanity directed at them.

A limited number of examples (Table 7) have been provided to illustrate the full context of the com-

ments and/or the manifestation of sentences within the framework of offensive humor. On the other hand, thematic coding was employed to outline a general framework of all posts in the context of offensive humor. This approach aimed to reveal a clearer picture through relationship density maps that highlight the semantic weight prevalent across the comments. For this purpose, codes were developed and applied to the comments on the news post to obtain an overarching perspective. The quantitative representation of the coding is visualized through a code cloud and the matrix of the coding system, as shown below (Figure 3).

Code System	YKS Document	SUM
Gender Distribution		0
Female	122	122
Male	198	198
Gender Not Specified	19	19
Identity Information		0
Real	83	83
Anonymous	257	257
Comment Distribution		0
Positive	83	83
Negative	247	247
Comment Content		0
Hate Speech	122	122
Praise/Swear	60	60
Insult	61	61
Image	16	16
Humor	83	83
Neutral	47	47
Support	80	80
SUM	1478	1478



Figure 3. Code Matrix Browser and Code Cloud

At the outset of the analysis, four themes and fourteen codes under these themes were established. According to Figure 3, the highest frequency of coding in the comments is attributed to the anonymous code (257 occurrences). This is followed by negative

(247), male (198), female (123), and hate speech (122) codes.

In addition to Figure 3, the relational distribution among other codes within the entirety of the coded comments is illustrated below (Figure 4).

Code System	Female	Male	Gender Not Specified	Real	Anonymous	Positive	Negative	Hate Speech	Praise/Swear	Insult	Image	Humor	Neutral	Support	SUM
Gender Distribution															0
Female		1		19	96	44	68	36	12	12	5	21	11	44	369
Male	1			61	137	34	158	74	45	44	10	58	34	30	686
Gender Not Specified				1	18	4	15	7	1	3		4	2	5	60
Identity Information															0
Real	19	61	1		3	27	55	26	12	14	2	20	15	24	279
Anonymous	96	137	18	3		58	193	97	48	48	14	63	32	57	864
Comment Distribution															0
Positive	44	34	4	27	58		3	2	8	3		4	8	74	269
Negative	68	158	15	55	193	3		120	50	59	16	76	34	7	854
Comment Content															0
Hate Speech	36	74	7	26	97	2	120		39	43	2	22	1		469
Praise/Swear	12	45	1	12	48	8	50	39		22	2	11	1	7	258
Insult	12	44	3	14	48	3	59	43	22		2	15		2	267
Image	5	10		2	14		16	2	2	2		12			65
Humor	21	58	4	20	63	4	76	22	11	15	12		9	1	316
Neutral	11	34	2	15	32	8	34	1	1			9		2	149
Support	44	30	5	24	57	74	7		7	2		1	2		253
SUM	0	369	686	60	0	279	864	0	269	854	0	469	258	267	5158

Figure 4. Code Relation Browser¹⁰

In Figure 4, the top five codes with the highest intersection/interaction frequencies, starting from the highest, are anonymous (f: 864), negative (f: 854), male (f: 686), hate speech (f: 469), and female (f: 369). These five codes also intersect with each other, revealing the most intense semantic interaction. The negative code most frequently intersects with the following codes, in order: anonymous (f: 193), male

(f: 158), and hate speech (f: 120). The second-ranked anonymous code most frequently intersects with male (f: 137), hate speech (f: 97), and female (f: 96). Excluding the male and female codes as agents, the anonymous (identity concealment), negative (malicious comments), and hate speech (malevolent remarks) codes directly reflect a distinctly negative semantic domain.

Table 7. Examples of Offensive Humor Comments

Gender	Name		Total
	Anonymous	Real	
Female	103	20	123
Male	137	61	198
Unknown	19	1	19
Total	258	82	340

¹⁰ In Figure 4, it is observed that the codes for both female and male are assigned simultaneously. This is due to one of the commenting accounts being a shared account. Indeed, the profile image and name associated with this account contain data indicative of both female and male identities.

According to Table 8, between July 19 and July 20, 2025, a total of 340 distinct X users directly commented on the news post. For the majority of these users, their gender could be directly identified as female (123) or male (198) based on their profile pictures and names. On the other hand, a small number of users (19) had profiles where gender was not clearly discernible at first glance.

The most striking observation is that a significant portion of users who did not conceal their gender still used anonymous accounts (258 out of 340). In other words, three out of every four users did not display their real identities on their profiles; instead, they used first names without surnames, names of celebrities, fabricated expressions formed by adding to existing names or words, abbreviations, meaningless letter combinations, and/or symbols.

The code co-occurrence maps generated from the

coding results provide clearer insights into the content of the comments. The general code co-occurrence map for all codes is presented below (Figure 5). These maps visually represent how frequently codes appear together within the text (co-coding), illustrating the intensity of their relationships through graphical means. Such visualizations reveal the overall semantic tendencies of the coded text. In coding analysis, a high degree of interaction (co-occurrence/relationship) is interpreted as a strong semantic connection, whereas low interaction indicates a weaker connection. The spatial proximity of codes on the map similarly reflects semantic closeness: the closer the codes are positioned, the stronger their relationship and thus their shared meaning. Conversely, greater distance between codes signifies a weaker relationship and diminished semantic association (Altıntop & Altıntop, 2024).

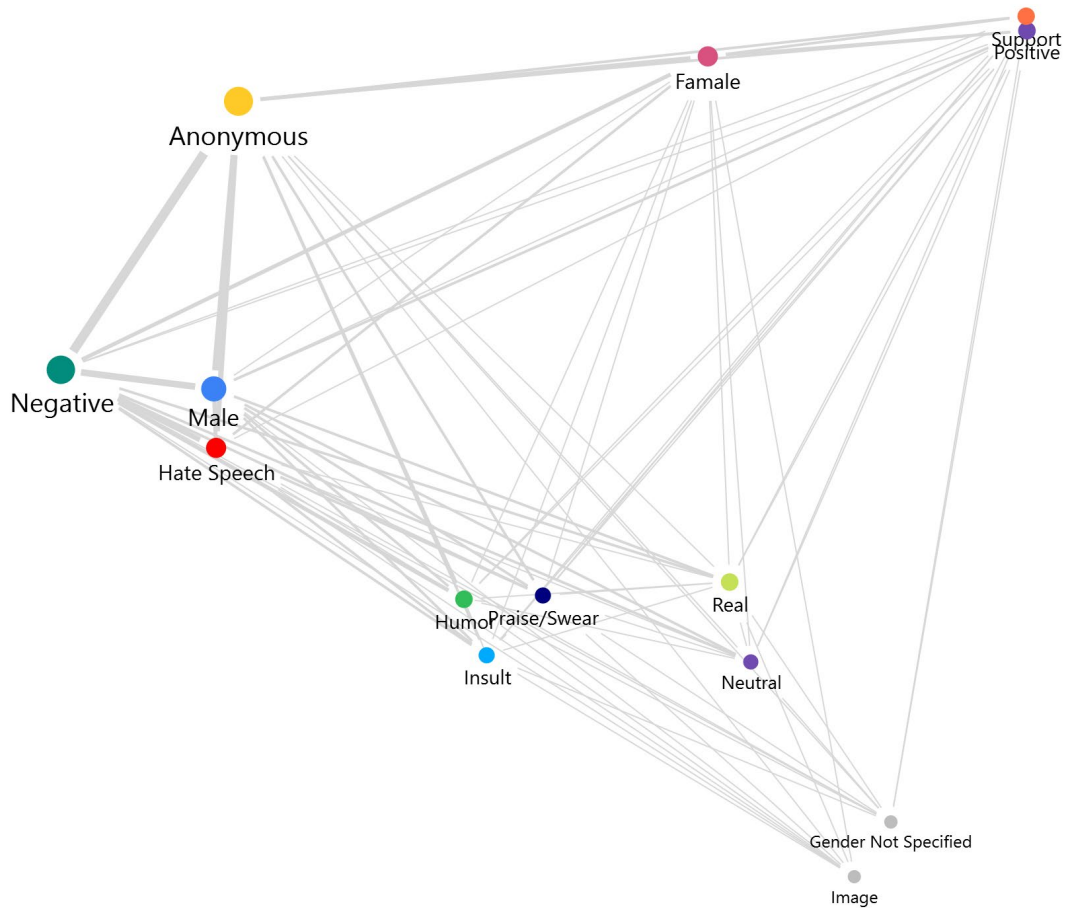


Figure 5. Code Co-Occurrence Map Covering All Themes

The colored nodes (points) shown in the map in Figure 10 represent the codes. The lines between the nodes indicate that these codes co-occurred within the same data segment. The size of the nodes and the thickness of the lines are directly proportional to the frequency of co-occurrence, reflecting the strength of the relationship. Conversely, smaller nodes and thinner lines indicate weaker relationships.

In this context, the map reveals three main clusters and one more distant cluster.

Examining the strongest “central cluster” of coding, it is evident that it predominantly represents negative meanings, containing the codes for negative, anonymous, hate speech, and male. The dense connections here mark the core semantic content of the analyzed text. The second cluster uncovers a dis-

course that can be described as “offensive humor.” This cluster includes the codes for humorous, slang/profanity, and insult, which have strong links to the central cluster and are also semantically associated with negativity.

The third cluster, which can be defined as an “isolated cluster,” consists of the codes female, positive, and support. This cluster represents the area of positive meaning within the text and on the map. However, the female code’s strong interactions with both the central and offensive humor clusters suggest that comments coded with “female” lie in an intermediate position between positive and negative meanings. In other words, the thematic domain

represented by the female code is situated between these two semantic poles.

The fourth and final cluster, referred to as the “distant cluster,” includes the codes ambiguous, visual, neutral, and real. While this cluster interacts with all others, it shows relatively stronger connections with the central and offensive humor clusters, positioning it closer to the semantic space created by these two clusters.

To illustrate the relationship between the nature of the comments and gender distribution, the code co-occurrence map covering the Gender Distribution and Comment Content themes is presented below (Figure 6).

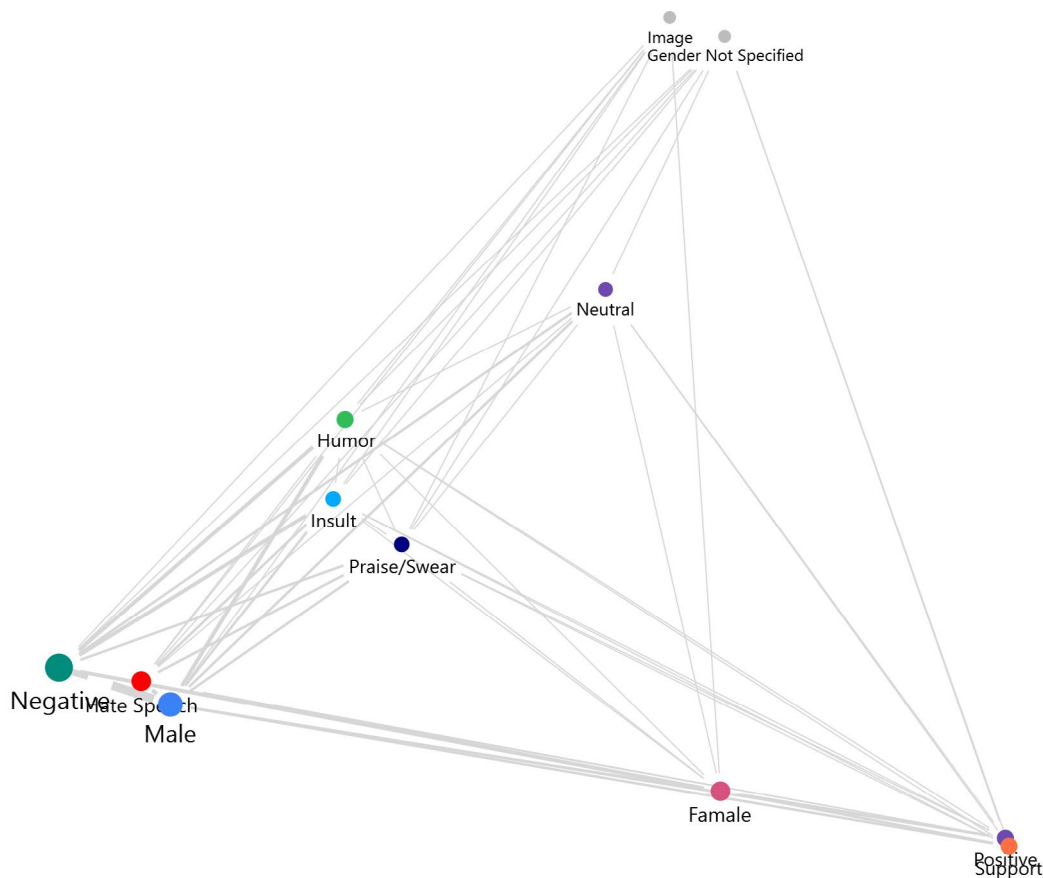


Figure 6. Code Co-occurrence Map Limited to the Themes of Gender Distribution, Comment Distribution, and Comment Content

In the limited map shown in Figure 6, four distinct clusters can be observed. The central cluster, formed predominantly around the Male code, exhibits the highest degree of intersections. Other codes within this cluster, such as Hate Speech, Insult, and Slang/Profanity, further confirm that negativity is the strongest thematic interaction in this map. The proximity and strong co-occurrence of the Humor code with this negatively oriented central cluster highlight the offensive humor dimension. Although the Female and Support codes demonstrate relatively strong intersections, their positioning on the periphery forms an isolated cluster. In other words, as also understood from the previous analysis, the cluster formed by these codes—characterized mainly by positive ten-

dencies—does not dominate the overall semantic landscape of the comments. The fourth cluster, consisting of Visual, Neutral, and Undetermined codes, forms a distant cluster with weak intersection links.

A general evaluation of this map reveals that the backbone of the network is formed by the Male-Humor-Insult-Hate Speech-Slang/Profanity axis. This axis represents the negative/critical/humorous-offensive discourses frequently co-occurring in the dataset. Conversely, the Female-Support axis, associated with positive/supportive expressions, remains isolated on the margins and thus has limited influence on the overall meaning. Although the Undetermined, Neutral, and Visual codes show scattered and weak connections, their relative closeness to

the Male-Humor-Insult-Hate Speech-Slang/Profanity axis contributes semantically to the negative context.

One of the most significant findings from this map concerns the isolated cluster characterized by positive meanings. According to the Gender Distribution theme, the Female code is distinctly separated from the Male code, which is embedded within the negatively loaded central cluster, and instead appears in the positively loaded cluster. In other words, women commenting on the news item were less in-

involved in the lynching culture and tended to post comments supportive of the targeted individual. Conversely, the language used by men contained more elements of offensive humor compared to that of women. Therefore, men contributed more frequently to comments containing hate speech, insults, and slang/profanity.

To reveal the semantic map within the comments themselves, the Comment Distribution and Comment Content themes were jointly analyzed (Figure 7).

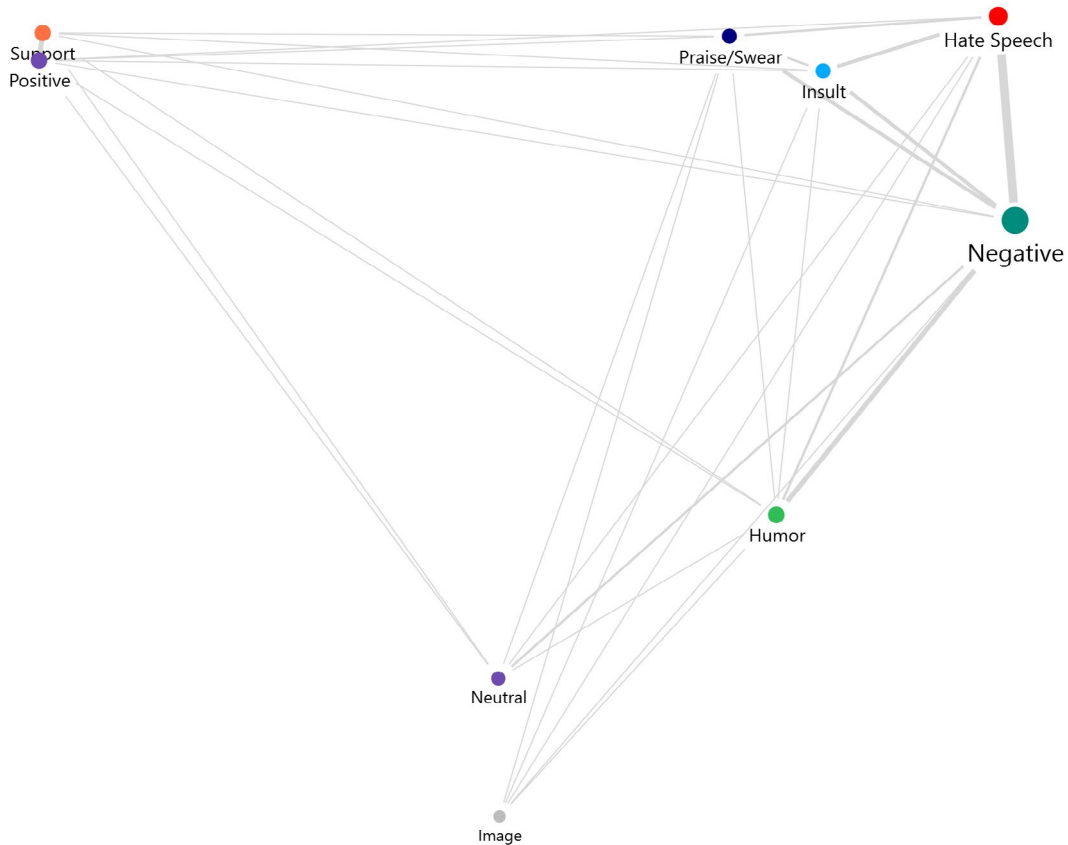


Figure 7. Intersection Map of the Comment Distribution and Comment Content Themes

In the map shown in Figure 7, four clusters are again observed. The node with the highest frequency of intersections in the central cluster is the Negative code. Surrounding this axis are the Hate Speech, Insult, and Profanity/Swearing codes. The proximity and strong relational intensity between the Humorous code and the central cluster indicate that the language used in the comments is of an offensively humorous nature. In other words, this language is malicious, aggressive, provocative, and derogatory. The Positive and Support codes form the distant cluster on the map. The distance of this cluster from the center diminishes the influence of positive semantic content within the overall text. The Neutral and Visual codes constitute a weak cluster; however, their connection to the central cluster reinforces the

negative semantic space.

Figure 8, which presents an analysis solely of the Comment Content theme, further clarifies these evaluations. In this visual, five distinct clusters—central, intermediate, and distant—can be seen. The core node of the general comment content is the Hate Speech code, with Insult and Profanity/Swearing codes positioned within the cluster. The negative semantic space, together with the Humorous code in strong relation to the central cluster, reveals the overall tendency of the comments and the offensiveness in the language used. The network connections between the Visual and Neutral codes from the distant clusters to the central code further reinforce this situation.

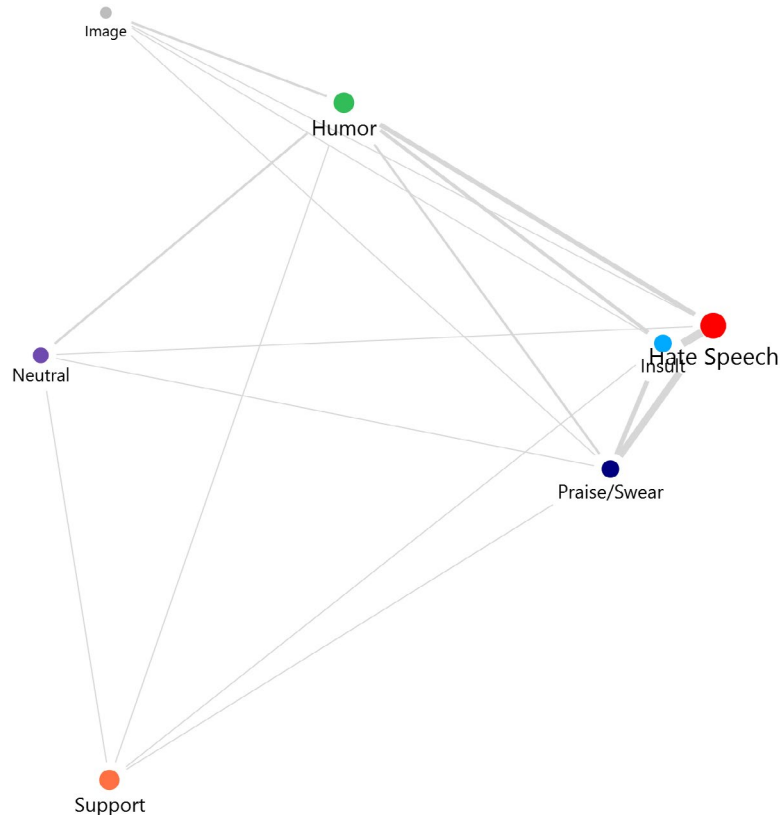


Figure 8. Intersection Map Within the Comments Themselves

This map reveals two important details. The first is that the Support code, which forms the third distant cluster, is linked to the central cluster only through the Profanity/Swearing code. This implies that individuals who react rationally against the offensive humor language and thus the digital lynching behavior have expressed their responses using language that includes profanity and swearing. In other words, to defend and support the person subjected to the lynching, an opposing offensive language has been used against those who carry out the lynching. However, as also seen on the map, this language does not intersect with the Humor cluster or code. Therefore, this offensive reaction should not be classified as offensive humor and, although it interacts with a cluster containing negative language, it should generally be considered outside the offensive humor axis.

The second detail is that the Visual distant cluster or code is linked exclusively to the Humor cluster or code. This relationship arises from the selection of visual elements attached to the comments in a manner that emphasizes their humorous aspect. Upon examination of the visual elements in the comments, it is observed that they predominantly consist of photographs of individuals captured as serial killers in real life, fictional killer characters from films, books, or other works of fiction, as well as manipulative images that have become trends on social media. This tendency in the visuals constitutes direct offensive humor. It is otherwise difficult to explain the association of the image and speech of a high school student who ranked in a national exam with these names. Indeed, the names listed in comments, whether accompanied by images or solely textual, confirm this observation (Table 9).

Table 9. Real and Fictional Characters Associated with M.İ.K. in Comments¹¹

Name	Frequency	Explanation
The man who appears in everyone's dreams	3	The imaginary male figure that became an internet legend in 2006, claimed by many to have appeared in their dreams.
Charles Manson	2	The leader of the Manson Family cult in the 1960s, an American criminal who orchestrated numerous murders.
Joker	2	A fictional criminal mastermind who is Batman's arch-nemesis in the DC Comics universe.

¹¹ The names associated with M.İ.K. are not limited to those listed above. For example, actor Nejat İşler (f: 1) has been linked with an implication of alcohol addiction, and singer Teoman (f: 1) with an implication of depression. Some users who did not make negative comments have associated M.İ.K. with Cansel Elçin (f: 4), Mehmet Erdem (f: 2), and Halil İbrahim Ceyhan (f: 1) due to perceived resemblance.

Frankenstein	2	A fictional monster created by the scientist Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's 1818 novel.
Richard Ramirez	1	An American serial killer and rapist known as the "Night Stalker" in the 1980s.
Joe Goldberg	1	A fictional character from the Netflix series You, who is obsessive and homicidal beyond just being dangerous.
Dahmer	1	Jeffrey Dahmer, an American serial killer who murdered 17 people between 1978 and 1991.
Dexter	1	The main character of the TV series Dexter, a fictional figure who works as a forensic expert by day and a serial killer by night.
Kubrick	1	Stanley Kubrick was an American film director known for his use of dark visual and thematic elements. His films, which predominantly focus on thriller, crime, war, and drama genres, are noted for their high psychological depth.
Tarantino	1	Quentin Tarantino is an American film director known for his dialogue-heavy and violence-intensive movies.
Godskin Noble	1	A boss character from the video game "Elden Ring."
Norman Bates		He is a fictional character adapted from American writer Robert Bloch's 1959 novel of the same name, and became especially famous through Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 film Psycho. He has formed a deep, pathological identification with his mother's personality in his mind, and is portrayed as highly introverted, socially inept, and psychologically unstable."
Ted Bundy	1	A notorious American serial killer from the 1970s who murdered numerous women.
Saddam Hüseyin	1	A politician who served as the fifth President of Iraq from 1979 to 2003, known for his authoritarian rule and the 2003 Iraq War.
Mehmet Pişkin	1	A person who came into the spotlight in 2014 with a suicide video in which they revealed their psychological struggles and feelings of life's meaninglessness, whose life and death sparked widespread reactions in Turkey.
Cem Garipoğlu	1	The defendant in a high-profile case in Turkey, known as the perpetrator of the murder of Münevver Karabulut in 2009.
Semih Çelik	1	The individual who, in 2024, killed İkbâl Uzuner and Ayşenur Halil before committing suicide.

The above findings demonstrate that users of the social media platform X employ a humorous style while engaging in discourse that disregards personal rights, easily overlooking empathy, moral and ethical values, social norms, and legal frameworks. Consequently, online mob culture and offensive humor emerge as interrelated phenomena that often reinforce and intertwine with each other. Mob culture has the potential to rapidly target individuals or groups, while offensive humor serves to provoke and intensify this hostile environment. This interaction poses risks of psychological and social harm. Therefore, multilayered intervention and prevention strategies are necessary, including individual ethical responsibility, media literacy, artificial intelligence literacy, platform regulation, and the restructuring of algorithms. It is clear that beyond individual accountability, systematic measures at institutional and societal levels are also urgently needed.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study revealed how the culture of online mobbing (digital lynching) emerges within the context of offensive humor on social media, which social dynamics shape this phenomenon, and which forms of interaction become prominent in this process. The research demonstrates that offensive humor is not merely an individual mode of expression; rather, it functions as a communicative tool through which social relations, power structures, and cultural norms are reproduced. The analyses showed that although offensive humor content produced and shared on social media sometimes remains within the bounds of social critique and humor, it often lays the groundwork for the spread of mob culture and the defamation of targeted individuals or groups.

The findings indicate that the culture of online mobbing is not limited to interpersonal interactions;

instead, it becomes a repetitive, circulated, and reinforced practice by broad networks of users. This shows that content created online is not merely a series of instantaneous reactions but rather a process that embeds itself in social memory and produces long-term psychological, social, and cultural effects on targeted groups. In this context, offensive humor becomes a vehicle for both individual reactions and collective mobilizations to gain visibility.

A key outcome of the study is the direct impact of social media platforms' technical operations, content flow algorithms, and interaction-promoting structures on the proliferation of mob culture. Specifically, the increased visibility of highly engaging offensive content facilitates its spread to wider audiences, thereby accelerating the expansion of mob culture. Additionally, anonymity and identity-masking possibilities on social media enable users to employ harsher, degrading, and aggressive expressions more freely, legitimizing and normalizing the culture of mobbing.

Another significant finding highlights that the boundaries of offensive humor vary across societies and even among different social groups within the same society. This underscores the importance of cultural context, social sensitivities, and past experiences in shaping perceptions of offensive humor. Consequently, the same expression or humorous element may be regarded as critical and creative by one group, yet perceived as hostile, derogatory, and exclusionary by another.

The study also reveals that offensive humor may exacerbate social polarization, reinforcing existing prejudices and further marginalizing targeted groups. This negatively affects both individuals' online experiences and the overall climate of societal communication. The persistence of mob culture contributes to the weakening of tolerance- and empathy-based communication on digital platforms, complicating constructive debate between opposing views and narrowing the channels of social dialogue.

In conclusion, this research identifies the intersections between mob culture and offensive humor on social media, demonstrating that digital communication environments undergo a transformative process with both individual and societal consequences. The findings emphasize the importance of social media users acting more responsibly in content creation and sharing, platform administrators developing content policies grounded in ethical principles, and public awareness efforts aimed at promoting conscious online communication. In this regard, the study offers significant insights relevant both to academia and social practices.

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Exit the Ballets Russes: Fernand Léger's Depiction of Modern Society

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Abstract

With the impact of the Industrial Revolution, significant societal and individual transformations occurred in 20th-century Europe. These transformations also manifested in art. One of the important topics to be considered within this context is the aesthetics of machines, and the form of the machine plays a central role in the works of many artists. In this context, the aim of this study is to examine Fernand Léger's work named "Exit the Ballets Russes" in both formal and sociological terms, revealing how 20th-century modern society is represented through art. In line with this purpose, the study is based on the analysis and interpretation of data obtained through a comprehensive review of the literature on the conditions of the period in which the work was produced, machine aesthetics, and the artist. Based

on the obtained data, the artist's relevant work is analyzed within the framework of pre-iconographic examination, iconographic description, and iconological interpretation stages, based on Erwin Panofsky's Iconographic and Iconological Criticism Method. The analysis indicates that the symbols created through the design elements in Léger's work clearly reflected the social and economic changes that happened as society moved into the modern era, the new role of individuals adapting to these changes, and a world influenced by machine aesthetics.

Keywords: 20th Century, Fernand Léger, Erwin Panofsky.

JEL Codes: Z11, O14, O33

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1. Introduction

20th-century Europe underwent a multifaceted process of change marked by significant transformations in social structure. During this period, as a result of the Industrial Revolution, urbanization, technological advancements, and mechanization became the defining elements of daily life. Radical transformations occurred in almost every field. With modernity, the individual broke away from traditional ties and had to reconstruct themselves within the social order. This process signified not only a societal but also a cultural and aesthetic rupture. Art was also affected by this transformation, where artists turned to new explorations.

One of the responses to modernization in the plastic arts, the aesthetics of the machine, emerged as a significant trend in 20th-century art. This understanding particularly emerged through avant-garde movements such as Cubism and Futurism, carrying the logic of industrial production into the language of art through formal approaches. The machine settled in the center of art not only as a motif representing production tools but also as an aesthetic model symbolizing modernity. Avant-garde artists sometimes regarded the machine as a source that glorifies individuality and at other times as a threat that destroys it. In this context, societal transformations directly influenced art, turning it into a valuable tool for reflecting modern society. At this point, the French painter Fernand Léger, as one of the leading artists of the period, developed an original pictorial language that addressed these transformations in both form and content.

Starting his education in the field of architecture, Léger soon turned to painting. As a result of his interactions with the Cubist circles in Paris, he embraced the artistic understanding of this movement. Over time, the unique approach he developed gained a structure based on machine aesthetics, where geometric shapes, vibrant colors, and industry-based forms came together (Fauchereau, 1994). The experiences he gained on the front lines during World War I deepened his artistic inclinations and led him to establish a direct connection between the destructiveness of war and the reality of a mechanized world (Fauchereau, 1994). Especially after World War I, Fernand Léger's paintings were mostly composed of machines and machine parts arranged together with human figures (Şiray, 2022). In this context, Léger's 1914 piece "Exit the Ballets Russes" is a notable illustration of how modern life is portrayed in this regard. This artwork, with its fragmented forms, figures arranged in succession, and rhythmic composition, embodies both the principles of Cubist aesthetics and the visual logic of the machine age. In this context, the research problem is concerned with how the artist represents the sociological transformations of modern society and how this representation

can be related to the changes in the social structure of the era. The aim of this study is to examine the work in question in a formal and sociological context, revealing how 20th-century modern society is represented through art.

2. Conceptual Framework

This study examines the impacts of modernization, industrialization, and urbanization in 20th-century Europe, along with the connections between these impacts and their artistic representations. The connection between art and socioeconomic changes has become particularly apparent in a novel visual language influenced by particular machine aesthetics. When considered in light of this visual language, Fernand Léger's works reflect the industrial age, modern society, and the individual's condition.

Léger's work named "Exit the Ballets Russes" makes this relationship between the formal elements of art and the sociological dynamics of the period visible. It turns into a multi-layered expression tool that questions the individual's positioning within the social order through machine aesthetics. Therefore, to understand the purpose and topics of this study, it is necessary to first examine the social structure of 20th-century Europe, the use of machine aesthetics in 20th-century painting, and Fernand Léger's artistic ideas within Cubism.

2.1. 20th-Century Europe from a Social Perspective

20th-century Europe was a period that witnessed one of the greatest social, political, and cultural upheavals in human history, marked by profound transformations. The industrial breakthroughs, technological developments, urbanization, world wars, and global economic crises radically redefined the individual-society relationship. Modernization became the key to this era, creating a new social form, economic structure, and intellectual grounds. In this process, the individual became alienated from both society and oneself, beginning to question their place and identity in a rapidly changing world. This questioning was effective not only on an individual level but also on a collective level. Both sociological theories and philosophical approaches formed the fundamental parameters of this transformation while trying to understand the 20th century.

The process of modernization can be defined as a mental change that severs ties with the past and focuses on the "now." The author Hasan Aksakal (2015) described this process not only as industrialization or urbanization but also as a historical transformation that enables the individual's liberation in thought, law, and art, as well as the development of a questioning mind.

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Modernity, unlike traditional society, has an individual-centered structure and replaced the previously determining collective identities with individual consciousness and rationality. This process of individualization became particularly pronounced within the structural and cultural conditions of the modern city, leading to profound changes in the relationships individuals establish with their surroundings. Sociologist Georg Simmel, while analyzing the effects of modernity on urban individuals, drew attention to the psychological dimension of this transformation. He noted that life in large cities creates "mental fatigue" and excessive sensory overload in individuals. According to Simmel (2003), the individual feels the mental living conditions of vast environments, mutual distance, and indifference most acutely in the crowd of the big city. This alienation can be associated more with the individual's functional existence rather than their social ties. The material basis of this transformation is industrialization. With the industrial society, mechanized production has severed the individual's connection with their labor, causing them to become merely a small link in the production chain. This situation has resulted in a diminished sense of belonging for the individual, leading to alienation from both work and production. Thus, the person has gone from being an active participant to a mere object. Sociologist Fritz Pappenheim (2002) also associated this situation experienced by the modern individual with technology freeing itself from human control and following its own internal laws.

Another aspect of this transformation emerged during the process of urbanization. Cities transformed into spaces that were far from the face-to-face relationships of traditional society, becoming anonymous, functional, and fast-paced environments. At this point, the words of the author Server Tanilli (2007), stating that the modern city has become the center of industry and commerce, are quite significant. This situation changed the ways individuals socialize. While physical proximity among people increased, emotional and social distance deepened. Individuals became isolated among crowds, and the modern lifestyle pushed them into introspection. This dilemma is not only a psychological issue but also a sociological condition.

Sociologist Emile Durkheim evaluated this transformation process in the context of the social division of labor. According to him, in modern society, individuals are in a relationship of dependence arising from differences, not similarities. The division of labor establishes this differentiation and gives rise to organic solidarity. Accordingly, organic solidarity is a form of cohesion that emerges in structures where the parts of society, composed of individuals, differentiate from one another, and each individual assumes a unique function. This solidarity is possible not through the dissolution of individuals within a social personality but rather through each having

their own unique sphere of activity. As the division of labor develops and as individuals specialize, their dependence on society increases while their personal characteristics become more pronounced. This situation creates a system that ensures social cohesion, akin to the different but harmonious functioning organs of an organism (Durkheim, 2006).

The structural principles that transform the individual-society relationship of modernity have been regarded by thinkers like Durkheim as the source of positive social cohesion. However, it is also clear that this transformation has not always resulted in stable and peaceful outcomes in the historical context. The increase in social differentiation and functional integration has, in some cases, made visible the tensions between the desire of modernity for rational order and its destructive practices. The wars and mass destructions of the 20th century represent one of the harshest contradictions of modernity. Millions of people lost their lives in World War I, and the mobilization process directly affected the civilian population. According to Tanilli (2007), the birth rate in Europe decreased by forty percent during the war, while the death rate increased by thirty-seven percent. World War II, on the other hand, brought unprecedented levels of destruction. Zygmunt Bauman defined this situation as an inherent contradiction of modernity. According to Bauman (1997), the rationalizing structure of modern reason has become capable of planning mass extermination. In this context, the Holocaust was a cold-blooded extermination process organized by the technical rationality of modernity (Bauman, 1997). Currently, the ideals of order, development, and progress that modernity promised have experienced significant ethical degradation. The Great Depression of 1929 exposed the unstable structure of the capitalist system, leaving millions unemployed and triggering social unrest. The collapse of the economic structure shook individuals' sense of security, and in particular, caused deep disappointment among the lower classes.

The identity crisis, alienation, and loneliness experienced by the individual in these processes have triggered the rise of existentialism on the philosophical level. Bedia Akarsu's (1987) assertion that the modern individual has achieved numerous successes yet simultaneously faces the threat of losing everything underscores this inherent contradiction. This situation reveals that the individual is undergoing a profound reckoning not only with external regulations but also with their own inner existence.

According to Marshall Berman (1983), modernity presents the adventure, development, and possibilities for transforming ourselves, while simultaneously posing a threat to destroy what we currently possess, and this effectively summarizes the dilemma of our age in an impressive manner. These words also reveal the structural contradiction inherent in modernity. While modernization provides indivi-

duals with opportunities for liberation and self-actualization, it also introduces destructive dynamics that undermine their existential, cultural, and social foundations. Especially in 20th-century Europe, this distinctly experienced internal tension should also be considered as a period where the individual was simultaneously liberated and disregarded and where the soul was troubled while the new order was being established.

2.2. The Aesthetics of Machines in 20th Century Painting

The 20th century is a period characterized by modernity, which significantly transformed the world of arts. At the start of the century, substantial changes in Europe's social, political, and economic structures resulted in radical shifts within the field of arts. Artists, breaking away from traditional aesthetic understandings, developed a new language of expression that reflected the pace of modern life, technological transformations, and the phenomenon of urbanization. The machine's form became a key element in painting, both symbolically and formally. The machine became a focal point for artists, both as a representation of modernization and as an aesthetic model that redefines the visual language of art.

From this point on, it can first be stated that Cubism represents a radical break that shakes the structural and conceptual foundations of visual representation in Western art. Instead of traditional perspective, this approach, based on the analysis of objects from multiple viewpoints in time and space, aimed to deconstruct and reconstruct form (Antmen, 2009). This fragmentation process is directly related to the scientific developments of the period (Robbin, 2006; Henderson, 2007). Cubist artists included unseen structures in their pictorial narrative by simultaneously depicting objects from different angles on the surface. Thus, they produced a reality based not only on the eye but also on mental comprehension. As the author İsmail Tunalı (2013) pointed out, this approach turned into a formal analysis process with the aim of "breaking the old values brought by tradition." Art had now moved away from the effort of creating beautiful images and turned toward a realm where the formal structure itself carried value. This intellectual and formal understanding offered an aesthetic approach parallel to the fragmented, mechanized, and rationalized world of the industrial age. The geometric forms used in Cubism contributed to the creation of a visual language that overlapped with machine aesthetics by emphasizing the functional and structural aspects of objects.

After Cubism, Futurism, which developed as an aesthetic stance glorifying mechanization, speed, and technology as a reflection of the industry-based

transformations affecting 20th-century Europe, and the Futurist Manifesto published by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in 1909, can be referred to as a call for a radical transformation in art. The manifesto opposes the traditional understanding of art and focuses on dynamic elements of modern life such as speed, energy, and aggression. Industry, automobiles, factories, airplanes, and trains, as modern technological tools, have been presented as new aesthetic elements that should transform not only life but also art. In the Futurist approach, art is no longer an expression of traditional values but it is an expression of technology, mechanization, and the energetic rhythm of the modern human. Marinetti's manifesto, while painting an aestheticized portrait of this new world, argues that art must also keep pace with this dynamism (Apollonio, 1973).

Similarly, the Constructivist movement that developed in Russia aimed to transcend art as an aesthetic representation and integrate it with technology, engineering, and industry. In this direction, artists shifted from the understanding of plastic form to the laws of mechanical necessity. Geometric precision and industry-based structures became the fundamental determinants of artistic production. The concept of "construction" was considered not only as a visual form but also as a material assembly and functional mechanism, and art was redefined within a structural and production process (Rowell & Rudenstine, 1981).

During this period, design schools in Europe, particularly the Bauhaus School, placed the technical possibilities brought by mechanization at the center of artistic production, making machine aesthetics a guiding principle not only in architecture but also in all visual fields, from furniture to everyday object design. This understanding, which advocated for a holistic relationship between design and life, aimed to transform the new tools offered by industrialization into an aesthetic language and brought art and technology together for the first time with such a holistic approach (Gropius, 1965).

To clarify what is meant by the expression of the machine transforming into an aesthetic language in art, one of the important examples of this understanding that can be mentioned is Fernand Léger's work named "Soldiers Playing Cards" (Figure 1). This work has a structure dominated by cylindrical forms and light-shadow modeling. Fernand Léger constructs the entire surface in a regular and functional manner, drawing inspiration from the parts of military machines. Color vibrations and ambiguous transitions are not allowed. Instead, clarity, sharpness, and structural rigidity take precedence. The composition is constructed with architectural precision, and the forms are assembled as if they were components of a war machine working in harmony (Kuh, 1953).



Figure 1. Fernand Léger, *Soldiers Playing Cards*, Oil on Canvas, 1917, 129.5x194.5 cm (*Soldiers Playing Cards*, n.d.)

In addition to Léger's paintings created with machine forms, many artists of the same period also developed various approaches based on machine aesthetics. This situation shows that the machine form was not merely an expression tool unique to Léger but rather a part of a broader aesthetic movement reflecting the spirit of the era. As a first example, Francis Picabia's work named "Love Parade" offers an ironic approach to the superficiality of modern

life by reducing human relationships to mechanical processes, where love is represented as a functional system through interconnected machine parts (Figure 2). In Charles Demuth's work named "Machinery," an ordinary industrial object is reinterpreted within an abstract rhythm organized by geometric shapes. Thus, industrial aesthetics are transformed into a visual language both in terms of formal balance and conceptual level (Figure 3). In Paul Klee's 1922 work

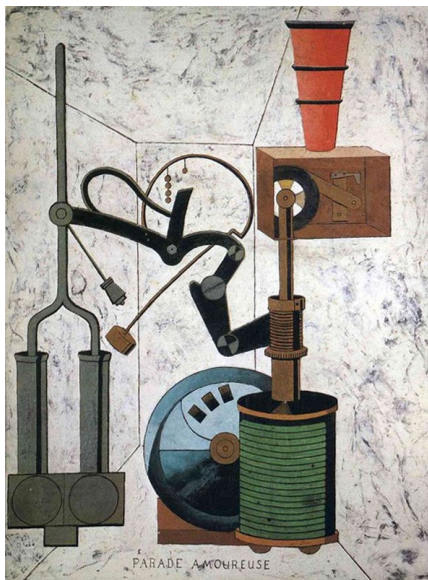


Figure 2. Francis Picabia, *Love Parade*, Oil on Cardboard, 1917, 96.5x73.7 cm (Holzwarth, 2016, p. 283)



Figure 3. Charles Demuth, *Machinery*, Opaque Watercolor and Graphite on Board, 61x50.5 cm (*Machinery*, n.d.)

"Twittering Machine," birds, which represent nature and organic life, are depicted as being connected to a machine, symbolizing the replacement of what is natural by what is artificial (Figure 4). In this context, chirping is no longer a natural sound coming from nature, but it is an artificial tone emanating from a mechanical device. Klee's representation offers a glimpse into how the modern age transforms the natural. A similar approach can also be seen in Otto Umbehr's photomontage named "the Racing

Reporter" (Figure 5). Here, the human figure merges with technological symbols like an airplane, a clock, and a car, essentially transforming into a biomechanical entity. Umbehr's composition presents the individual as a figure empowered by technological tools. Both works demonstrate that machine forms are used not merely as a formal choice but to conceptually question the effects of modernization on individuals and society.

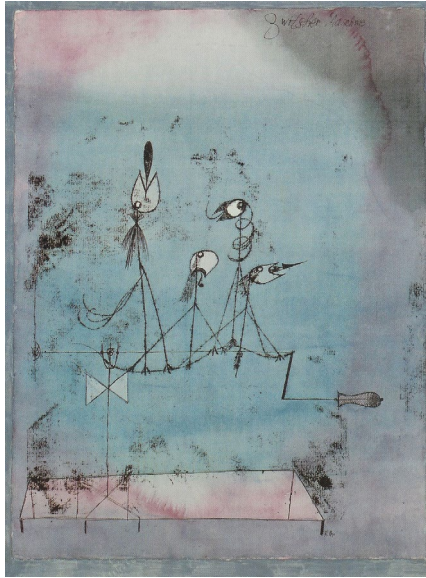


Figure 4. Paul Klee, *Twittering Machine*, Oil Transfer Drawing, Watercolor, and Ink on Paper with Gouache and Ink Borders on Board, 1922, 64.1x48.3 cm (*Twittering Machine*, n.d.)

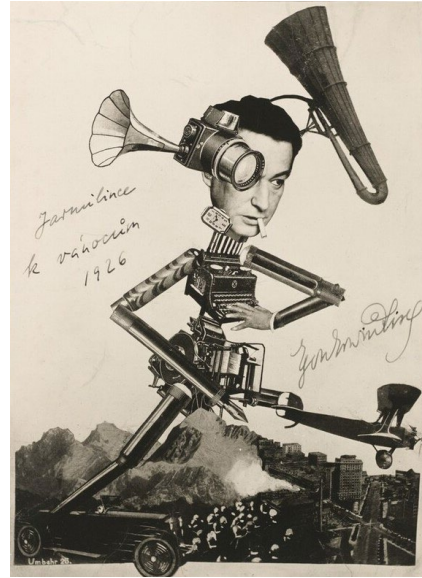


Figure 5. Otto Umbehrr, *The Racing Reporter*, Gelatin Silver Print of Photomontage, 1926, 28.6x20.5 cm (*The Racing Reporter*, n.d.)

The reasons for the intensive use of the machine form in 20th-century European painting are multi-layered. First and foremost, the machine is one of the fundamental symbols of modernity. Machines that accelerate daily life, increase production, and transform social structures have shaped not only the environment of modern humans but also their sensitivities. Artists could not ignore this transformation and incorporated the machine into their works from a perspective that either glorified or questioned it. Secondly, the formal structure of the machine became a new aesthetic source for artists. Finally, the machine also emerged as a metaphor symbolizing the tensions between the individual and society, the natural and the artificial, and humanity and technology. The machine's aesthetics were now a theme and a form of expression.

2.3. The Aesthetic Language of the Machine: Fernand Léger in a Cubist Context

Developed in the early 20th century under the leadership of Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso, Cubism is an expression of a radical break that shook the centuries-old representational system of Western art. Cubism, by deviating from traditional perspective, developed a new visual language based on the principle of multiple viewpoints, understanding objects based on changing angles in time and space instead of depicting them from a fixed viewpoint. Cubists depicted nature conceptually, as opposed to descriptively, on the two-dimensional pictorial surface. By displaying an object from several perspectives at once, they added a sort of four-dimensional comprehension to the picture. This revolutionary break accelerated the transition from representational reality to pictorial reality, grounding art not only

in what the eye sees but also in the forms constructed by the mind (Antmen, 2009).

The concept of the fourth dimension that Antmen pointed to is not only an artistic orientation but also closely related to the scientific developments of the time. As noted in the book "Shadows of Reality," European artists in the early 20th century incorporated concepts such as multidimensional geometry, non-Euclidean space, and n-dimensional structures into their aesthetic language, and this directly influenced the development of Cubism (Robbin, 2006). Art historian Linda Dalrymple Henderson, drawing attention to the scientific roots of this trend, stated that Cubist and Futurist painters were inspired by the effect of X-rays in making solid matter transparent. According to Henderson (2007), this method, which makes invisible forms visible, has reinforced the idea of breaking down volumes in paintings to also represent internal structures.

All these developments explain the tendency of Cubist artists to analyze objects and detach form from appearance. According to Tunalı (2013), to dismantle the old values inherited from tradition, forms need to be deconstructed. Thus, by leaving the effort of creating a "beautiful image," painting has focused solely on form, allowing for a representation of reality stripped off emotional embellishments. Cubism, in this respect, can be considered not only a formal transformation but also a significant visual revolution that transforms the perception, knowledge, and aesthetic structure of modern people.

Artists who emerged from or interacted with Cubism clearly reflected the effects of this formal transformation. Although Cubist principles influenced Fernand Léger, his unique approach led him to evolve in a different direction. His approach was referred to as Tubism. This term was derived from his use of

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forms reminiscent of cylinders, pipes, and mechanical parts in his paintings. With this approach, Léger focused more on the machine, construction, and technical representation than on geometric abstraction. He also openly expressed this preference by saying, "Just as others brought the naked body and still life into their paintings, I brought the machine into my painting" (Turani, 1995). In this context, Léger's theoretical approach to machine aesthetics laid the groundwork for developing a unique visual language in his artworks, where geometric forms and mechanical elements are central. In his 1913 article, Léger argued that rather than the representational function of art, the focus should be on plastic values, and he suggested that the arrangement of line, form, and color is the source of true aesthetic value. In this context, the machine is positioned not merely as a technological object but as a contemporary metaphor for a new mode of perception and the transformation of the subject of art (Léger, 1973).

The artist, who adopted the structural analysis approach of Cubism by deconstructing and reconstructing objects, adapted this method to the new aesthetic forms of industrial society, beginning to shape the human figure and its surroundings according to the logic of technical objects. This tendency is apparent in Léger's selection of the machine as the focal point of his artwork, as well as in his development of a "machine-like" visual language utilizing plastic elements. The combination of forms, the recurrence of elements, and the robustness of structure establish a visual framework in his paintings that mirrors the functionality of a machine. Thus, while preserving the Cubist legacy, Léger transforms it with the visual codes of the industrial age, becoming one of

the pioneers of machine aesthetics both formally and conceptually. One of the significant examples of this intellectual and visual transformation is the artwork named "Contrast of Forms" (Figure 6). In this work, the artist creates a composition that resembles interlocking parts of a mechanical system by rhythmically repeating cylindrical, conical, and prismatic forms on the surface. This structure, where the volumes overlap and intertwine with each other, is completely devoid of figurative elements. Visual narration is based solely on form, color, and rhythm. This approach shows that the artist focuses more on the structural functioning of the object and its movement within space than on the object itself. "Contrast of Forms" signifies a pivotal moment where Léger, driven by his aim to emphasize plastic values, departs from traditional representational art and restructures form in accordance with the visual logic of industrial society. In the work named "Soldier with a Pipe," however, Léger reduces the human body to a mechanical order through tubular forms. Here, the figure, anonymized by war, aligns with the formal aesthetics of the machine (Figure 7). It is known that the artist's experiences as a soldier were an important reference in creating his works. As Katharine Kuh noted, Léger did not pick up a brush for a while after going to the front in 1914, but he continued to draw. The war experience fundamentally changed his perspective on art. Encountering the direct and stark reality of machines and modern warfare deeply influenced his understanding of the figure. This process laid the groundwork for Léger to interpret the human body not as a whole, but as a mechanical system composed of fragmented and functional components (Kuh, 1953).



Figure 6. Fernand Léger, *Contrast of Forms*, Oil on Canvas, 1913, 100.3x81.1 cm (Contrast of Forms, n.d.)



Figure 7. Fernand Léger, *Soldier with a Pipe*, Oil on Canvas, 1916, 130x97cm (Neret, 1993)

In Léger's understanding of the figure, the transformation experienced after the war was not limited to military representations. The human figure in civilian life was similarly reconstructed with mechanical forms. This transformation was not only a result of the war's destructive impact but also of the effects of modern life and the mechanized urban environment on the individual. The artist perceives the human body not as a vessel of expression and identity but as an organism composed of structural units functioning within a systematic framework. This understanding shows that Léger's plastic language, shaped by war, persisted in representations of urban life and daily practices in the following years. The figure is no longer a narrative object, but it is now equated with the mechanical objects around it and included in the

same aesthetic logic. This framework becomes even more pronounced in the artist's work named "Three Women" (Figure 8). In this work, Léger constructs the figures as parts of a mechanical arrangement, transforming the human body into an aesthetic object. The female figures, created with cylindrical volumes, are treated with a similar formal understanding as the surrounding interior objects, consciously eliminating the visual distinction between human and object. This approach also shows that the artist imbues the figure with not only an expressive content but also a plastic value. The work visualizes the monotony of modern life and the mechanized reality, replacing individuality with formal order and balance (Kuh, 1953).



Figure 8. Fernand Léger, *Three Women*, Oil on Canvas, 1921-22, 183.5x251.5 cm (*Three Women*, n.d.)

Léger reduces figures to a formal element through his understanding of the mechanized body. This reduction in figurative representation affects the artist's approach to objects and forms. Now, not only humans but every element in the surroundings is conceived as part of the same aesthetic system. In the mid-1920s, with the figurative structure gradually transforming into abstract forms, the artist integrates mechanics into his paintings not just as representational content but as a pure plastic fictional element. This transformation is clearly observed in

Léger's work named "Mechanical Element," where he emphasizes principles such as form, balance, and clarity (Figure 9). In this work, he establishes a clear connection with machinery by using the wheel-like structure of geometric parts and the metallic surface sheen. However, the materiality of these metallic elements is systematically pushed into the background by reducing their volumes to flat surfaces. The rigid linear structure is balanced with intense and undiluted colors. It is clear that this imaginary setup creates only an abstract visual effect (Lanchner, 1998).



Figure 9. Fernand Léger, Mechanical Element, Oil on Canvas, 1924, 92.8x65.5 cm (Elément Mécanique Sur Fond Rouge, n.d.)

Looking at Léger's artistic approach from a holistic perspective, one can speak of a narrative form that initially relied on the formal foundations of Cubism and gradually merged with machine aesthetics to transform into an original and contemporary visual language. Using industry-based forms such as tubes, cylinders, and gears in his art, Léger composed figures as if they were parts of a machine, thereby visually blurring the boundaries between humans and technology. His works question not only form but also the modern individual's relationship with society, urban life, and the mechanized world. With his rhythmic compositions and geometric structures, he reflects the order, speed, and artificiality of modern life. Léger, in this respect, is not only an artist who diverges from Cubism but also stands out as an important representative who clearly conveys the aesthetic understanding of the machine age into the language of painting. In his art, the machine has become not just a tool but also a center representing the intellectual and cultural transformation of the era.

3. Method

This study was conducted based on qualitative research methods, and a descriptive and interpretive analysis approach was adopted. A comprehensive review of the literature was conducted within the framework of the sociology of art. In this context, sources written about Fernand Léger's life, artistic practice, formal style, and the historical period he was in were systematically examined. The data obtained from texts written by art historians, sociologists, and theorists were evaluated in light of the social transformations at the beginning of the 20th century. Be-

fore proceeding to the analysis of the work under the theoretical framework, the conditions of the period in which the work was produced, the aesthetics of the machine, and the artist's artistic understanding in the context of cubism were focused on.

Based on the information obtained during the research process, Léger's work "Exit the Ballets Russes" was examined using Erwin Panofsky's method of iconographic and iconological criticism, which is an approach that stands out for its analysis of artworks in terms of subject, form, and content (Kum, 2022). In this method, not only the formal characteristics of the work but also the symbolic, cultural, and social meanings it carries are analyzed. This three-stage method consists of pre-iconographic examination, iconographic description, and iconological interpretation, and according to Panofsky, the perception and esthetic evaluation of a work of art is based on a three-stage assessment step in terms of form, subject, and content (Türkcan, 2021; Şirin & Coşkun, 2023). In the first stage, the primary or natural meaning is defined as the world of artistic motifs where the forms and movements in the artwork represent natural objects, and this representation is combined with expressive qualities. In the second stage, the secondary or conventional meaning, is a layer of meaning where specific themes and concepts are expressed through images, stories, and allegories formed by the combination of artistic motifs, and correctly identifying the motifs is fundamental in iconographic analysis (Panofsky, 2012). In the final stage, the basic beliefs and values of a nation, time period, social class, or way of thinking are analyzed by examining the key ideas shown through the way the artwork is put together and its symbolic meaning. In the first stage in this study, the elements visible

on the canvas were examined, and the work's formal structure was analyzed. In the second stage, the symbolic elements in the artwork were identified, and their relationship to industrial society was analyzed. In this process, themes such as mechanization, urbanization, and the stripping of individual identity were highlighted. In the final stage, the aim was to interpret the work in depth within its cultural, historical, and social context. At this stage, using a sociological perspective, the accelerated mechanization of the Industrial Revolution and its transformation of society and the individual were examined.

Using Panofsky's analysis method, the visual elements of the artwork were closely examined to reveal how they are connected to the social and cultural changes of the period and how the industrial society affected individuals and the community.

4. Findings

This study was conducted to examine the dynamics of social transformation in 20th-century Europe, machine aesthetics, and Fernand Léger's understanding of art.

4.1. Analysis of the Work Named "Exit the Ballets Russes" Using the Iconographic and Iconological Criticism Method

4.1.1. Pre-iconographic examination

Fernand Léger's work named *Exit the Ballets Russes*, completed in 1914 just before World War I, is a striking example of the artist's unique style, which he developed under the influence of the Cubism movement and later became known as "Tubism" (Figure 10). At this point, what is particularly noteworthy is Léger's artistic approach, which he integrates with modernism, consciously reflecting the aesthetic and structural principles of the machine age in his works (Kahnweiler, 1950). Indeed, in an evaluation he made in 1913 on the foundations of modern painting, Léger stated that the value of reality in an artwork does not stem from the exact imitation of the object but from the arrangement of plastic elements such as form, line, and color (Antmen, 2008). The painterly language developed by the artist in line with this thought transforms into a coherent aesthetic order, as seen in *Exit the Ballets Russes*, where line, form, and color are structured with a machine-like logic.



Figure 10. Fernand Léger, *Exit the Ballets Russes*, Oil on Canvas, 1914, 136.5x100.3 cm (Lanchner, 1998, p. 167).

In the artwork, the ballerina figures descending a staircase are depicted in an abstracted and mechanized form, stripped off their graceful and fluid movements. The reduction of the figures to cylindrical and conical volumes almost transforms them into machine parts. The abstract and mechanical shapes in the artwork make it look mostly abstract at first. The staircase and human figures are like hidden clues among the messy lines and colors, but one can only see them if they look closely. The sharp contours that define the boundaries of the forms separate the pieces that make up the composition while also holding them together in a common rhythm.

The diagonal direction of the staircase and the diagonal arrangement of the steps give the painting a sense of depth and movement, while the depiction of the railings with perspective shortening stresses the dynamic structure of the scene extending towards the viewer. Nonetheless, this sense of depth arises not from traditional perspective rules but from the gradual foregrounding of superimposed planes and forms. Léger, inheriting from Cubism, deconstructs and reconstructs space and figures, bringing together images captured from various viewpoints into a single plane. Still, in terms of color usage, Cubism's neutral color palette gives way to the use of

bright and saturated primary colors.

This visual structure is also in strong interaction with the artistic and intellectual environment of the period. Léger, while reconstructing figurative elements on an abstract plane, establishes a parallel language with the common sensibility developed by the art movements of the period regarding speed, movement, and mechanization. *Exit the Ballets Russes*, in this context, not only presents an original compositional understanding within itself but also engages in dialogue with modernist approaches such as Cubism and Futurism.

4.1.2. Iconographic description

Produced in 1914, on the brink of World War I and during a period when industrialization profoundly transformed society, *Exit the Ballets Russes* exhibits a formal approach, particularly in its reduction of figures to geometric and mechanical forms, which plays an important role in reflecting the historical context in which the artist lived. Here, it should be noted that Léger's confrontation with the direct and sharp reality of machines led to a profound transformation in his understanding of art, and this transformation is clearly evident in the artist's works (Fauchoy, 1994).

Therefore, Léger's formal choices in his work should be interpreted as an indication of an attitude toward the socio-economic structure of the period. The artist's conscious stripping of the figures off their human qualities is a visual reflection of the transformation that the individual experiences within modern production relationships. In particular, this emphasis on machine aesthetics deepens the world of meaning contained in the work while establishing a strong connection with the social reality of the era. In the work, the rhythmic and monotonous repetition of sequentially arranged figures can be interpreted as a reference to the repetitive processes of production. The bodies of each figure are devoid of individual qualities, homogenized, and mechanized. The human body here is neither a subject nor an emotional being. Instead, it has become an anonymous component of the production process. The work, in other words, presents a structure that directly visualizes the concept of "alienation" as defined by Karl Marx in his "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844." According to Marx (2013), the worker becomes a slave to the object produced by their labor. They can only remain a physical being as long as they are a worker that can only work as long as they are a physical subject (Marx, 2013). Léger's figures are precisely the formal counterpart of this existential cycle: they are arranged like soulless machines, stripped off their true selves, with their will suppressed, reduced to mere "working" bodies. This arrangement strongly implies not only the impact of modern production techniques on the individual but

also how human labor has become a captive of the very system it created. The artist's conscious deformations and the rendering of figures as devoid of expression create a visual record of an era in which the individual becomes alienated not only from their labor but also from themselves, their body, and their humanity. This situation is closely related to the fact that, as Pappenheim (2002) also emphasized, technology has become an independent system operating according to its own internal laws, no longer under human control.

In the modern era, individuals have begun to detach from small and homogeneous communities and position themselves within the complex structure of large cities. This transformation has not only led to the dissolution of social relationships but also had profound effects on an individual level. In this context, the multiple roles and changing identities that individuals, especially in urban life, assume threaten the continuity of the self, bringing about a fragmented mode of existence. Tönnies, drawing attention to this dissolution, stated that in modern cities, the relationships of individuals are largely superficial, temporary, and based on self-interest. According to Tönnies, modern cities consist of individuals who lack a shared understanding of life and exist together only for functional reasons. The relationships between individuals are now defined within a social structure based more on contractual and rational relationships than on a sense of community (Aydoğan, 2000). Léger's work can be considered an expression of this mental and social transformation on the visual plane.

Looking at the elements that make up the composition, it can be seen that the work reflects the fragmentation, discontinuity, and plural identity experience of the modern individual. The way shapes are put together from different viewpoints on one surface represents the fast pace, many influences, and constant movement of city life. Despite all this visual chaos, a certain degree of rhythmic integrity stands out within the structure. In this respect, Léger traces an aesthetic order that exists even in the chaotic nature of big cities. Simmel's assessment of modern life is explanatory in terms of understanding this aesthetic order. Simmel (2009) asserted that one of the fundamental issues faced by the modern individual is the struggle to maintain subjective integrity and individuality in the face of social pressures, historical heritage, and the weight of a technified lifestyle. "*Exit the Ballets Russes*" presents this effort not only as an experience of failure for the individual but also as a dual interpretation of a search for a new aesthetic and order that could emerge from this failure.

On the other hand, the complex solidarity relationships of modern society explain how all the figures in the painting are interconnected and move harmoniously within a single compositional structure. The downward movement of the figures in a common

rhythm reveals the mutual dependence and the necessity of cooperation among the parts of industrial society. This situation overlaps with Durkheim's concept of organic solidarity. According to Durkheim, organic solidarity is a form of cohesion that emerges as functional differences between individuals increase and everyone specializes in a certain field; in this form of solidarity, individuals no longer resemble each other but still need each other (Durkheim, 2006 ; Burelli & Camboni, 2023). In Léger's staircase scene, each piece seems to play an indispensable role in the harmony of the entire composition. The painting gains meaning through the togetherness of all the pieces. As seen here, such multi-layered content not only intuitively reveals the effects of urbanization and industrialization on individuals and society at the beginning of the 20th century but also contains clues about how decisive the social division of labor is for both individual freedom and social cohesion.

Lastly, *Exit the Ballets Russes* is a representation that deeply questions the transformative effects of modernity on the individual, not only in terms of form but also on the level of meaning. The depiction of the figures in the work with mechanical forms reflects a new model of humanity where the individual is stripped off subjective qualities and rendered anonymous. This representation is directly related to the homogenizing impulse that modernism developed against differences to create security and stability in the face of uncertainty. Bauman's observations are important for understanding the ideological orientation behind the de-identified figures in the work, as they highlight the homogeneous societal structure that modern nation-states construct through assimilation (Boynukalin & Doğan, 2020).

It is observed that Léger's effort to incorporate the aesthetics of the machine as fundamental plastic elements into painting stems from a desire to redefine the visual language of the era. In "*Exit the Ballets Russes*," the ballerina figures have been stripped off their graceful and fluid movements. They have been transformed into rigid, fragmented, and mechanized forms. This approach can be interpreted as a reference to the rigid regulation of individual movements and behaviors in modern society. This situation is a visual expression of a social structure where humans have distanced themselves from their existence, becoming a functional and passive component of the production process. "*Exit the Ballets Russes*," by centering this transformation, presents the mood of the modern era and the conditions that erode social and physical human existence in a multi-layered manner to the audience.

4.1.3. Iconological interpretation

20th-century Europe is a period in which industrialization, urbanization, and technological advancements profoundly transformed the individual-so-

ciety relationship. In this process, the individual, on one hand, sought liberation, while on the other hand, faced the danger of standardization. One of the reflections of this dual structure in art is the aesthetics of the machine.

Fernand Léger's *Exit the Ballets Russes* addresses the social effects of this change while depicting the individual's dilemma in modern society. In this context, the work reveals the effects of modernization on individuals and society through the relationship between form and content. The work, evaluated at Panofsky's iconological interpretation stage, presents Léger's work as a powerful symbolic narrative that reveals the standardization and alienating structure of the modern world to the viewer.

5. Conclusion

The 20th century in Europe is a period when social, political, and technological transformations radically changed the individual-society relationship. This transformation was not limited to sociological and economic fields. It also reshaped the individual's perception of the world, daily living practices, and aesthetic sensibilities. In this process, where industrialization and urbanization gained momentum, the individual, on one hand, acquired opportunities for liberation and individualization, while on the other hand, they experienced significant ruptures in their emotional, social, and cultural ties. This contradictory structure has been intensively addressed not only by sociologists but also by artists, leading to the production of visual representations related to the spirit of the era. In this context, the aesthetics of the machine became one of the important themes of modern art. It found its place in artworks in relation to the dynamics of the era. Fernand Léger, one of the pioneering figures who developed this aesthetic understanding, also used the machine's form as a symbolic tool to reflect the sociological reality of the era.

The artist's multiple perspectives taken from Cubism and the emphasis on dynamism from Futurism have transformed into a visual language reflecting the structural characteristics of modern society, such as speed, fragmentation, anonymization, and rhythm. In the composition of figures, objects, and spatial areas in the artwork, the unity formed by the parts refers to a societal structure where individuals work in harmony like the parts of a machine but lose their uniqueness. The artist's artistic language, based on machine forms, represents not only a destruction but also the emergence of a new order and visual perception. Unlike many of his contemporaries, the artist viewed technological advancement not merely as a threat but as an aesthetic phenomenon embodying the tempo and structure of the era. Therefore, he centered technological form in his works. In conclusion, "*Exit the Ballets Russes*" is not only a product

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of Fernand Léger's individual artistic practice, but it is also a visual record of the modernization of the 20th century, the transformation of the individual-society relationship, and the mechanizing world. The work addresses the aesthetics of the machine on a symbolic level that reflects the ideological, economic, and sociological dynamics of the era. Thanks to this multilayered structure, the work in question simultaneously reflects both the exalted idealism of modernism and the alienating effect it creates. In this context, considering the third stage of Panofsky's Iconographic and Iconological Criticism Method, it can be argued that the metaphors created through the formal elements in Léger's *Exit the Ballets Russes* transform the socio-economic changes experienced during the transition to the modern era in 20th-century Europe and the individual's position in relation to this transformation into a visual narrative.

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An Evaluation on the “Municipal Police Officer” Duty of And Organization Metropolitan Municipalities Within the Framework of Norm Staff Principles

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Abstract

Municipalities, established to meet the local needs of densely populated urban areas, are endowed with a range of privileges to adequately fulfill these duties and are tasked with policing the administration to ensure citywide welfare, peace, health, and order. The study examined metropolitan municipalities with larger urban populations than other provinces. Using a qualitative research method, a descriptive study was conducted on the standard staffing requirements of municipalities, the currently employed police personnel, and the activities of police units. The study found that approximately 40% of the total police personnel standard staffing limit is utilized in metropolitan municipalities, and some municipalities publish activity reports specifically for their “Municipality Police Units” and operate effec-

tively and efficiently with their existing staff. In some municipalities, the utilization rate of police officers is extremely low, with this primary duty performed by personnel with a labor status through “direct service procurement,” and the performance of police units in these regions is inadequate. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made regarding the norm staff and employment data and the activities of police personnel.

Keywords: Metropolitan Municipality, Law No. 5393, Law No. 5216, Municipal Police, Law Enforcement.

JEL Codes: H7, H70, H76, H79

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1. Introduction

In the last century, due to factors such as population growth, rural-urban migration, industrialization and agricultural mechanization, cities have continuously expanded in terms of both population and area. This development has necessitated the systematic organization of local administrations in providing common services to citizens. Accordingly, municipalities have created service-specific units to fulfill their duties. Social institutions also change historically according to the lifestyles and needs of societies. The ihtisap institution, unique to Islamic societies, was transformed during the Tanzimat period; the duties of the muhtesip were distributed among the municipal police, military, finance and judiciary, while municipal affairs were transferred to today's municipal police organization (Abay, 2015). Similarly, the municipal police organization, historically influenced by France, assumed duties parallel to current municipal services (Şimşek, 2016).

In larger cities, service-specific institutions have been established, such as İETT, EGO, and ESHOT after the Republic, and the water and sewerage administrations following Law No. 2560 in 1981. While local services were traditionally considered the responsibility of local governments, the new public management approach has redefined them as joint responsibilities of local administrations, civil society and the private sector. Within this framework, Municipality Law No. 5393, prioritizing efficiency and satisfaction, came into force in 2004 (Gürer & Güler, 2015, p. 99).

Today, in increasingly dense metropolitan areas, municipal police are responsible for ensuring public order, health and well-being, implementing municipal council decisions, and enforcing regulations. However, population growth, expanding service areas, political pressures, and limited personnel rights have strained municipal police organizations, which remain under Civil Servants Law No. 657 (Pıçakçioğlu & Ergör, 2005, p. 45)

This study evaluates the "norm cadre" structures, personnel capacities and activities of municipal police departments in metropolitan municipalities through a descriptive analysis of activity reports of 30 metropolitan municipalities and the annual "General Activity Reports of Local Administrations." The lack of previous academic studies on the organizational structure and norm cadre of municipal police reveals both the originality and the limitations of this research.

2. Municipal Police in Literature

With the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye and the subsequent organization of Türkiye's administrative organization, important regulations and changes have been made over time regarding the

performance of public services and law enforcement duties. Municipal police fulfill an important duty in terms of the principle of "subsidiarity" in the performance of local common duties, and it is seen that it is regulated in detail in the Municipality Law No. 1580, which entered into force in 1930. The 104th article of the said law states that "The police are responsible for ensuring and preserving the order, health and boundaries of the town within the municipal borders and in this capacity, they are responsible for the execution of the municipal law, its regulations and prohibitions and the orders given based on them and the penalties imposed in accordance with the law no. 486 dated 16 April 1340 on the provisions of the penal provisions concerning the municipality and its annexes, the performance of the duties set forth in articles fifteen and nineteen and the pursuit and investigation of the crimes by the municipality" and the 108th article states that "Those who oppose the police shall be punished in the same way as those who oppose the state police". On the other hand, under the title of Municipal police Regulation in Article 106, there is a regulation stating that "the profession, qualifications, training and education, promotion and advancement, appointment and dismissal of police officers are determined by a regulation to be prepared by the Ministry of Internal Affairs". As can be seen, in the post-Republican period, police have a key place in municipal legislation and important regulations have been made regarding the nature of the subject with secondary legislation (Law No. 1580). However, there are few studies specific to police in the ongoing period. In the article titled "Municipal police" written by Ertuğ, it is stated that there are no significant study and discussion specific to police force compared to gendarmerie and police organization and that the problems in this regard are not sufficiently expressed. In this respect, it is seen that various suggestions were made in the study in question to protect the order, health and borders of the municipality and to ensure that the authorized police provide more effective service in the execution of municipal regulations and laws and the execution of penalties (Ertuğ, 1947). In his study on the method of use and limitation of the police authorities granted to administrative officers, Günal puts forward the view that the content, method of use and limits of the police authorities should be left to the administrative officer and that only the execution of the issues in question should be granted to the police (Günal, 1959). On the other hand, in an article written in 10966, a case study is given regarding the police authorities granted to administrative officers based on the Council of State Jurisprudence Unification Decision (Günal, 1966). It is seen that the police organization has conducted a study on the effects of smoking and depression on the quality of life of police officers in a narrower scope (Kutlu et al.: 2015). In a study conducted by Şimşek, an ex-

amination is made on the functional and organizational necessity of the police organization and it is mentioned that there are various functions similar to the duties given to the police within the scope of the current legislation, but there are some deficiencies in various issues such as training and recruitment supporting the organizational structure (Şimşek, 2016). In another study, Usta examines the perception of senior managers in the service sharing of district and metropolitan municipalities by taking Ordu and Trabzon provinces as examples within the scope of the analysis of police service sharing in the metropolitan municipality model (Usta, 2013). In his study, Yıldırım addressed the municipal personnel system in Türkiye and therefore the subject of law enforcement and concluded that the principles of merit and career were not sufficiently functional in the implementation of the personnel system in the Samsun Metropolitan Municipality (Yıldırım, 2019). In his study, Akman and Bayram addressed the difficulties experienced by law enforcement in providing services and performing their duties in the city of Isparta, and the issues that could be improved (Akman & Bayram, 2018). On the other hand, Yüceyilmaz and Özgür, who examined the municipal norm cadre regulations, although not specifically about law enforcement, interpreted the norm cadre regulation and the cadre and annex tables in their study (2018). In fact, it was determined that Yüceyilmaz and Özgür (2018), Peker and Şen (2015) and Alıcı (2017) conducted general research on municipal norm cadre in various municipalities.

In the literature review given above, it is seen that the police organization has not been subject to a study specific to metropolitan municipalities within the existing norm cadre principles and limitations, and especially the activities of the police cadres have not been compared with the metropolitan municipality activity reports. In this respect, considering the fact that no study has been conducted specifically on the “Norm cadre” and “Organization” regarding the police duty carried out in metropolitan municipalities, it is understood that the aforementioned study is original and, as mentioned before, the subject has not been addressed specifically in the literature.

3. Municipal Police in Local Governments

According to the Municipality Law No. 5393, which came into effect in 2005, “police” units are among the units that must be established in municipalities. Again, according to this law, among the duties of mayors; there is a duty that is quite general and attributes responsibility to the mayor as “To take the necessary measures for the peace, well-being, health and happiness of the townspeople”, and mayors fulfill this primary duty through police.

When the “Metropolitan Municipality Law” No. 5216, which entered into force in 2004, is examined,

it is seen that the term “police” is only included in the 7th article, which regulates the duties of metropolitan municipalities, as “To perform police services in areas where the metropolitan municipality is authorized or operates”, and in the 24th article, which regulates the expenses of metropolitan municipalities, as “Expenses to be incurred for the execution of police and fire services and other duties and services”. On the other hand, there are many regulations in the same law regarding the application of Municipality Law No. 5393 in cases not covered by Law No. 5216. When this provision is taken into consideration, it is seen that Law No. 5393 contains fundamental regulations regarding police. Article 51 of Law No. 5393 on Municipalities, titled “Duties and authorities of the police”, reads as follows: “The police are responsible for ensuring the welfare, peace, health and order in the town and for this purpose, they apply the orders and prohibitions taken by the municipal council and to be carried out by the police, and the penalties and other sanctions stipulated in the legislation on those who do not comply with these.” The continuation of the article also states that the sanctions to be applied to those who prevent the police from performing their duties during the performance of their duties are considered identical to those of law enforcement officers.

On the other hand, within the scope of the said article, it has also been regulated that a regulation will be put into effect by the tutelage authorities in order to clarify the working principles, duties, authorities, responsibilities of the police organization, the conditions to be sought for entering the police officer position, examination, in-service training, promotion in accordance with the career principle, dress code, vehicles to be used for defense purposes and other issues regarding the police organization.(Sevgili,2012) Thus, an authority has been granted to the tutelage authorities in this direction in accordance with the principle of “Administrative Law.” Based on this, the “Municipal police Regulation”, which regulates “the establishment, duties, authorities and responsibilities of the police organization, the qualifications of the police officers, their promotion and professional training, their uniforms and working procedures and principles” was published and put into effect in the Official Gazette dated 11.04.2007 and numbered 26490. In the said Regulation, five different arrangements were made on different dates between 2011-2021, and the provisions of the said Regulation are currently implemented by all municipalities.

In the said Regulation, the police are defined as “the special police force that maintains the order of the town, protects the well-being, health and peace of the town’s people, and implements the decisions to be taken by the authorized bodies for this purpose”, and the police are classified as “department head, director, branch manager, chief, commissioner and officer” as an organization.

Within this framework, the police organization is entered as a police officer, and the candidate must first take the Public Personnel Selection Exam. To recruit a police officer, municipalities must first obtain permission from the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change if there is a vacant officer position in the standard cadre. Following this permission, the exam announcement is made and five times as many candidates are invited to the exam, starting from the highest score among the applicants for each vacant position. According to the relevant Regulation, those who will apply for the exam;

- a. Must meet the general conditions specified in Article 48 of Law No. 657,
- b. Must be at least a high school or equivalent school graduate,
- c. Must be at least 1.67 meters tall for men and 1.60 meters tall for women, provided that the weighing and measuring is done on an empty stomach, undressed and barefoot, and there must be no difference of more than (+, -) 10 kilograms between the part of the height that is more than 1 meter and the weight,
- d. Must not have reached the age of 30 on the date of the exam,
- e. Must have received the minimum score specified in the exam announcement from the KPSS score type that has not expired.

Candidates who are successful in the written or oral exam and practical exam to be held on the subjects included in the relevant Regulation are started to work as police officers.

Article 10 of the said Regulation regulates the duties of the police officers and the said duties are regulated in detail under the titles of "Duties related to the order and well-being of the town", "Duties related to construction", "Duties related to environment and health", "Duties related to traffic" and "Duties related to assistance". Article 11 of the Regulation also includes the authorities to be used by the police officers while performing these duties. When the nature of the duties listed under the main headings above is examined, it is understood that they include duties arising from special laws and duties assigned to police by the said regulations.

During the performance of these detailed and comprehensive duties by the police; It is also seen that they are equipped with the authority to conduct inspections on the issues they are responsible for, to request information and documents from the relevant parties, to draw up reports in case of non-conformity to the legislation, to report the situation to the law enforcement authorities in case of negativities and resistances encountered during the performance of their duties, to draw up reports in order to prosecute in this matter, to prevent the sale of prohibited materials in order to establish peace and

security in public places and to report the situation to the relevant authorities, to detect, prioritize and take the necessary legal action against negativities such as noise, environmental pollution and occupation of public areas that negatively affect social life.

3.1. Duties and Authorities of Municipal Police Units

The police departments established in cities with metropolitan municipalities operate under the general secretariat or the relevant deputy general secretary within the metropolitan municipality hierarchy. The department head, as the highest officer of the police organization, conducts the services and duties within their own fields through the branch manager, chief, commissioner and officers who are their subordinates. The department head, who is primarily responsible for all duties and authorities of the police organization, is responsible for his hierarchical superiors in all matters. The general duties, authorities and responsibilities of the Municipal police Department Heads are given below, based on the Working Regulations or Directives of the Municipal police Department Heads of metropolitan municipalities.

- a. Coordinate the work of the units affiliated to the department within the framework of the Strategic Plan and Performance Program,
- b. Prepare the budget of the department in accordance with the performance program and submit it for approval,
- c. Ensure that the work and transactions conducted in the unit are conducted in accordance with the prepared work processes,
- d. As the spending authority, conduct the work and transactions in accordance with the objectives, economic management principles, control regulations and legislation every year and prepare the internal control assurance declaration and add it to the unit activity reports,
- e. Follow up the legislation, innovations and technical developments related to the unit and ensure their implementation,
- f. Ensure that the unit activities are reported periodically,
- g. Ensure that the unit works in cooperation and harmony with the unit and other units while performing its duties,
- h. Ensure the employment of sufficient number and quality of personnel and the distribution of duties of the personnel,
- i. Ensure in-service training of the personnel and their training in accordance with their job qualifications,
- i. Periodically evaluate the performance of its sub-

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- ordinates and conduct activities to increase morale, motivation and performance in the unit,
- k. Take similar measures to be given by the superior to perform other duties of a nature,
 - l. To ensure supervision and coordination in cases where metropolitan municipality police and district municipality police work together,
 - j. The Department Head is authorized and responsible to the upper management in ensuring that the above-mentioned duties are fully and timely performed.

Although the internal norms put into effect by the relevant municipalities regarding the duties, authorities and responsibilities of the Municipal police Department Heads are like each other, it is understood that they regulate the administrative duties of the department head and their hierarchical subordinates. In other words, the Municipal police Regulation has classified the hierarchical chain that will serve in the police units in municipalities as “Department Head, Director, Branch Manager, Chief, Commissioner and Officer”; however, it has not included their duties, authorities and responsibilities. The same Regulation has regulated the duties of the police in detail under five main headings: “Duties related to the order and well-being of the town”, “Duties related to construction”, “Duties related to the environment and health”, “Duties related to traffic” and “Duties related to assistance”. Municipalities, on the other hand, have made their own internal arrangements by using these duties and authorities, considering administrative duties. It is understood that the primary duties of the police are included in a single article as “To fulfill, monitor, supervise and coordinate the duties, authorities and responsibilities of the police in the legislation.” It is understood that the duties listed above are distributed hierarchically from top to bottom among the Police Department Manager, Municipal police Chief, Commissioner and Officer, and the duties of the directorates are determined specifically for duties related to “Order and welfare of the town”, “Development”, “Environment and health”, “Traffic” and “Aid”, and that the police work in coordination with the relevant units within the scope of these duties, just like the distinction between administrative and judicial police. For example, it is evaluated that the police perform a judicial police duty upon detection of illegal construction in matters related to zoning, that they also undertake administrative police duty in preventing zoning pollution through continuous inspections at the beginning or before the construction of the illegal construction, and that during this period they must work in coordination both within their own unit and with other units.

It is crucial for law enforcement personnel to maintain social and economic peace while serving as auxiliary law enforcement officers. However, the manipulation and manipulation of law enforcement by some elected municipal officials to align with their own political views undermines the impartiality of the police in providing public services. The frequent and frequent changes in municipal administration disrupt the current system and complicate the performance of their duties (Pektaş,2003).

Another important issue is that the privatization of municipal facilities and service houses may lead to the deterioration of uniformity in field practices between the Municipal Police, which are the law enforcement and control mechanism of the municipalities, and the privatized ones in terms of security, cleanliness and service quality (Esen,2021).

3.2. Municipal Police in Metropolitan Municipalities Norm Cadres

In order to regulate “effective and efficient use of public resources, balanced distribution of local services, increasing the quality of services provided by municipalities, employment of personnel with the required qualifications, titles and numbers” in both municipalities and metropolitan municipalities, the “Regulation on the Principles and Standards of Norm Cadres of Municipalities and Affiliated Institutions and Local Administration Unions” was published in the Official Gazette dated 22.02.2007 and numbered 26442 and entered into force. The regulation classifies municipalities according to various parameters, primarily population, and determines the number of personnel based on these classes. According to the Regulation; (A) Group: Metropolitan Municipalities, (B) Group: Provincial Municipalities, (C) Group: Metropolitan District Municipalities, (D) Group: District and Town Municipalities.

In our study, the data for Group (A) (Metropolitan Municipalities) are given below.

Table 1. Metropolitan Municipality Categories According to Population Distribution

Group A Categories	Population Range	Metropolitan Municipalities
A-1	0-999.999	Erzurum, Eskişehir, Malatya, Mardin, Ordu, Trabzon
A-2	1.000.000-1.999.999	Aydın, Balıkesir, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kayseri, Manisa, Mersin, Muğla, Sakarya, Samsun, Tekirdağ, Van
A-3	2.000.000-2.999.999	Adana, Antalya, Gaziantep, Kocaeli, Konya, Şanlıurfa
A-4	3.000.000-4.999.999	Bursa, İzmir

A-5	5.000.000-7.499.999	Ankara
A-6	7.500.000 Ve Üzeri	İstanbul

Source: Prepared by the author based on the Regulation on Norm Cadre Principles and Standards of Municipalities and Affiliated Organizations and Local Administration Unions.

The above table shows the classification of metropolitan municipalities in category A based on population. The table below shows the upper limit of police cadres to be employed in each category.

Table 2. Upper Limits of Municipal Police Cadres by Category

Cadre	A-1	A-2	A-3	A-4	A-5	A-6
Municipal Municipal Police Department Head	1	1	1	1	1	1
Municipal Municipal Police Branch Manager	5	7	8	10	12	14
Municipal Municipal Police Chief	15	21	24	50	60	140
Municipal Municipal Police Commissioner	45	63	72	150	180	420
Municipal Municipal Police Officer	225	315	360	750	900	2520
Total	291	407	465	961	1153	3095

Source: Prepared by the author based on the Regulation on the Norm Cadre Principles and Standards of Municipalities and their Affiliated Institutions and Local Administration Unions.

According to the table above, the maximum norm cadre data granted to metropolitan municipalities based on population, in a series from the Head of the Police Department to the police officer within the scope of the hierarchy principle, and the current number of police personnel of metropolitan municipalities are included. When this table and the infor-

mation provided previously are taken into consideration, it is understood that a total of 16,404 police personnel cadres have been allocated for 30 metropolitan municipalities. The table below includes metropolitan municipalities that include the number of police personnel in their strategic documents and activity reports.

Table 3. Metropolitan Municipalities Norm Staff Upper Limit and Current Employed Municipal Police Numbers (2023)

City	Population	Km ²	Norm Cadre Upper Limit	Employed Municipal Police Officer	Percentage Between Norm Cadre and Employment
İstanbul	15.655.924	14.125	3.095	1.417	45,78
Ankara	5.803.482	25.437	1.153	448	38,85
Bursa	3.214.571	10.882	961	203	21,12
Adana	2.270.298	13.844	465	271	58,27
Antalya	2.696.249	20.177	465	94	20,21
Konya	2.320.241	40.838	465	78	16,77
Şanlıurfa	2.213.964	19.242	465	30	6,45
Mersin	1.938.389	16.010	407	205	50,36
Denizli	1.059.082	12.134	407	286	70,27
Hatay	1.544.640	5.524	407	144	35,38
Kahramanmaraş	1.116.618	14.520	407	83	20,39
Erzurum	749.993	25.006	291	66	22,68
Trabzon	824.352	4.628	291	154	52,92
Total	41.407.803	222.367	9.279	3.479	37,49

Source: Prepared by the Author by Examining the Activity and Audit Reports of the Municipalities and Their Websites.

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One of the most important elements of local government is the municipal police, which is responsible for maintaining urban order and ensuring the efficient execution of municipal services. However, the number of employed police officers often falls below the legally established upper limit for standard staffing. The table data shows that this situation poses a serious problem, particularly for metropolitan municipalities.

The total population of the 13 metropolitan municipalities examined in Turkey is around 41.4 million. While the standard upper limit for staffing in these cities is 9,279, the actual number of police officers on duty is only 3,479. Therefore, only 37.5% of the staffing capacity is effectively utilized. Significant differences are noted between the following cities:

- a. Despite a population of 15.6 million in İstanbul, only 45.7% of the standard staffing capacity is occupied. This rate indicates a serious inadequacy at the metropolitan level.
- b. While the rate in Ankara is close to the national average at 38.8%, this level can be considered inadequate considering its status as the capital.
- c. The Şanlıurfa example is quite striking; while the standard staffing capacity is 465, the actual number of employees is only 30. This indicates that capacity utilization is at its lowest level, at 6.45%.

In contrast, capacity utilization is relatively higher in cities such as Denizli (70.3%) and Trabzon (52.9%).

In general, it can be said that municipal police employment is insufficient in cities with high population density and large surface area. For example, in provinces with large geographical areas such as Konya (40,838 km²) and Antalya (20,177 km²), the rates are as low as 16.7% and 20.2%, respectively. This situation complicates the effective supervision of services spread over a wide area. In light of this data, the following observations can be made:

- a) Capacity utilization problem: The difference between the standard staffing and actual employment prevents services from being operated at full capacity in many cities.
- b) Regional disparities: While the rate is relatively high in some Aegean and Black Sea provinces, serious deficiencies exist in Southeastern and Central Anatolian provinces.
- c) Risk to service effectiveness: Low employment rates in cities with large populations and large surface areas negatively impact the effectiveness, accessibility, and oversight capacity of municipal police services.

Consequently, the imbalance between municipal police staffing and employment poses a significant obstacle to the fair and effective delivery of local services. Moving forward, it is crucial to revisit staffing planning to take into account both population

density and geographical reach, and to bring actual employment closer to standard staffing levels.

According to the Unit Activity Report of the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality IMM Police Department, 430 personnel are employed by direct service procurement. In Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, 620 personnel are employed by direct service procurement. The municipalities' activity reports do not include the details of this information, which is given as a worker status in the police units, and it is not sufficiently understood whether the personnel in question are permanent municipal workers or workers employed by direct service procurement. When this issue is taken into consideration, it is understood that 7 personnel are employed in Ankara, 45 in Antalya, 111 in Konya, 138 in Şanlıurfa, 352 in Mersin, 162 in Kahramanmaraş and 224 in Trabzon. However, it is also debatable to what extent it is healthy for the continuous police duty to be conducted not by police officers but by personnel employed by municipal companies and working as workers, who do not have professional guarantees and assurances. In other words, it is also unknown to what extent municipal company personnel can perform their duties independently and in accordance with the legislation, especially in neighborhoods where local motives and politics are dominant.

On the other hand; because of comparing the population and the number of employed police officers and managerial personnel; there are 11,048 people per police officer in İstanbul; 12,952 people in Ankara. It is seen that the highest population per police officer is in Şanlıurfa with 73,798 people; and the lowest is in Denizli with 3,703 people. Since the surface area, population, settlement characteristics of the city and the activities within the control area of the police differ, it is evaluated and suggested that different studies can be conducted by researchers on each of the mentioned issues.

3.3. Municipal Police in Activity Reports of Metropolitan Municipalities

When the data obtained from the activity reports and other strategic documents published by metropolitan municipalities at certain periods are examined, it is seen that a sizable portion of these units work effectively when the current personnel numbers are considered.

It is also seen that the practice of employing police personnel through municipal companies through direct service procurement is also implemented, some municipalities include this issue in their activity reports and announce the number of personnel employed, but most municipalities do not provide information on this issue, do not prepare activity reports specific to the police and do not disclose this

information to the public within the framework of transparency and accountability principles. In this respect, it is seen beneficial for police to prepare "Municipal police Activity Reports" specific to their own organizations and to inform the public by publishing this information on their websites. It is also clear that this practice will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of police units. Within this framework, it is a general rule that services that are continuous with the changes in question are provided by civil servants, and the public benefit is seen in the employment of personnel in this direction, in other words, in not employing police personnel by directly purchasing services. It has been determined that while there is not enough information specific to police in the activity reports of metropolitan municipalities, limited information is provided in terms of the activities conducted in general. It has been observed that police units in Ankara and İstanbul prepare activity reports within the scope of their own activities, and especially the activity report of the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality Municipal Police Department is quite comprehensive. It has also been understood in the said report that the police unit determines indicators and performance indicators in line with the strategic goals and objectives of the municipality. In this context, it is seen that they have determined themes under the titles of "Resilient İstanbul", "Accessible İstanbul", "Environmentally Sensitive İstanbul", "Productive İstanbul", "Sharing İstanbul", "Living İstanbul" and the performance of the goals and targets is systematically monitored with indicators specific to development, environment, traffic, urban well-being and other local common services. In the said indicators; It has been understood that the inspection of public transportation vehicles, demolition decisions as a result of zoning inspections, excavation-construction/demolition waste inspections, workplace inspection activities, unsanitary institution and sanitary institution inspections, announcement and billboard inspections, price tag, tariff, tare and shopping mall parking lot inspections, terminal and market inspections, combating begging inspections, inspections to prevent unregistered economic activities (peddlers), licensing activities and inspections, inspections regarding the protection of consumer rights and administrative sanction reports and fines issued based on these inspections were monitored (IMM Municipal police Activity Report, 2023). In the said activity report, it was seen that the 2023 targets were achieved with 100% performance. In Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, although there is no systematic report in this direction, it has been observed that data on inspections in activity areas such as traffic inspections, excavation, zoning pollution, illegal construction, announcements and advertising signs, market hall and terminal, street vendors, beggars, noise pollution, as well as the minutes and fines kept are included in

tables (ABB Municipal police Activity Report, 2024).

In İzmir Metropolitan Municipality 2023 Activity Report; Within the scope of the performance goal of "Conducting Municipal police Inspection Activities for Public Health and Well-being and Ensuring the Protection and Security of Service Provided Areas", targets were determined as "Conducting Protection and Security Services", "Conducting Municipal police Services", "Conducting Municipal police Inspection Services", "Conducting Municipal police Traffic Services" and "Conducting Environmental and Zoning Municipal police Services", and it has been observed that the determined targets were achieved within the scope of 2023 (İzmir Metropolitan Municipality Activity Report, 2023).

In other metropolitan municipalities, it was observed that police activities were generally monitored under the following activities: "Environmental Inspections", "Building Control Inspections", "Visual Pollution", "Fighting with Visual Pollution", "Marketplace and Bus Station Inspections", "Inspections and Controls for Consumer Rights". However, it was understood that systematic and performance-evaluating model-reporting was not developed as in the three major cities. In Şanlıurfa, the city with the lowest rate of police officer employment, various activities were included under the headings of workplace, bus station, street vendor, beggar, traffic and consumer rights, and when the number of personnel is taken into account, it is understood that the activities remained limited compared to other metropolitan municipalities (Şanlıurfa Metropolitan Municipality Activity Report, 2023).

In Denizli, where the employment rate of police officers is the highest, the performance of police activities is monitored with three indicators: "Number of advertisement and ad inspections/inspections", "Number of sanitary workplaces inspected" and "Number of non-sanitary workplaces inspected" within the framework of the performance goal of "Performing police services quickly, with high quality and in a fair manner", and it is understood that the performance of the municipality, which employs proportionally more police officers than other metropolitan cities, is not sufficient in this context and is evaluated with limited indicators (Denizli Metropolitan Municipality Activity Report, 2023).

According to the information provided above, it has been observed that police activities in Ankara metropolitan municipalities, especially in İstanbul, are systematically monitored with separate activity reports, their performance is more measurable, and that there is essential information and performance data in this direction in the general activity report of İzmir Metropolitan Municipality. However, no such determination has been made in other metropolitan municipalities, and it has been understood that limited data is shared.

It was mentioned that the ratio of the employment of police personnel to the standard number of cadres in metropolitan municipalities is quite low and that police personnel are commonly employed through “Direct Service Procurement” in these municipalities. In this respect, it is evaluated that the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change should clarify the issue of employment through direct service procurement specifically for police personnel or should adopt a quota that does not exceed a certain percentage of the standard number of cadres, which would establish a more effective and accountable police unit. On the other hand, it is also considered beneficial to audit police services through performance measures to ensure more accountable and transparent management. It is evaluated that subjecting the police units of municipalities to performance audits by taking the performance indicators applied in İstanbul and Ankara Metropolitan Municipalities as a basis and determining new indicators in the audits of the Ministry of Interior or the Court of Accounts will encourage both the efficiency of the service and the rational use of cadres.

4. Conclusion

To provide local common services, municipalities, which are also called service groups among local government units, need officers and an organization in law enforcement to provide their duties effectively and efficiently. Accordingly, for municipalities to perform their duties of a wide variety of nature throughout the city and accordingly to ensure well-being, health, peace and social order in the city, a “police” unit and personnel must be active. According to the current legislation, the duties, authorities and responsibilities of the police units in municipalities are regulated by the “Municipal police Regulation” and the police units and officers are authorized as a local police force. In metropolitan municipalities, considering both the large population and the size of the service area, the police organization had to be designed accordingly. According to the said legislation, it is mandatory to establish Municipal police Departments in metropolitan municipalities and personnel are employed in these units as “department heads, directors, branch managers, chiefs, commissioners and officers.” In 30 metropolitan municipalities, 16,404 cadres were allocated with standard cadres, and in 13 metropolitan municipalities that included information on police personnel in their strategic documents, 9,279 personnel cadres were allocated with standard cadres, and it was determined that 3,722 of these cadres were used, in other words, an average of 37.49% of the total cadres were used. In some of the municipalities in question, in addition to police officer personnel, police personnel were also employed as workers affiliat-

ed to municipal companies through “direct service procurement”, and when these numbers were taken into consideration, it was understood that there were personnel performing police duties well below the standard cadre limit.

The police officer profession, which is entered through a special competitive exam and requires various conditions to be met, is a cadre that provides the opportunity to advance within a hierarchical chain in accordance with the principles of career and merit. This cadre, which is a local police force in accordance with the current legislation, has duties arising from many special legislations, from urban health and well-being to the environment, from zoning to traffic. Therefore, it is evaluated that if the mentioned cadres are used rationally and the tasks are conducted effectively, local joint services will be provided as required. However, it is seen that in the municipalities whose information can be accessed within the scope of the study, on average 37% of the cadres are used, employment through direct service procurement is also common, in both cases, the total personnel remains well below the standard cadre allocation, and on the other hand, there are drawbacks in the quality and continuity of the service provided by worker personnel who do not have professional security. When the cadre rates are taken into consideration, it is seen that the ratio of civil servant police personnel to the cadre envisaged by the standard cadre is 6.45% in Şanlıurfa, indicating the lowest employment. On the other hand, it is understood that the highest employment rate is in Denizli with a rate of 70.27%. Within the framework of this information, when the 37% average in metropolitan municipalities where police officer data is accessed is taken into consideration, it is seen that the police officer employment rate in metropolitan municipalities varies, the police employment rate decreases as the population increases, and as a result, the police officer cadres determined in accordance with the standard cadre are not used effectively. In the case of Ankara and İstanbul, it has been determined that metropolitan municipalities publish detailed information containing Municipal police Department Activity Reports, that numerical information including performance data on important duties such as zoning, environment, health, license, and traffic is included, and that an effective police service is provided with systematic and measurable indicators in the police units. However, no such information has been found in other municipalities, and no concrete and effective activities have been found to show effective performance in the administrations that employ a small number of people and/or try to provide police services through direct service procurement. In this context, it is evaluated that the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change can clarify employment through direct service procurement for police personnel or implement

a quota that does not exceed a certain percentage of the norm staff number, which will establish more effective and accountable police units. In addition, it would be useful to conduct performance audits by considering the indicators applied in İstanbul and Ankara, which will measure police performance, in the audits of the Ministry of Interior or the Court of Accounts. It is thought that such an audit will ensure rational use of personnel numbers, and that positive changes will occur in the well-being, health and peace of the city, together with more accountable and transparent service delivery. Furthermore, the findings reveal the inadequacy of municipal police employment, particularly in cities with large populations and large land areas. As seen in Konya (40,838 km², 16.7%) and Antalya (20,177 km², 20.2%), the risk of inadequate oversight and effective maintenance of services across large areas arises.

Based on the data obtained from all these studies, the imbalance between municipal police personnel and the standard staff negatively impacts the equitable, accessible, and efficient delivery of local services. Therefore, staff planning should be reevaluated not only based on population data but also on the geographic size and service diversity of cities. Furthermore, bringing actual employment closer to the standard staffing levels is critical for the quality of municipal services and the order of urban life.

Information About Ethics Committee Approval

In this study, all rules specified to be followed within the scope of the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed. None of the actions specified under the second section of the directive, "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics," were conducted.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

When the study is a Research Article, an ethics committee is not required.

Contribution Rate Statement

Since the entire study was prepared by a single author, the author's contribution rate is 100%.

Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no financial or personal connection with any person or institution in the research. There is no conflict of interest in research.

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Research Article

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Determination of Misconceptions in Cooking Methods and Chopping Techniques in Culinary Education¹

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the misconceptions that students enrolled in the culinary program have regarding cooking methods and cutting techniques. Within the scope of the research, a three-stage misconception determination test was administered to first- and second-year students enrolled in the Culinary Program at Söğüt Vocational School. Concept maps related to the subject were prepared for the students before the test was administered. The test results were analysed in terms of general misconceptions and positive and negative misconceptions. The findings from the analysis of misconceptions showed that students had the most misconceptions about techniques such as "blanching", "braising"

and "stir frying". When examining the findings on chopping techniques, the same results emerged for the concepts of "paysanne chopping", "medium dice chopping" and "oblique cuts". The high level of confidence in the answers chosen by the students indicates that the misconceptions are persistent. The results indicate the need to develop educational strategies for concept teaching in culinary education.

Keywords: Cooking Methods, Chopping Techniques, Concept Map, Culinary Education.

JEL Codes: I21, I23, D83

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1. Introduction

Culinary education is a professional training field that teaches the combined use of scientific knowledge and art, in addition to kitchen practices. Today, the culinary profession involves the use of technology in addition to practical and theoretical knowledge. Chefs must also develop their creativity alongside the use of technology. Changing sectoral conditions necessitate a certain level of transformation in culinary education. In their work, Aslan and Pekerşen (2019) emphasised that students who receive a high standard of culinary education directly add value to businesses and the sector. Similarly, Kurnaz, Kurnaz, and Kılıç (2014) stated that the quality of education is a fundamental factor affecting students' perspectives and attitudes towards the profession. These findings reveal that the quality of culinary education not only supports individual success but also supports the sustainability of the tourism and food and beverage sector.

Culinary programs are among the best examples of vocational education models that can be applied to practical education. Oğan (2022) stated that culinary programs offering associate degrees are effective in training qualified personnel and shaping students' attitudes towards the profession. However, he emphasised that there are significant differences in students' levels of readiness for working life. According to Oğan's (2022) study on "Level of Readiness for Working Life," although students possess theoretical knowledge, they perceive themselves as inadequate in certain areas. These include initiative, foreign language skills, risk-taking, and professional ethics. This result reveals that culinary education must develop not only practical skills but also communicative and cognitive competencies.

The existence of gender-based differences in the culinary education process is an important factor. Gençoğlu and Kemer (2021) showed in their study that female students pursuing a career in cooking have negative perceptions regarding gender-based barriers. However, it was found that female students have higher professional skills. This situation demonstrates the need for an approach based on equality, inclusiveness and competence in education.

Incorrect learning acquired in the workplace or during internships during the education process becomes embedded in students' subconscious. This learning becomes permanent over time. The aim of this research is to reveal misconceptions arising from incorrect learning and many other factors. Before determining misconceptions, the subject matter was explained to the students and concept maps were created. Concept maps support meaningful learning and make students' cognitive levels more visible. As a result of this application, it was observed that students' learning processes deepened and their

levels of relational understanding increased. At the end of the training process, the Conceptual Misconception Determination Test developed by Sarioğlu, A. B., Sarioğlu, M., and Sökmen (2024) was updated and applied. The findings show that students have misconceptions about some basic concepts. This study aims to increase conceptual learning success in culinary education, strengthen students' ability to apply correct techniques, and contribute to the establishment of a science-based understanding in the culinary profession.

2. Literature Review

Chopping techniques and cooking methods constitute an important part of the curriculum in gastronomy and culinary education. Because gastronomy focuses not only on what and why is consumed, but also on how it is consumed. These two issues are decisive in terms of presentation, flavour, digestion and elimination of microorganisms. However, the naming of chopping techniques and cooking methods differ in the literature. For example, Maviş (2008) made a triple classification for cooking methods, while Aktaş & Özdemir (2012) divided them into two as wet and dry heat. Türkan (2009) and Sökmen (2011) did not make a classification. This diversity of knowledge makes it difficult to transfer knowledge to students and negatively affects the quality of education. Correct understanding of basic concepts strengthens the quality of education.

On the other hand, correct understanding of basic concepts not only improves the quality of education but also contributes to the prevention of misconceptions. Determination and elimination of misconceptions are generally dealt with intensively in the sciences. In this context, misconceptions of students at different levels in fields such as physics, chemistry, mathematics and biology are determined and various methods are applied to correct these misconceptions. As innovative teaching approaches, inquiry-based education model (Deveci, 2020; Göksu, 2011), problem-based education model (Bayram, 2010; Yılmazel, 2021; Yurd, 2007), project-based education model (Dilşeker, 2008; Seloni, 2005) and 5E-7E teaching model (Caner, 2008; Çekiş-Toroslu, 2011; Gül, 2011; Saka, 2006; Yenil, 2020; Türker, 2020) stand out. These findings in science indicate the existence of similar problems in gastronomy education. However, there are few studies addressing misconceptions in the fields of gastronomy and culinary. The case study conducted by Sarioğlu, Avcı Kurt, and Sezen (2020) is the first research on the subject in both national and international gastronomy literature. In the related study, special teaching methods were applied to eliminate misconceptions about cooking methods, and the effectiveness of these methods was evaluated.

2.1. Cooking Methods and Cutting Techniques

Cooking methods are one of the fundamental components of culinary education and aim to make food edible while preserving its sensory, nutritional and hygienic properties. Different cooking methods have been developed for this purpose. In most sources, cooking methods are subject to different classifica-

tions. Basically, a three-stage classification can be made. These are wet cooking, dry heat cooking, and other cooking methods. There are different characteristics that distinguish cooking methods from each other. These vary according to the equipment used, the heat source, and the heat level. Table 1 explains cooking methods based on their basic characteristics.

Table 1. Cooking Methods

Cooking Methods	Description	Average Temperature Value at Which the Cooking Method is Used
Boiling	Cooking food at the boiling point of water (100°C).	100°C
Blanching	The process of briefly immersing food in boiling water, followed by rapid cooling.	100°C
Simmering	Cooking food in a liquid that is gently bubbling at a temperature slightly below the boiling point.	85°C-93°C
Poaching	Cooking food in a liquid that is below the boiling point of water and gently moving.	71°C-85°C
Steaming	Cooking food using steam.	100°C
Stewing	Cooking food at a low temperature in a small amount of liquid for a long time.	85°C-93°C
Braising	This involves first searing food over high heat and then cooking it at a low temperature in a small amount of liquid.	85°C-93°C
Roasting	Cooking food in a dry heat oven.	149°C-232°C
Grilling	Cooking food over an open flame or on a grill.	177°C-288°C
Broiling	Cooking food under intense heat from above.	260°C-288°C
Baking	The process of cooking food in a closed environment in the oven using dry heat.	149°C-204°C
Deep Frying	The process of frying food by completely submerging it in oil.	163°C-191°C
Shallow Frying	This involves frying food in a small amount of oil.	177°C-191°C
Stir-Frying	Cooking food quickly over high heat with a small amount of oil, stirring constantly.	191°C-204°C
Sautéing	Cooking food quickly in a small amount of oil.	177°C-191°C
Microwave	Cooking food using microwave radiation.	Varies depending on the microwave frequency.
Sous-Vide	Cooking food in vacuum-sealed bags in a water bath at a low temperature for a long period of time.	54°C-85°C
Infrared Cooking	Cooking food using infrared rays.	260°C-482°C
Bain-Marie	The process of cooking food indirectly at a low temperature in a container filled with hot water.	Below 100°C

Source: Gisslen, W. (2015). *Essentials of Professional Cooking*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Cutting techniques positively or negatively affect the cooking process. The quality of the product changes with incorrect cutting. Basic cutting techniques such as julienne, brunoise, mirepoix, paysanne, chiffonade, and bâtonnet directly shape the cooking time and flavour transfer by affecting the surface area of the food. Furthermore, the application of correct cutting techniques supports efficiency, safety, and aesthetic presentation in the kitchen. The misconceptions students encounter in cutting tasks mostly stem from mixing up measurement

units, incorrectly applying knife grip techniques, or cutting pieces that do not conform to standard measurements. Therefore, conceptual awareness is as important as the repetition of motor skills in teaching cutting techniques. Teaching through visual materials, hands-on practice, and concept maps helps students integrate their cognitive and psychomotor competencies. The types of cutting techniques and measurement standards used in culinary education are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Cutting Techniques

Cutting Technique	Description
Tourné	Cutting products into oval and seven-sided shapes. Potatoes are particularly suitable for this cut. Products should be cut into oval shapes 5 cm long and 2 cm wide.
Large Dice Cutting	Products should be cut into large cubes. The cubes should measure 2 cm in width.
Medium Dice	Products should be cut into medium-sized cubes. The cubes should measure 12 mm in width.
Small Dice	Products should be cut into small cubes. The cubes should measure 6 mm on each side.
Brunoise	Products should be cut into small cubes. The cubes should measure 3 mm on each side.
Fine Brunoise	Products should be cut into small cubes. The cubes should measure 1.5 mm on each side.
Rondelle	Products are sliced into round pieces. Measurements vary depending on the diameter or thickness of the slice.
Paysanne	Products should be cut into square shapes. The height should be 3 mm, and the side lengths should be 12 mm.
Lozenge	Products are sliced into diamond shapes. The cutting process is performed at dimensions of 12 mm x 12 mm x 3 mm.
Fermière	Products are cut into irregular shapes. Thicknesses and diameters typically vary.
Bâtonnet	Products are cut into sticks. The cutting process is carried out at dimensions of 6 mm x 6 mm x 6-7.5 cm.
Julienne Cutting	Products are cut into thin sticks. The cutting process is carried out at dimensions of 3 mm x 3 mm x 6 cm.
Fine Julienne	Products are cut into thin strips. The cutting process is carried out at dimensions of 1.5 mm x 1.5 mm x 5 cm.
Oblique Cuts	Typically used for long, cylindrical vegetables. The cutting angle varies depending on the shape of the vegetable.
Chiffonade	This involves cutting leaves into thin strips. It is commonly used for lettuce and herbs.

Source: Gisslen, W. (2015). *Essentials of Professional Cooking*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Cooking methods and chopping techniques must be applied correctly to achieve good results in kitchen production. In addition to teaching students the correct applications, theoretical knowledge must be taught without causing misconceptions. In this way, kitchen applications can become a learning

area based not only on skills but also on scientific accuracy and cognitive awareness. This integrity also provides an important foundation for the conceptual learning process and the identification of misconceptions, which will be detailed in the next section.

2.2. Misconception

Misconceptions are the situation where students have incomplete or incorrect knowledge structures that contradict scientific facts. These misconceptions can negatively affect the learning processes of individuals and lead to the reinforcement of erroneous knowledge. Especially in areas that require both theoretical and practical knowledge such as culinary program, it is of great importance to provide correct concept knowledge. Students may develop misconceptions due to their own experiences, misinformation acquired in daily life or incomplete guidance in the educational process (Daley & Torre, 2010).

In the context of gastronomy education, these misconceptions are particularly focused on cooking methods, food processing techniques, material properties and hygiene. For example, misconceptions such as students confusing "roasting" and "sauteing" methods or perceiving "boiling" method as a cooking process in hot water can directly affect their performance in the kitchen. When the correct learning strategies are not applied, such misconceptions may become permanent and may lead to wrong practices in the professional kitchen environment. Studies have shown that concept maps are effective in determining misconceptions. (Ökten & Seferoğlu, 2022).

2.3. Concept Maps

Concept maps are an educational method that enables students to visually convey their knowledge and learn correctly by establishing relationships between concepts. Developed by Novak and Gowin (1984), this method supports meaningful learning by establishing relationships between concepts. The concept-intensive nature of culinary education makes this method particularly suitable for use.

Concept maps reveal students' thought structures. They are widely used in science and education sciences (Daley & Torre, 2010). Studies conducted in the context of nursing education show that concept maps are effective in increasing creative thinking tendencies and supporting academic success (Ökten & Seferoğlu, 2022).

A systematic review of the use of concept maps as an assessment tool revealed that this method is frequently preferred in engineering education to support the learning process and increase academic achievement (Şanlıtürk & Boy, 2023). In addition, comparative studies in the fields of health sciences and diabetes education show that higher knowledge acquisition is achieved in groups using concept maps compared to traditional lectures (Wilgis & McConnell, 2008).

Since gastronomy education is an interdisciplinary

field that includes practical knowledge, it is of great importance for students to construct their conceptual knowledge. Concept maps can be considered as an effective method in teaching subjects such as food preparation techniques, hygiene practices and kitchen management. In addition, it has been observed that teaching processes with concept maps increase students' learning motivation and reduce misconceptions (Daley & Torre, 2010).

2.4. Related Research

When the studies conducted between 2001 and 2024 on the determination of misconceptions are examined, it is seen that a total of 66 theses were prepared at master's and doctoral level. Some of these theses are exemplified below:

Ünsal (2019) aimed to determine the misconceptions, knowledge deficiencies and scientific knowledge levels of prospective science teachers about gas pressure. In this direction, a four-stage Gas Pressure Misconception Diagnosis Test was developed. The findings show that the candidates' scientific knowledge levels are insufficient, and they have difficulties in giving correct answers, making explanations and trusting their answers. The study provides important contributions in terms of understanding conceptual difficulties and developing appropriate teaching strategies.

Aksoy (2022) examined pre-service science teachers' misconceptions about global warming through a four-stage diagnostic test and calculated the rates of scientific knowledge, lack of knowledge, positive false and negative false. The findings showed that pre-service science teachers had more than 10% misconceptions in each question and that their scientific knowledge of the subject was insufficient. The study reveals the need for effective teaching strategies to eliminate these misconceptions.

Şemet (2023) aimed to determine and correct the misconceptions of university students from different disciplines about the phases and eclipses of the Moon. In the study, which was designed in a determinative and descriptive manner, survey and case study methods were used together. Data were collected through a four-stage astronomy concept test based on the literature and a semi-structured interview; thus, students' misconceptions on the related topics were revealed.

Gürbüz (2023) aimed to determine the misconceptions of pre-service teachers who had taken measurement and evaluation course. For this purpose, he developed a 22-item, three-stage multiple-choice diagnostic test and applied it to 132 prospective teachers from Kocaeli University Faculty of Education. The stages of the test were structured to consist of 4, 4 and 2-choice questions, respectively.

Kartal (2017) aimed to examine pre-service science teachers' level of understanding of basic chemistry concepts and their misconceptions. The study was conducted with 260 pre-service science teachers studying at Necmettin Erbakan University. In the questionnaire consisting of two parts, the first part includes personal information, and the second part includes judgements about the evaluation of chemistry concepts of the candidates with 87 statements. The participants were given the options of "agree", "disagree" and "no idea". The data obtained were statistically analysed and misconceptions about chemistry topics were revealed in detail.

Demirci (2015) aimed to determine students' misconceptions about protein synthesis through concepts questionnaire, concept test and concept maps. In the study, the effect of concept maps in eliminating these misconceptions was compared with the traditional teaching method. In the mixed research design study, quantitative data were analysed using a quasi-experimental design with pretest-post-test control group and qualitative data were analysed using descriptive analysis. While concept map supported instruction was applied in the experimental group, traditional method was preferred in the control group. In the data collection process, various measurement tools were used to compare the level of conceptual understanding and the effectiveness of teaching methods.

Orçan (2013) aimed to examine the misconceptions of graduate students on the concepts related to the research process and the relationship between these misconceptions and research competences. A total of 110 students (58 master's and 52 doctoral students) studying at the Educational Sciences Institutes of Ankara and Gazi Universities constituted the research group. Research Concepts Test (RCT) and Cognitive-Developmental Competences in Research Scale (CDRS) were used as data collection tools. The findings showed that most misconceptions were concentrated in the concept of "test adaptation"; however, there was no significant difference according to the level of education or a significant relationship between misconceptions and competence scores.

These examples clearly show how common misconceptions are in different disciplines and the importance of studies in this field.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Model

In this research, survey method was used from quantitative research method. In the study, it was aimed to determine the misconceptions of the 1st and 2nd year students studying in Söğüt Vocational School Culinary Program about cooking methods and chopping techniques. After the related topics

were explained to the students, they were informed about the concept map method and asked to create their own concept maps. After the learning process was completed, a three-stage misconception determination test developed by the researchers was applied.

3.2. Study Group

The population of the study consists of students enrolled in culinary program at universities across Turkey offering associate degree-level culinary program education. As of 2024, there are 99 universities in Turkey offering this program, with a total student capacity of 6,373. In this context, the population of the study encompasses a fairly large group of students.

The sample of the study consists of a total of 65 students enrolled in the Culinary Program at the Söğüt Vocational School of Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University. All students enrolled in the program were included in the study. Therefore, no sampling technique was used in the sample selection process; the census method was preferred. The census method is based on the inclusion of all individuals in a specific sub-population in the study and, in this respect, eliminates sampling error.

First- and second-year students were evaluated together in the study, and no distinction was made based on class level. Although the census approach was applied in the study due to high accessibility and participation rates, the results cannot be generalised to all culinary program students in Turkey because the sample represents only one university. Nevertheless, the fact that Söğüt Vocational School's curriculum, course content, and student profile are similar to those of other state universities indicates that the findings obtained are adaptable to similar programs.

3.3. Data Collection

The data collection process in the research was carried out after several stages. Firstly, the theoretical information about cooking methods and chopping techniques was explained to the students in the classroom environment. Then, information on how to prepare concept maps was given and sample concept maps were shown. Students individually created concept maps on cooking methods and chopping techniques. After the learning process, a three-stage misconception determination test was applied to the students. The data of the study were collected in the autumn semester of the 2024-2025 academic year in the designated culinary program. All students participating in the study were included in the study on a voluntary basis. The three-stage misconception determination test developed within the scope of the research was used as a data collection tool. During the test application, the research-

er was present in the classroom as a supervisor and supervised the process. This study was ethically approved by the decision of Balıkesir University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee dated 29.11.2024 and numbered 2024/11-44 (Document Date and Number: 13.12.2024 - E.458015). The research was conducted in accordance with the decision of the relevant board and within the framework of ethical principles.

3.4. Data Analysis

The reliability of the three-stage misconception determination tests used in the study was evaluated by Kuder-Richardson (KR-20) coefficient. The KR-20 reliability coefficient was found to be 0.69 in the analysis of two tests whose first and second stages consisted of 68 items in total. This value shows that the test has a moderate level of reliability. The reliability coefficient is close to 0.70. This indicates that the test items are consistent. The difficulty level and item discrimination indices of the items included in the tests were analysed. The difficulty levels were found to range between 0.30 and 0.85. It can be said that the difficulty level of the test questions shows a balanced distribution. It was observed that a significant portion of the discrimination indices of the items in the test were above 0.20. This finding revealed that there was a meaningful level of discrimination among the participants.

The three-stage misconception determination test, which was used as a data collection tool, was structured to reveal the conceptual knowledge levels of the students and their possible misconceptions about the concepts. In the first and second stages of the test, multiple-choice questions are included, and in the third stage, students are asked to what extent they are sure of their answers. This structure

allows us to analyse not only the correct or incorrect answers of the students, but also the cognitive confidence levels behind these answers.

The analysis categories in Table 3 show the criteria used in the evaluation of student responses. The fact that the students answered both questions correctly and stated that they were sure of their answers shows that they have scientific knowledge. On the other hand, students who had one correct and one incorrect answer and were not sure of their answer were included in the category of lack of knowledge. Likewise, students who gave incorrect answers at both stages and expressed indecision were also categorised as lack of knowledge. Students who gave correct answers at both stages but expressed uncertainty about their answers were categorised separately on the grounds that they might have given correct answers by guess or chance.

Misconceptions arise when a student gives an incorrect answer with high confidence. The fact that the student is confident even though his/her answer is wrong shows that he/she has a systematic false belief about the concept. In this context, those who gave correct answers in the first stage and incorrect answers in the second stage and were confident about their answers showed positive misconceptions; those who gave incorrect answers in the first stage and correct answers in the second stage and stated that they were confident again showed negative misconceptions. The students who gave wrong answers to both questions and were sure of their answers were directly in the misconception category.

This analysis approach goes beyond students' superficial knowledge levels and systematically reveals their conceptual understandings, knowledge deficiencies and misconceptions. Thus, it contributes to the planning of more targeted and effective interventions for the teaching process.

Table 3. Three Step Misconception Test Evaluation Table

Categories	Phase One Question	Second Stage Question	Third Stage Question
Scientific Knowledge	Right	Right	Sure
Lack of Information	Right	Wrong	Not sure
	Wrong	Right	Not sure
	Wrong	Wrong	Not sure
Estimated Lucky answer	Right	Right	Not sure
Misconception (Positively Wrong)	Right	Wrong	Sure
Misconception (Negatively Incorrect)	Wrong	Right	Sure
Misconception	Wrong	Wrong	Sure

Source: Arslan, H. O., Cigdemoglu, C., & Moseley, C. (2012). A three-tier diagnostic test to assess pre-service teachers' misconceptions about global warming, greenhouse effect, ozone layer depletion, and acid rain. *International journal of science education*, 34(11), 1667-1686.

4. Findings

4.1. Findings Related to Cooking Methods

To determine the students' conceptual knowledge and possible misconceptions about cooking methods, a three-stage test consisting of 19 items was applied. Within the scope of this test, students' prior knowledge levels, whether they recognised the concepts correctly and their confidence level in their answers were analysed for each cooking method. The questions aimed to assess the extent to which stu-

dents comprehended both basic and lesser-known cooking techniques, and the possibility of misconceptions was considered in students who could not reach the correct answer or exhibited high confidence despite the wrong answer. According to the data obtained, it was observed that students confused some cooking techniques and learnt some of them incompletely or incorrectly. Below, the findings related to the results obtained from this test are presented in detail.

Table 4. Misconception Findings in Cooking Methods

Cooking Methods	Number of incorrectly selected answers in the first and second stages (n)		Number of students who were sure of the answer at the third stage (n)
	Class I	Class II	Total
Blanching	17	16	33
Braising	13	12	25
Roasting	8	9	17
Stir Frying	10	7	17
Simmering	3	11	14
Stewing	7	6	13
Grilling	5	6	11
Broiling	4	4	8
Poaching	2	4	6
Infrared	4	2	6
Sous-Vide	1	5	6
Sauteing	5	1	6
Boiling	1	3	4
Bain-Marie	2	1	3
Deep Frying	1	2	3
Shallow Fat Frying	2	1	3
Microwave	2	-	2
Steaming	-	-	-
Baking	-	-	-

In Table 4, the misconceptions of culinary program students about different cooking methods are presented based on grade levels according to the results of the three-stage concept test. The number of students who gave wrong answers in the first and second stages and the number of students who expressed that they were sure of their answers despite these answers in the third stage are given. These findings reveal students' misconceptions at conceptual level about cooking methods.

According to the results of the analysis, the highest misconception rate was observed in the "Blanching" method. Regarding this method, a total of 33

students gave wrong answers in the first two stages and stated that they were sure of their answers in the third stage despite their wrong answers. Similarly, the "Braising" method also had a high rate of misconceptions, and it was determined that 25 students had incorrect information and thought that this incorrect information was correct.

Following these two methods, a total of 17 students in "Roasting" and "Stir Frying" methods, 14 students in "Simmering" method and 13 students in "Stewing" method exhibited misconceptions. In addition, 11 students had similar misconceptions in the "Grilling" technique.

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These findings show that misconceptions are not only caused by the lack of superficial knowledge, but also that students internalise misconceptions in a permanent and established way. In particular, the fact that the students who gave wrong answers in the third stage stated that they were sure of their answers reveals that these misconceptions have a strong embeddedness at the cognitive level.

On the other hand, the fact that none of the stu-

dents gave wrong answers in "Steaming" and "Baking" methods shows that these basic techniques were better comprehended by the students. Similarly, it is seen that the rate of misconceptions is low in relatively more widely used methods such as Microwave. This shows that students have conceptual knowledge about basic cooking techniques and misconceptions in methods that require technical differences.

Table 5. Positive Misconception Findings in Cooking Methods

Cooking Methods	Number of correct answers in the first stage and incorrect answers in the second stage (n)		Number of students who were sure of the answer at the third stage (n)
	Class I	Class II	
Baking	19	20	39
Microwave	16	14	30
Boiling	17	12	29
Stewing	16	13	29
Grilling	12	15	27
Simmering	10	5	15
Roasting	9	3	12
Blanching	5	5	10
Bain-Marie	4	6	10
Deep Frying	4	5	9
Infrared	6	2	8
Poaching	4	2	6
Sauteing	5	1	6
Braising	3	1	4
Steaming	1	3	4
Sous-Vide	3	-	3
Stir Frying	2	1	3
Shallow Fat Frying	3	-	3
Broiling	1	1	2

Table 5 reveals the students' positive misconceptions about cooking methods. Positive misconception is defined as the student's preference for the wrong answer in the second stage although he/she gives the correct answer in the first stage and states that he/she is sure of his/her answer despite this. This situation shows that the student has an incomplete or erroneous thought at the conceptual level, although he/she can choose the correct information at the beginning, and that he/she continues this wrong learning with confidence.

The findings of the analyses revealed that such misconceptions were seen most intensely in the "Baking" method. A total of 39 students exhibited

positive misconceptions about this method. This is followed by "Microwave", "Boiling" and "Stewing" methods respectively. These results show that although the students gave correct answers about these basic cooking techniques, they could not ground this knowledge conceptually. In particular, the high level of positive misconceptions even in methods such as cooking with microwave, which are frequently encountered in daily life, reveals that these techniques are not sufficiently reinforced conceptually during the teaching process.

In addition, a significant number of students showed similar misconceptions in methods such as "Grilling", "Simmering" and "Roasting". Although the

students were able to define these techniques correctly at the beginning, the fact that they turned to distractor options in the second stage and expressed that they were sure of their answers despite this shows that learning is superficial and conceptually fragile.

On the other hand, the low number of students showing positive misconceptions in techniques such as "Broiling", "Stir Frying" and "Shallow Fat Frying" suggests that these methods are better comprehended or involve less conceptual confusion.

Table 6. Negative Misconception Findings in Cooking Methods

Cooking Methods	Number of incorrect answers in the first stage and correct answers in the second stage (n)		Number of students who were sure of the answer at the third stage (n)
	Class I	Class II	Total
Stir Frying	8	8	16
Roasting	6	6	12
Poaching	2	4	6
Steaming	6	-	6
Broiling	2	1	3
Simmering	2	-	2
Microwave	2	-	2
Infrared	-	2	2
Shallow Fat Frying	1	1	2
Stewing	1	-	1
Braising	-	1	1
Bain-Marie	1	-	1
Deep Frying	1	-	1
Sauteing	-	1	1
Boiling	-	-	-
Blanching	-	-	-
Sous-Vide	-	-	-
Grilling	-	-	-
Baking	-	-	-

Table 6 reveals students' negative misconceptions about cooking methods. Negative misconception is defined when a student gives an incorrect answer in the first stage and states that he/she is sure of his/her answer in the third stage although he/she chooses the correct answer in the second stage. This situation shows that although the student has reached the correct answer, he/she still has a wrong conceptual model mentally and maintains this wrong idea. Therefore, even if the correct answer is given on the surface, there is a deterioration in the underlying conceptual framework.

According to the data, the most negative misconceptions were observed in the "Stir Frying" method. A total of 16 students were included in this category,

which shows that this technique is not sufficiently comprehended by the students and is based on wrong foundations at the conceptual level. This was followed by the "Roasting" method, and 12 students had a similar misconception. The fact that both methods are widely used in daily life suggests that although the students know these techniques practically, they could not conceptualise them correctly in the academic context.

Other cooking methods in which negative misconceptions were frequently observed include "Steaming", "Poaching", "Broiling", "Simmering", "Microwave" and "Infrared". These findings indicate that students also have misconceptions about topics that require detailed technical knowledge.

What is particularly noteworthy is that in some of the cooking methods, although the students gave incorrect answers in the first stage and reached the correct answer in the second stage, they were still sure of their misinformation. This situation reveals that not only knowledge transfer, but also cognitive confidence and conceptual awareness should be developed in the teaching process.

On the other hand, no negative misconceptions were observed in some cooking methods such as "Boiling", "Blanching", "Sous-Vide", "Grilling" and "Baking". This reveals that students have a better grasp of these basic techniques or that these methods create less conceptual confusion.

4.2. Findings Related to Chopping Techniques

In the study, a test consisting of a total of 15 questions with a three-stage structure was applied to determine the misconceptions of the students about the verification techniques. This test assessed students' levels of recognition, differentiation, and conceptualisation of different cutting techniques. The questions were prepared in a way to cover both basic and less known techniques, and the level and structure of mislearning were analysed in line with the answers given by the students. Below, the findings from this test on cutting techniques are presented in detail.

Table 7. Misconception Findings in Cutting Techniques

Cutting Techniques	Number of incorrectly selected answers in the first and second stages (n)		Number of students who were sure of the answer at the third stage (n)
	Class I	Class II	
Medium Dice	7	8	15
Chiffonade	6	7	13
Large Dice	4	8	12
Oblique Cuts	6	5	11
Paysanne	7	3	10
Julienne	5	2	7
Tourné	5	2	7
Small Dice	2	3	5
Rondelle	2	2	4
Batonnet	-	3	3
Brunoise	1	1	2
Fermière	1	-	1
Fine Julienne	-	-	-
Fine Brunoise	-	-	-
Lozenge	-	-	-

Table 7 shows the misconceptions of culinary students about various chopping techniques. When the number of students who gave wrong answers in the first and second stages and the number of students who stated that they were sure of their answers in the third stage are analysed, it is seen that there is a significant level of conceptual confusion in some chopping techniques.

The highest misconception was observed in the "Medium Dice" technique. A total of 15 students in both grade levels answered this method incorrectly and at the same time stated that they were sure of their incorrect answers. This result shows that stu-

dents had difficulty in defining the basic chopping dimensions and learnt the concept incorrectly. It is seen that 13 and 12 students exhibited misconceptions in "Chiffonade" and "Large Dice" techniques, respectively. This situation shows that chopping techniques, which have a similar structure, are confused with each other in the naming and visual recognition processes.

In addition, "Oblique Cuts", "Paysanne", "Julienne", "Tourné" and "Small Dice" techniques also contain a considerable number of misconceptions. Most of these techniques both show visual similarities and require detailed discrimination skills

in terms of naming. This reveals that the students could not internalise these techniques sufficiently not only practically but also conceptually.

On the other hand, fewer misconceptions were detected in simpler or more frequently encountered techniques such as "Rondelle", "Batonnet" and

"Brunoise". In addition, the fact that there were no wrong answers for techniques such as "Fine Julienne", "Fine Brunoise" and "Lozenge" suggests that students have clearer knowledge on these subjects.

Table 8. Positive Misconception Findings in Cutting Techniques

Cutting Techniques	Number of correct answers in the first stage and incorrect answers in the second stage (n)		Number of students who were sure of the answer at the third stage (n)
	Class I	Class II	
Lozenge	26	18	44
Fermière	13	10	23
Small Dice	12	8	20
Fine Brunoise	9	7	16
Oblique Cuts	12	3	15
Brunoise	7	4	11
Large Dice	4	5	9
Tourné	5	3	8
Julienne	4	3	7
Batonnet	4	3	7
Fine Julienne	4	3	7
Medium Dice	4	2	6
Rondelle	-	4	4
Paysanne	-	2	2
Chiffonade	1	-	1

Table 8 shows the cases where students exhibited positive misconceptions about chopping techniques. Such misconceptions were analysed through the cases where the students gave the correct answer in the first stage but chose the wrong option in the second stage and stated that they were sure of their answer in the third stage. This situation shows that although the students answered the question correctly, their mental structures related to the related concept were weak and unstable, and their learning remained superficial.

According to the data, the most positive misconceptions were observed in the "Lozenge" technique. A total of 44 students exhibited a positive misconception in this method and stated that they were sure of their answer. This result shows that the related concept may have been chosen correctly by the stu-

dents only intuitively or accidentally, but it was not sufficiently internalised at the conceptual level.

The following techniques include "Fermière", "Small Dice", "Fine Brunoise" and "Oblique Cuts". Since these techniques may have similarities especially in terms of appearance, they are open to conceptual confusion. In addition, it is understood that students do not have a clear knowledge about naming, classifying and distinguishing these techniques.

Although relatively low levels of positive misconceptions were observed in other chopping techniques, it is still noteworthy that students had conceptual uncertainties about these techniques. In particular, the low numbers that are sure of the correct answer suggest that the students reached the correct answer with an approach based on rote memorisation or chance, rather than based on concept.

Table 9. Negative Misconception Findings in Cutting Techniques

Cutting Techniques	Number of incorrect answers in the first stage and correct answers in the second stage (n)		Number of students who were sure of the answer at the third stage (n)
	Class I	Class II	
Chiffonade	7	6	13
Rondelle	6	5	11
Julienne	3	7	10
Brunoise	2	3	5
Small Dice	2	1	3
Paysanne	2	1	3
Batonnet	1	2	3
Large Dice	-	2	2
Fine Julienne	1	-	1
Medium Dice	-	1	1
Oblique Cuts	-	-	-
Fermière	-	-	-
Fine Brunoise	-	-	-
Tourné	-	-	-
Lozenge	-	-	-

Table 9 presents the cases in which students exhibited negative misconceptions about chopping techniques. This type of misconceptions refers to the situations in which students answer the question incorrectly in the first stage, choose the correct answer in the second stage, but still state that they are sure of the answer in the third stage. This situation shows that students may have reached the correct answer without understanding the concept; in other words, their conceptual awareness is not developed, and they have confidence in their wrong knowledge.

According to the data, the chopping technique with the highest number of negative misconceptions was "Chiffonade". A total of 13 students first gave an incorrect answer in this method and then chose the correct answer but stated that they were sure of their answer. This situation shows that the related concept has not been sufficiently internalised by the students in terms of both terminology and practice.

Similarly, a high number of negative misconceptions were found in the "Rondelle" and "Julienne" techniques. Other techniques with negative misconceptions include less complex chopping techniques such as "Brunoise", "Small Dice", "Paysanne", "Batonnet", "Large Dice", which shows that even basic concepts are sometimes mislearnt, and students can rely on these misconceptions. In some techniques, no negative misconceptions were detected.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study determined the conceptual knowledge levels of students in culinary program education regarding cooking methods and chopping techniques. Conceptual misconceptions were examined through a three-stage conceptual misconception identification test. The findings show that students have learned certain techniques incorrectly or incompletely at a conceptual level in both cooking and chopping. All misconceptions were observed at a high level, particularly in techniques such as "blanching", "braising" and "stir frying". This indicates that, in addition to practical training, students have deficiencies at the conceptual level. The fact that students reported high confidence despite their incorrect answers indicates that these misconceptions are not superficial but cognitively embedded, emphasising the importance of conceptual teaching strategies.

When examining findings related to cutting techniques, conceptual misunderstandings were observed in basic cutting techniques. Students particularly confused concepts in cutting techniques with similar visuals. These results indicate that students memorised concepts and had weak associations during the application stage. Although they performed correctly in the first stage of the tests,

they made incorrect choices in the second stage. The tests revealed that answers were intuitive and that knowledge was not retained. To address these issues, an instructional approach based on observation-based education and practical assignment techniques can be applied to students.

The findings indicate that culinary education is not merely a process of acquiring skills, but also a process of conceptual thinking and cognitive structuring. Students' misconceptions regarding cooking and cutting techniques can be addressed both practically and theoretically. In this regard, integrating methods such as concept maps, structured feedback, comparative application, and error analysis-based teaching into the learning process can be effective in reducing misconceptions. Furthermore, reflective learning techniques that enable students to identify their own learning errors should also be used in the teaching process. These methods help students recognise their misconceptions and restructure them with correct scientific knowledge.

Research findings reveal that culinary education should be approached holistically. The relationship between cooking methods and cutting techniques is important not only in terms of technical application but also in terms of cognitive integrity and professional competence. In this context, incorporating concept-based teaching models into curriculum design will deepen the learning process, thereby increasing both students' academic achievement and their performance in the sector. Furthermore, comparative studies of culinary program at different universities in future research may offer a more comprehensive perspective on the causes of misconceptions.

5.1. Misconceptions about Cooking Methods

The test results revealed that the methods in which students had the most misconceptions related to cooking were 'Braising' and 'Blanching'. A total of 33 students in the "Blanching" technique and 25 students in the "Braising" technique gave wrong answers in the first two stages and stated that they were sure of their mistakes in the third stage. This finding shows that the students have not only a lack of knowledge about these methods, but also permanent and established misconceptions.

Following these two methods, 17 students each showed misconceptions in "Roasting" and "Stir Frying" techniques, 14 students in "Simmering" method and 13 students in "Stewing" method. On the other hand, no misconceptions were detected in "Steaming" and "Baking" methods.

The fact that the students gave the correct answer in the first stage and chose the wrong answer in the second stage and stated that they were sure despite

this reveals a positive misconception. This misconception was mostly seen in the "Baking" technique. A total of 39 students showed positive misconceptions in this method. This was followed by "Microwave", "Boiling" and "Stewing" methods respectively. These results show that even if the students reached the correct answer, they could not fully internalise these methods at the conceptual level.

In the negative misconception, students should give a wrong answer in the first stage and a correct answer in the second stage and still be sure of their answer. This misconception was mostly observed in the "Stir Frying" method; a total of 16 students were in this category. This was followed by the "Roasting" method. In addition, a certain number of negative misconceptions were identified in techniques such as "Steaming", "Poaching", "Broiling", "Simmering", "Microwave" and "Infrared". On the other hand, no negative misconceptions were observed in "Boiling", "Blanching", "Sous-Vide", "Grilling" and "Baking" methods.

5.2. Misconceptions about Chopping Techniques

The highest misconception in chopping techniques was seen in the "Medium Dice" technique, and a total of 15 students answered this method incorrectly and stated that they were sure of their answer. This was followed by "Chiffonade" and "Large Dice" techniques. It is seen that students often confuse the techniques that are visually similar, and conceptual separation is not fully achieved.

Positive misconceptions were mostly observed in the "Lozenge" technique; a total of 44 students initially chose the correct answer in this method, but in the second stage they chose the wrong answer. This situation was followed by techniques such as "Fermière" with 23 students, "Small Dice" with 20 students and "Fine Brunoise" with 16 students. This shows that even if the students reached the correct answer, they recognised these concepts at a superficial level but did not have a complete conceptualisation mentally.

Negative misconceptions were mostly observed in the "Chiffonade" technique; a total of 13 students were in this category. This was followed by "Rondelle" and "Julienne". The fact that negative misconceptions can be seen even in simpler techniques such as "Brunoise" or "Small Dice" shows that students can occasionally mislearn even basic concepts and rely on these misconceptions.

The findings obtained show that students have permanent, systematic and highly confident misconceptions in both cooking methods and chopping techniques. It is understood that the ability to make conceptual distinction is weak, especially in visually similar or closely named techniques.

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This situation reveals that only practical teaching is not sufficient; teaching strategies based on conceptual learning and supporting cognitive structuring are needed. It is thought that a teaching process supported by methods such as concept maps, comparative visual contents, peer interaction and structured feedback can be effective in reducing these misconceptions.

In addition, the systematic use of three-stage diagnostic tests in culinary education can be a powerful tool for determining misconceptions and restructuring the teaching process accordingly. Thus, students' professional competences can be developed at both practical and conceptual levels. Furthermore, concept misunderstanding identification tests can be systematically used in culinary education. This enables the development of students' professional competencies at both the practical and conceptual levels.

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Unpacking Türkiye's Trilateral Trade-Off: Export Quality, Growth, and Carbon Emissions¹

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Abstract

Export quality, economic growth, and carbon emissions are key elements in the discourse on sustainable development, particularly for developing economies. This study explores the dynamic relationships among these variables in Türkiye over the period 1963–2023. Using annual data on GDP, the Export Quality Index (EQI), and CO₂ emissions, the analysis employs the Fourier Toda-Yamamoto (FTY) causality test and continuous wavelet transform (CWT) to capture both temporal causality and time–frequency correlations. The research addresses a substantial theoretical challenge, as the nonlinear and time-varying nature of these trilateral relationships cannot be adequately captured by traditional models. By integrating FTY and wavelet analysis, the study offers a robust and flexible framework that overcomes key empirical limitations and provides time-sensitive insights for policymakers aiming to align export-led growth with environmental sustainability. Empirical results show no direct causality

between export quality and either GDP or carbon emissions. However, a strong bidirectional causality exists between economic growth and emissions. Wavelet analysis reveals positive, time-varying correlations between export quality and both GDP and emissions, particularly during 1963–1980 and 2000–2013. These findings suggest that improvements in export quality have contributed to economic growth and environmental pressures during certain periods, though their long-term effects remain complex and context-dependent. Overall, the study highlights the importance of integrating environmental considerations into export-oriented growth strategies and which strategies could be adopted.

Keywords: Export Quality, Economic Growth, Carbon Emission, Sustainability, Türkiye.

JEL Codes: C32, F14, O44, O56

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1. Introduction

Achieving long-term developmental goals in emerging economies is fundamentally contingent upon the successful implementation of structural transformation policies that enhance productivity, diversify the economic base, and promote sustainable growth. So that, export quality vitally arises, as it not only reflects the intricacy of production credentials of a country but also forms its coalescence inside global value catenation. Augmenting export merchantises' quality can conduct to exceptional remunerative benefits by increasing periphery of profit of firms, generating labour as well as broad prosperity. An increase in superior products' worldwide demand boosts the advancement of export volume; accordingly stirring inflows of international funds and promoting gni per capita. Such method generates auxiliary habitat both for savings and investment and so economic proliferation. Howbeit, this high-quality transmit manufacturing necessitates advanced technology embracements and production methods' refinements. Here the technological promotions which are commonly guided by R&D investments increases is crucial to nurture innovation, enhance competitiveness, and minimize cost of production in time. Nonetheless, here-mentioned elevations can be lead to greater utilization of resources plus output of carbon. So that deepining solicitude about saeculum of both steadiness and sustainability of environment. The creation of superior merchantise generally entails useage of highest-quality raw materials and production procedures refinements, that might commanding waste generation rises, unwittingly. Withal, to be consisted in this competitive global market, companies have to stick multinational peripheral norms to track and to lessen environmental deterioration. Thus, analyzing the vigorous reciprocity among export quality, economic growth, and environmental outcomes is pivotal to compose policy initiatives which manage economic progress and ecological responsibility together. The research query of the paper is to probe the dynamic nexus among export quality (EQ), economic growth (G or GDP), carbon emissions (CE) and their impact on sustainable development. Yet, the scope is to evaluate export quality, economic growth, and carbon emissions over the period 1963–2023 of Türkiye in the context of their interaction. In line with this problem, the aim of the study is to determine whether direct causal relationships exist between these trilaterals employing the FTY causality test, also to analyze how these relationships evolve over time. Additionally, the study seeks to assess the time-varying correlations and the temporal evolution of these interrelations through continuous wavelet analysis.

This study is structured around five associated dimensions. First, it synthesizes the theoretical cornerstones of EQ, emphasizing its role in structural transformation, international competitiveness, and

sustainable development, while evaluating the methodology of the Export Quality Index (EQI). Second, it provides a extensive review of empirical literature that explores the complex and context-dependent trilateral links across countries and time periods. Third, the study sketches an advanced methodological framework employing the Fourier Toda-Yamamoto causality test and continuous wavelet analysis in order to examine the dynamic and potentially non-linear interactions. Finally, the research findings are presented and discussed in relation to existing scholarship, offering refined insights and policy-relevant determinations for intergrating economic advancement with environmental sustainability.

2. Theoretical Background

Policymakers and industry leaders are increasingly focusing on the qualitative transformation of export structures as a tool to support long-term development. Various policy avenues have been identified to this end, including sectoral diversification, targeted resource reallocation, and the systematic enhancement of product quality (Khandelwal, 2010). Improving product quality enables nations to leverage their existing advantages, thereby elevating efficiency levels and increasing export-derived revenues. However, the potential for quality enhancement differs by product category; specifically, finished goods exhibit a greater capacity for quality improvement relative to agricultural products and natural resources (Henn, 2013). To enhance export quality, manufacturers and policymakers can pursue several avenues: (i) bolstering the physical-human capital quality (Hausmann et al., 2006); (ii) optimizing the "Process-Product-Function-Intersection" system within manufacturing lines (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002); (iii) reducing tariffs and fostering global trade liberalization through comprehensive strategies, including free trade agreements, deeper integration, foreign direct investment flows, and North-trade and South-trade both among and within themselves (Grossman & Krueger, 1991; Anitweiler et al., 2001; Amighini & Sanfilippo, 2014; Fan et al., 2015); (iv) assessing the creation embedding and advantages of sectoral divisions (Hidalgo & Hausmann, 2009; Poncet & Starosta de Waldemar, 2013); and (v) increasing intricacy, instability, and relative advantage within the fabrication sector (Lee, 2010; Krishna & Levchenko, 2013; Maggioni et al., 2016). Notably, the superiority of exported goods particularly relevant to the overhaul of nations at intermediate phases of economic advancement (Gozgor & Can, 2017).

EQI, a pivotal metric for assessing the quality of exported goods, is predicated on various factors, including technical characteristics, durability, reliability, innovativeness, and customer satisfaction associated with products within the export portfolio. The EQI, utilized by the IMF, is computed using unit

values derived from an extensive dataset encompassing 55.8 million observations of trade values and quantities at the 4-digits Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) level. In instances where import quantities for a specific buyer-exporter-product-year combination are reported across multiple unit sets (for example, kilograms and dozens for clothing) within the same 4-digit category, these are classified as distinct "4-digit SITC plus" products to facilitate the acquisition of comparable unit values within the same product category. Consequently, the total number of "4-digit SITC plus" products

identified through this methodology amounts to 835. The quality estimations are derived from this comprehensive trade dataset, leveraging trade prices, values, quantities, and various supplementary information. The estimation methodology primarily bases quality on unit values, incorporating two significant adjustments. Inspired by Hallak's (2006) framework, this approach is a modified version that seeks to eliminate data restrictions. Initially, it is posited that the trade price p_{mxt} (equivalently unit value) for any given product is determined by the following relationship:

$$\ln p_{mxt} = \zeta_0 + \zeta_1 \ln \theta_{mxt} + \zeta_2 \ln y_{xt} + \zeta_3 \ln \text{Dist}_{mx} + \xi_{mxt} \quad (1)$$

In Eq 1, m , x , and t represent the importer, exporter, and temporal dimension, respectively. Price determination is influenced by three key factors: unobserved quality (θ_{mxt}), the per capita income of the exporter (y_{xt}), and the geographical distance sepa-

rating the importer and exporter (Dist_{mx}). According to IMF (2024), to address the disparities in consumer preferences and the costs associated with trade, a quality-enhanced gravity model is constructed for each product category, as delineated in Eq 2.

$$\ln(\text{Imports})_{mxt} = \text{ImFE} + \text{ExFE} + \alpha \ln \text{Dist}_{mx} + \beta l_{mxt} + \delta \ln \theta_{mxt} \ln y_{mt} + \varepsilon_{mxt}$$

In this analytical context, ImFE represents importer fixed effects, encompass factors unique to the importer that influence the studied outcomes, while ExFE denotes exporter fixed effects. Physical distance, a fundamental variable in gravity models of trade, is defined as previously outlined. The matrix of conventional trade determinants, referred as $\mathbf{I}_{mxt}$, includes range of factors traditionally incorporated within gravity models. The exporter-specific quality parameter, θ_{mxt} , encapsulates the quality of the

goods or services produced by the exporter, and is analyzed in conjunction with the importer's per capita income, represented as y_{mt} . A positive coefficient for δ (i.e., $\delta > 0$) indicates that higher income levels are associated with an increased demand for superior-quality goods. By rearranging Eq 1 and Eq 2 and substituting the unobserved quality parameter in the gravity equation with observable parameters, researchers derive the following estimation equation (IMF, 2024):

$$\begin{aligned} \ln(\text{Imports})_{mxt} &= \text{ImFE} + \text{ExFE} + \alpha \ln \text{Dist}_{mx} + \beta l_{mxt} + \zeta'_1 \ln p_{mxt} \ln y_{mt} + \zeta'_2 \ln y_{xt} \ln y_{mt} \\ &+ \zeta'_3 \ln \text{Dist}_{mx} \ln y_{mt} + \xi'_{mxt} \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Here $\zeta'_1 = \frac{\delta}{\zeta_1}$, $\zeta'_2 = -\frac{\delta \zeta_2}{\zeta_1}$, ζ'_3 and $\xi'_{mxt} = -\frac{\delta \zeta'_0 + \delta \xi_{mxt}}{\zeta_1} \ln y_{mt} + \varepsilon_{mxt}$

Eq 3 is estimated separately for each of the 835 coefficients, corresponding to the 851 "4-digit SITC plus" product categories in the dataset, using a two-stage least squares method. ξ_{mxt} is a component of p_{mxt} , so the regressor $(\ln p_{mxt} \ln y_{mt})$, is correlated with

the error term (ξ'_{mxt}). Therefore, $\ln p_{mxt-1} \ln y_{mt}$ is used as an instrument for $\ln p_{mxt} \ln y_{mt}$. The regression coefficients are then used to make extensive quality estimates that is adjusted for production costs and selection bias:

$$\text{Quality estimate}_{mxt} = \delta \ln \theta_{mxt} = \zeta'_1 \ln p_{mxt} + \zeta'_2 \ln y_{xt} + \zeta'_3 \ln \text{Dist}_{mx} \quad (4)$$

Countries that export high-quality products are not only realize high profit margins but also create more significant employment opportunities. Thereby elevating overall welfare levels. The international demand for high-quality goods correlates with increased export volumes, which in turn stimulates a higher flow of foreign currency. This flow is instrumental in augmenting national income and per cap-

ita income. Also, it is important in fostering an environment conducive to savings and investment, and further rising economic growth. In the high-quality product gains, corporations are usually impreviently obtain innovative technologies along with multicomplex production methods to simultaneously enhancing productiveness and minimizing costs. Hence, while the amplification of gain margins hap-

pens, businesses can raise the capacity of production and this provokes extra employment. Besides, centering quality behoves increase in R&D investments. Consequently, promoting techs and output innovations strengthen global competitiveness while creating new avenues in worldwide economies. Such dynamism do not only escalates quantities of export or earnings of foreign exchange. It intensifies respect and prestige of the state globally. Having such a statu can cause a rise in demand for products produced in the country along with amplification of brand value, premium pricing and profit enhancement. Nevertheless, it should better be adressed that product quality enhancement ordinarily relies on improving production procedures, output design and sourcing higher-quality raw material, which have the potential to elevate operating costs. If the costs increases, these expenses can unwittingly lessen competitiveness of traders, when synchronously can decrease profits. Likewise, if improvements in quality steers escalation of prices, then exporters can be at risk to meet reduction in rivalry and thereby detrimentation of trade share and retardmentation in growth trajectories. Besides, high-quality products often cater to specific market segments, that may create product diversity depreciation and raise of reliance on a singular market. Therefore, fluctuations in the needs of the markets or magnified rivalry can adversely influence export-dealers, emphasizing the complexities in pursuit of quality.

The persuasion of export quality on growth provisional to many elements as a country's level of development, attribution of export merchandises or globally predominant trade atmosphere.

Corporations which deals with high-quality commonly experience augmentation in production sizes determined via lifted profit ranges. But, mentioned expansion may lead to unexpected raise

in both energy and water consumptions as well as increase in waste generation so environmental pollution. To alleviate the cost of manufacturing, some corporations may opt to relocate their businesses to countries which have looser ecological rules and regulations. This alleviation, on the other hand, may worsen these jurisdictions' pollution problems. However, the high-quality exporter firms oftenly invest in highly viable techs that uprises efficiency of allocation of resources thereby may lessen the pollution. Additionally, corporations must abide multinational environmental regulations in order to avoid punishment and hence maintaining their positions in competitive market arena. Eventually, the complex interaction between EQ and environmental outcomes highlights to have integrated approaches via emphasizing economic advancement and ecological preservation. Securing this conciliation is important to achieve sustainable development in an increasingly interconnected world.

2.1. Empirical Literature Review

Although the effect of exports on economic growth is extensively discussed in the literature, the link interjacent of quality and production-related carbon emissions has gathered higher attention only in past two decades. Therefore, in this part the aim is to elucidate the aforementioned knotty link among export quality (EQ), economic growth (G), and carbon emissions (CE) through examining the applied literature. This functional literature mostly designed by econometric model analysis such as panel data and/or time series. Thereupon, the main aim is to synthesize only econometric-based research and try to explain the interation between critical parameters.

Table 1 exhibits econometric-based reseach that investigates trilateral relationship.

Table 1. Selected Empirical Literature

	Authors	Sample (Period)	Method	Findings
Export Quality & Economic Growth Nexus	Kiiza et al. (2022)	United States, Sub-Saharan African Countries (1963-2010)	GMM	Rise in EQ increases income convergence.
	Bilgili et al. (2022)	United States (1980-2019)	Markov Switching Model	A positive impact of EQ on G
	Wang et al. (2021)	Austria, Norway, Finland, Ireland, Japan, Singapore, Sweden, South Korea, US, Switzerland, UK, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Italy (1980-2014)	Panel Cointegration FMOLS, DOLS, Granger Causality Test	Higher EQ generally reduces CE
	Henn et al. (2013)	178 countries (1962-2010)	Panel Data Analysis, GMM	EQ increases G in developing countries
	Jarreau & Poncet (2012)	China (1997-2009)	Regression Analysis	Positive impact of EQ on G

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Export Quality and Carbon Emissions Relationship	Manova & Zhang (2012)	China (2003-2005)	Regression Analysis	Higher the quality goods leads higher quality inputs
	Bustos (2011)	Argentina (1992-1996)	Generalized Differences-In-Differences Estimation Method	EQ rises G
	Hausmann et al. (2006)	United States (1992-2003)	Fixed Effect, Random Effect, Regression Analysis	Increase in EQ rises G
	Manga et al. (2023)	China, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea, India, Oman (1970-2014)	ARDL Bounds Testing	Higher EQ reduces CE in China and India, but increases in Thailand and the Philippines.
	Trinh et al. (2022)	29 countries and regions in East Asia and the Pacific (1975-2014)	FMOLS, DOLS, Granger Causality Test	1% increase in EQI leads a 0.071% increase in CE.
	Wang et al. (2021)	Austria, Norway, Finland, Ireland, Japan, Singapore, Sweden, South Korea, US, Switzerland, UK, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Italy (1980-2014)	Panel Cointegration, FMOLS, DOLS, Granger Causality Test	Higher EQ reduces CE
	Doğan et al. (2020)	63 Developed and Developing Countries (1971-2014)	Pooled OLS, Panel Quantile Regression Model	Increase in EQ reduces environmental degradation in high-income countries, but less reduction in low-income countries.
	Murshed & Dao (2020)	Selected South Asian Economies (1972-2014)	Gregory-Hansen Cointegration Test, FMOLS, Mean Group, and Common Correlated Effects Mean Group Estimator	Increase in EQ reduces CE
	Fang et al. (2019)	82 Developing Countries (1970-2014)	Fixed Effects Model	Increase in EQ has a positive impact on the rate of increase in CE
	Gozgor & Can (2017)	China (1971-2010)	ARDL Bounds Test, Error Correction Model, Granger Causality Test	Increase in EQ decreases CE
	Nguyen & Su (2022)	30 low and lower-middle-income, 21 upper-middle-income, and 41 high-income economies (2002-2014)	Pooled OLS Method	EQ reduces income inequality.
	Wang et al. (2021)	Austria, Norway, Finland, Ireland, Japan, Singapore, Sweden, South Korea, US, Switzerland, UK, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Italy (1980-2014)	Panel Cointegration, FMOLS, DOLS, Granger Causality Test	G and urbanization rise CE
	Nguyen & Su (2021)	49 Low and Lower-Middle-Income, 31 Upper-Middle-Income, and 48 High-Income Economies (2002-2014)	Fixed Effect, Random Effect, Dynamic Panel Data Model	Significant bidirectional causality between financial development indicators and export quality.

Carbon Emissions and Economic Growth Relationship	Murshed & Dao (2020)	Selected South Asian Economies (1972-2014)	Gregory-Hansen Cointegration Test, FMOLS, Mean Group, CCE Mean Group Estimator	The panel data analysis results support the Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) hypothesis, but country-specific results show heterogeneity in this regard.
	Fang et al. (2019)	82 Developing Countries (1970-2014)	Fixed Effects Model	Increase in G increases CE
	Adu & Denkyirah (2018)	7 West African countries (1970-2013)	Fixed Effects, Random Effects	G significantly increases CE in the short term and not significantly reduce degradation in the long term.
	Omri (2013)	14 MENA Countries	GMM	Bidirectional causality relationship between G and CE

The possible acquired knowledge from Table 1 can be outlines as follows:

- Export quality directly link and mostly assists growth (Kiiza et al., 2022; Bilgili et al, 2022; Henn et al., 2013).
- An increase in export quality can reduce income convergence and environmental degradation (Doğan et al., 2020).
- Firms using higher quality inputs and producing higher quality goods are more successful (Manova & Zhang, 2012).
- The diversity and quality of the export portfolio can have a significant impact on economic growth (Hausmann et al., 2006).
- An increase in export quality reduces carbon emissions (Wang et al., 2021; Doğan et al. 2020; Murshed & Dao, 2020).
- There are mixed impressions regarding whether export quality leads or not to leads a rise in carbon emissions (Manga et al., 2023; Trinh et al, 2022; Fang et al. 2019).
- Economic growth increases carbon emissions (Wang et al., 2021; Murshed & Dao, 2020; Fang et al. 2019; Adu & Denkyirah, 2018).
- Economic growth increases carbon emissions up to a certain point but reduces them at higher income levels (Nguyen & Su, 2020).

As it can be detaily seen from Table 1 that the literature consistently insinuate high EQ-high EG-less CE triality. However, it is essential to note that due to sophisticated dynamics of this triality may differ through time, sector and country.

2.2. Data and Methodology

This study investigates the causal Nexus among EQ, G and CE in Türkiye. Due to data constraints, it was necessary for the analysis to cover from 1963 to 2023, and the selection of variables was guided by existing literature. EQI stands for export quality, with data sourced from the IMF database. Economic growth is represented by GDP (in constant 2015 USD) per capita, while carbon emissions are represented by Carbon Emissions (CRB) per capita. Both data sets obtained from the World Bank. The GDP variable is log-transformed. EQI and CRB variables are analyzed in their original forms, as they are expressed in ratios and indices.

For this study, the following methodology is employed:

1. Descriptive statistics of the variables are analyzed.
2. A unit root test is applied to determine the stationarity degree of the variables. In this study, the Fourier Augmented Dickey Fuller (FADF) unit root test is used.
3. Since stationarity is detected, FTY casuality test is deemed appropriate for the study.
4. The triality is also examined using Wavelet analysis, since because it produces time-frequency decomposition as well as has superiority in time-frequency localizations.

The FADF unit root test is traditional Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test's prolongation, diffent along with Fourier expressions in formulated test equation. The mentioned test occupies nonlinear demeanors as well as structural breaks of series in a superior way through employing Fourier series. Such aspect is exceptionally beneficial to notice nonlinear Dynamics and structural amendments oftenly inspected in both economical and financial time series. Enders and Lee (2012)'s central equation is below:

$$\Delta y_t = \alpha_1 + \delta_t + \beta y_{t-1} + y_1 \sin\left(\frac{2\pi kt}{T}\right) + y_2 \cos\left(\frac{2\pi kt}{T}\right) + \sum_{i=1}^p \theta_i \Delta y_{t-i} + u_t \quad (5)$$

In Eq 5, y_t denotes for the time series, t shows the trend, π signifies the constant pi, T means the data's total size. Again, in the equation, k represents the frequency that minimizes the sum of squared residuals when the parameters sign as $\alpha, \delta, \theta, y_1, y_2$. The equation's error term is u_t . The abovementioned test finer in terms of capturing nonlinear structures and structural breaks, enabling more precise simulation of the sophisticated dynamics for the time series used in this study.

Thereafter assessing the variable stationary, the FT-Ycasuality test has employed in order to examine whether a causality exist or not. This assay purposes to figure nonlinearity in structures and structural breaks in used series via annexing Fourier term into Toda-Yamamoto (TY) model in order to check finer accuracy and reliability of the results. Through the test, firstly each time series' the degree of integration (d) has been determined. Later, the model has

predicted by employing aforesaid determined lag length (p) together with Fourier terms. Also, Wald tests have carried out via both the calculated integration degrees and " p "s. Hereunder mentioned tests monitor whether the coefficients are zero. In case where the Wald test implies the coefficient values are different from zero, causality can be said. According to Alper et al (2022) and Singh (2023) the test has a greater ability to capture non-linear structures and structural breaks; and it can be utilized albeit the used series have diverse degree of integration.

The Fourier methodology can be used to examine structural alterations of anonymous timing, frequency and form. So the test literaturally accepted as fairly plain technique- which examines gradual changes under the lack of anterior knowledge on either date, number and nature of breaks- to capture long-term movements and swift breaks as reported by Nazlioglu et al (2018) reported as

$$y_t = a(t) + \beta_1 y_{t-1} + \dots + \beta_{p+d} y_{t-(p+d)} + \varepsilon_t \quad (6)$$

The structural changes stated as $a(t)$ which is also a function of time is shown at Eq 6 (Becker et al. 2006).

$$a(t) = \alpha_0 + \sum_{k=1}^n y_{1k} \sin\left(\frac{2\pi kt}{T}\right) + \sum_{k=1}^n y_{2k} \cos\left(\frac{2\pi kt}{T}\right) \quad (7)$$

In Eq 7 k , a particular frequency, y_1 measures the amplitude of the frequency, and y_2 measures the phase shift of the frequency. A high (n) value can cause fluctuations in stochastic parameters, limiting degrees of freedom, and increasing the risk of overfitting. However, a single Fourier frequency can model different breaks in deterministic components regardless of the time, number, or form of the break.

Increasing the n value causes changes in stochastic parameters, reducing degrees of freedom and leading to overfitting. A single Fourier frequency can mimic different breaks in deterministic components, regardless of the timing, number, and form of the break (Becker et al. 2006). Based on this information, $\alpha(t)$ can be defined as follows using a single frequency component (Nazlioglu et al., 2016): By consider-

$$a(t) = \alpha_0 + y_1 \sin\left(\frac{2\pi kt}{T}\right) + y_2 \cos\left(\frac{2\pi kt}{T}\right) \quad (8)$$

ring Eq 8 and Eq 6 together, the following equality can be obtained:

$$y_t = \alpha_0 + y_1 \sin\left(\frac{2\pi kt}{T}\right) + y_2 \cos\left(\frac{2\pi kt}{T}\right) + \beta_1 y_{t-1} + \dots + \beta_{p+d} y_{t-(p+d)} + \varepsilon_t \quad (9)$$

The statement of "*there is no causality*" is scrutinized by Wald test. This Wald statistic has asymptotical chi-square (χ^2) distribution and p degrees of freedom. The way to reject the null hypothesis is that this statistical figure exceeds the critical value, which in this case indicates a casual relationship. In vice versa, the null hypothesis stands, suggesting that no casual relationship exists (Nazlioglu et al., 2016).

The functioning doctrine of Wavelet analysis test derives from inspecting signals at divergent frequencies. In other word, in each frequency it is possible to capture wave-like actions (Cazelles et al., 2006). Since the Wavelet is a vigorous test which permits

signals and fuctions in various scales, the possible relationship examined by wavelet analysis as well. According to Mallat (2009), since this test prevails some traditional techniques such as Fourier analysis' limitations and allows time-frequency decomposition like surpassing in localization, it let to examine time parameters of signal and frequency component of this signal at the same time. Hence Wavelet technique is a multipurpose test to analyze both short-run circumstances and high-frequency factors. Moreover, it helps superfluous factors like noise or seasonality; thereby creates better distinctive results.

Furthermore, Continuous Wavelet Transform (CWT) model is a practice which use particularized function set (wavelet) to decompose an indicator in the time-frequency plane. The wavelet can be defined via two pivotal properties: it is limited by time and frequency and the mean of it have to be zero (Holschneider, 1995). Meaning that the wavelets port-

raying signals' various scale components, evaluate different range of frequencies and time-periods. But, it can be possible under the condition of shifting the waves along with diversifying scale and time positions. The primary wavelets ($\psi(t)$) involves time position (shift-in-time) (τ) along with frequency (expansion) (f) functions (Cazelles et al, 2008):

$$\psi_{f,\tau}(t) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{f}} \psi\left(\frac{t-\tau}{f}\right) \quad (10)$$

The introduced parameters regulate the location and the extent of the signal's wave. On the basis of the selected primary wavelet, time series' wavelet transform $[x(t)]$ can be carried out as this: When the $[x(t)]$ signal multiplies by a certain primary wavelet, this composed wavelet can be implemented at several positions and scales. After obtaining the coefficients, signal's time-frequency can be reached

through and for every differentiated scale and time, the characteristics of the signal can be revealed. Hence the wavelet transform of the time series $x(t)$ with a selected primary wavelet can be performed. Mentioned transformation covers $x(t)$ signal times a particular primary wavelet and utilization of the resulted wavelet in different scale and time (Cohen, 2003; Liang, 2004):

$$W_x(f, \tau) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{f}} \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} x(t) \psi^*\left(\frac{t-\tau}{f}\right) dt = \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} x(t) \psi_{f,\tau}^*(t) dt \quad (11)$$

The acquired coefficients point the signal through the time-frequency range. The "*" demonstrates some sort of complex conjugation which is crucial to examine signals and wavelets. By using "*", it can be probable to purify wavelets, to figure zero intersections and to get phase details. Cazelles et al (2008) describes this transformation as cross-correlation of signal and wavelet at different time (τ) and frequency (s). In other word, it implies finding signals via matching them with wavelets. When the normali-

zation of $1/\sqrt{f}$ equalizes wavelet to unit, each positions through time become comparable (Tiwari & Albulescu, 2016). By sustaining the identical energy in each scale, the wavelets can provide consistent outcomes for different time-positions. This method assists to perceive mutual time series' characteristics at various frequencies and how they modifies in time (Torrence & Webster, 1999). Therefore, for this paper, the link among the variables has probed employing wavelet coherence technique:

$$R_n^2(s) = \frac{\left| S\left(s^{-1} \psi_n^{(f,\tau)}(s)\right) \right|^2}{S\left(s^{-1} \left| \psi_n^f \right|^2\right) \cdot S\left(s^{-1} \left| \psi_n^\tau \right|^2\right)} \quad (12)$$

s utilizes to coefficient smoothing which are acquired through the transformation. This procedure enables to observe more conventional trends along with less fluctuated data. Additionally, $R_n^2(s)$ has an essential role in equation. The $R_n^2(s)$ can

be stated as "square wavelet coherence coefficient-SWCC" measures correlation power of time series. This coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, with a value close to 0 indicating weak or no relationship between the two time series, while

$$S_\tau(W) = \left(W_n(s) * \lambda_1^{-t^2/2s^2} \right); S_f(W) = \left(W_n(s) * \lambda_2 \Pi((0,6s)) \right) \lambda_1 + \lambda_2 \quad (13)$$

λ_1 and λ_2 are both normalization constants when Π stands for a rectangular function. In this equation Torrence & Compo (1998) settled 0.6 figure as an empirically determined averaging instrument.

3. Findings and Discussion

EQI, GDP and CRB correlation results based on unit root test are presented at Table 2. Based on the findings, when the test stats of EQI and CRB variables are modelled via constant values, these series reveal non-stationary. Also, test stat for GDP declines under the critical value and shows stationarity at 10%

level of significance. Moreover, the findings of both constant and trend models indicate non-stationarity of EQI and CRB series when GDP still reveals significance at 5%.

According to EQI-GDP-CRB first difference analysis, stationarity exist for each of them at 1% significance threshold for both constant and trend models. Yet, since the variables' test stats fall beneath critical level at 1%, it is highly possible that EQI and CRB become stationary once differenced. On the other hand, GDP shows powerful stationarity for each calculated situation.

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Consequently, for modeling and forecasting purposes, the GDP series can be considered more reliable, whereas the EQI and CRB series should be analyzed

using their differenced data, as they only achieve stationarity in their first differences.

Table 2. FADF Test Findings

Level				First Difference		
Constant Model						
Variables	Test Statistic	Fourier number	Lag length	Test Statistic	Fourier number	Lag length
EQI	-2.3879	4	1	-5.4228***	1	1
GDP	-3.6666*	1	1	-11.6777***	5	0
CRB	-2.3591	4	3	-6.3103***	5	1
Constant+Trend Model						
EQI	-2.8342	3	1	-5.4493***	1	1
GDP	-4.0823**	3	4	-11.6784***	5	0
CRB	-3.0621	1	3	-6.3151**	1	1

Note: The symbols *** and ** in the Table represent stationarity at the 10%, 5%, and 1% significance levels, respectively. Critical table values acquired from Enders and Lee (2012).

Table 3 provides the evidence from the causality examination conducted among the EQI, GDP, and CRB. Accordingly, both asymptotic and bootstrap p-values indicate:

- No causality effect of EQI on GDP.
- No causality effect of GDP on EQI.
- No causality effect of EQI on CRB.
- No causality effect of CRB on EQI.
- The asymptotic p-value is significant at the 0.10

level. And the bootstrap p-value is significant at the 0.10 level. They are indicating a causality effect of CRB on GDP.

- The asymptotic p-value is significant at the 5% level. Also the bootstrap p-value is significant at the 0.10 level. They are indicating a causality effect of GDP on CRB.

These findings indicate that there is no causal relationship between EQI, GDP and CRB, although a bidirectional causality exists between GDP and CRB.

Table 3. Fourier Toda-Yamamoto (FTY) Causality Test Findings

	Wald	Asym. p-val	Bootst. p-val	Lag	Frequency	Causality Relationship
H0: EQI ↔ GDP	0.447	0.88	0.80	2	3	EQI → GDP
	0.149	0.92	0.92	2	3	GDP → EQI
H0: EQI ↔ CRB	1.356	0.85	0.59	4	3	EQI → CRB
	0.760	0.94	0.77	4	3	CRB → EQI
H0: GDP ↔ CRB	8.735	0.06*	0.09*	4	2	CRB → GDP
	9.401	0.05**	0.08*	4	2	GDP → CRB

Note: The symbols *** and ** in the table represent statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively. Bootstrap p-values are based on 1000 repetitions

Figures 1, 2, and 3 illustrate the wavelet coherence findings examining the relationships between the EQI, GDP, and CRB variables. The accompanying color scale on the right indicates the strength of the correlation, with red and orange areas denoting high

(i.e., strong) correlation, and blue and green areas indicating low (i.e., weak) correlation. The color gradient ranges from 0 (blue) to 1 (red), reflecting the spectrum of correlation levels from weak to strong.

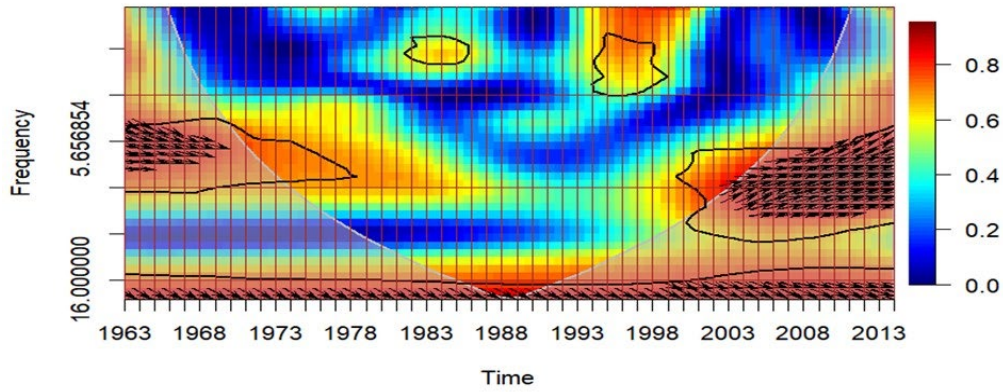


Figure 1. Wavelet Analysis Findings: EQI and GDP

Figure 1 illustrates the progressive link in between EQI and GDP over time, highlighting periods of varying strength in their correlation. Specifically:

- From 1963 to 1980, there is a favorable linkage observed between EQI and GDP. Both of the series moving in tandem, although EQI slightly precedes GDP.
- In the 1980s and 1990s, the relationship between EQI and GDP weakens significantly.
- From 2000 to 2013, a positive correlation re-emerges between EQI and GDP, with both series again moving simultaneously.

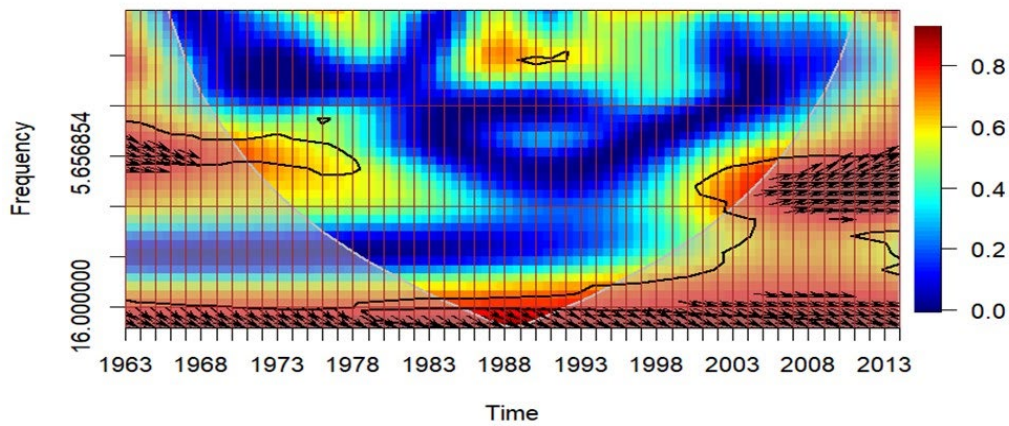


Figure 2. Wavelet Analysis Findings: EQI and CRB

From Figure 1 and 2, overall, a positive correlation between EQI and GDP is observed between 1968-1980 and 2000-2008, with both series moving in the same direction. In contrast, a weaker correlation is

noted in 80s and 90s. These findings from the wavelet coherence analysis (WCA) are partially consistent with the results obtained from the FTY test.

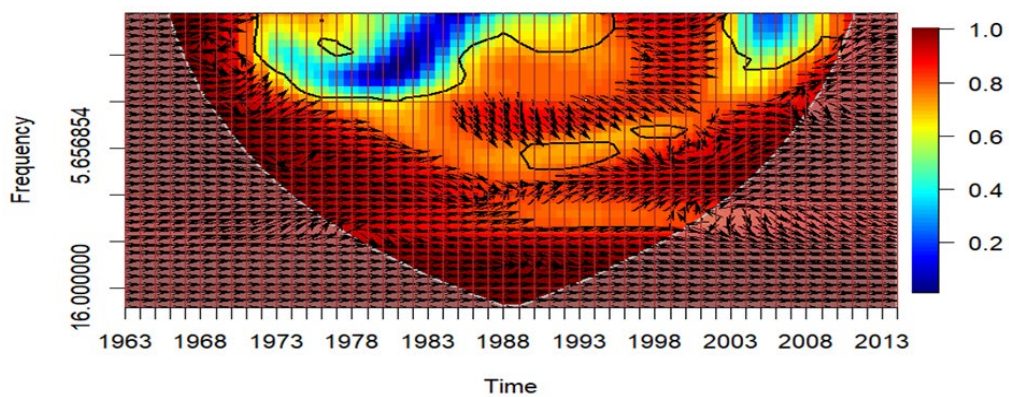


Figure 3. Wavelet Analysis Findings: GDP and CRB

Figure 3 presents the WCA results. The red areas on the graph signify a strong correlation when they are consistent with the findings of FTY test.

Overall, the findings indicate that these relationships are subject to temporal variations and may strengthen during specific periods. Wavelet Analysis reveals an upward linkage between EQ and national income during the periods 1963-1980 and 2000-2013, suggesting that improvements in Türkiye's EQ positively contribute to G. However, the analysis also identifies a weaker relationship between these variables during the 1980s and 1990s. Besides, there is not any direct causality in the midst of EQI and GDP according to FTY test. This indicates that for a certain time period EQ has favorable affect on growth but create neither consistent nor protracted relationship. The findings partly oppose the strong causality mentioned in some existing literature (i.e. Kiiza et al., 2022; Bilgili et al., 2022; Henn et al., 2013; Bustos, 2011; Hausmann et al, 2006). Also, the outcomes imply that EQ solely cannot be a direct driver of G. So, it is significant supplementary remediations in EQ along with rise in educational, technological and infrastructural investments overall in order to have a sustainable economic development.

Wavelet analysis findings also displays that there is a positive association within EQ and KE in 1963-1970 as well as 2000-2013. It means that when Türkiye's export quality rises via high carbon emissions which stresses the need of integrating environmental sustainability schemes with exertion of boost EQ. These results are parallel to Trinh et al (2022) and Manga et al (2023) findings. However, the findings contrariwise to Wang et al. (2021), Fanga et al. (2019) and Gozgor&Can (2017) findings since they claim the more reduction in CE creates betterment in EQ. Furthermore, this analysis suggests a weak correlation between EQ and CE for 1968 and 2000 period. The FTY analyze reports substantiate the causality absence in between EQ and CE.

In addition, Wavelet and FTY tests indicate bidirectional causality relationship of national income and CE. Such finding insinuates direct influence of G over CE when contrarily CE directly effect G. Here this "tendency of growth is likely to expand CE" finding is similar with Omri (2013), Nguyen& Su (2022), Wang et al.(2021) and Adu& Denkyirah (2018).

4. Conclusion

Endeavor of long-term development of emerging economies lie in effective structural transformation policies focused on amplifying productivity, radiating economic efforts as well as securing sustainable growth. In this regard, export quality has a pivotal function, assisting as an indicator of state's manufacturing refinements and its status into global value stream. Enhancing quality of export can return es-

sential economic advantages, comprising improved profit margins for cooperations, employment creation together with comprehensive welfare advancements. Augmented global demand for high-quality products not only amplifies intensity of export, but also lures pecunial foreign exchange gainings, exalting both national and per capita income. Such a created atmosphere fosters circumstances lead increases in savings and investment, while driving higher economic growth. Nonetheless, generating superior export quality requires embracing advanced technologies and manufacturing techniques, usually necessitating substantial investments in R&D. While the technical improvements can steer to inventions, ameliorate rivalry and decrease the costs of manufacturing, these improvements can also mean greater energy consumption and emission rates. Also, completely newly designed high-quality manufacturing may unwittingly increase generation of waste and may exacerbate environmental degradation. Moreover, in order to preserve international rivalry, companies must conform both national and multinational ecological regulations formed to monitor and alleviate degradation. Hence awareness of the sophisticate engagements amongst export quality, growth and environmental issues is significantly important for progressing holistic policies which balance economic development along with environmental liabilities. Therefore, this research examines the dynamic corelation amongst export quality, economic growth and carbon emissions, concentrating on Türkiye's experiences in 1963-2023 period. The study scrutinizes direct casual correlation and evolvement procedure of this relationship by utilizing Fourier Toda-Yamamoto causality and continuous wavelet analysis methods.

The findings reveal trilateral relationship alters across time and can be strengthen within certain terms. Particularly, an auspicious correlation between export quality and national income has been observed for 1963-1980 and 2000-2013. Yet, weakened ties have been observed during 80s and 90s. The lack of a direct casual link between the Export Quality Index and Gross Domestic Product indicates that while export quality positively affects economic growth during certain periods, it does not actually establish a consistent and long-term casual relationship as expected. Furthermore, the positive quality-emission relationship in 1963-70 and 2000-13 demonstrated that neither efforts to improve export quality nor environmental sustainability strategies can be addressed in isolation. Therefore, the importance of integrated efforts for Türkiye has become evident. Additionally, both wavelet and FTY analyses have demonstrated a bidirectional, mutually reinforcing relationship between national income and emissions. The results also show that export quality alone is not a direct driver of sustainable economic growth. For sustainable development, improve-

ments in export quality must be supported by investments in education, technology, and infrastructure. Moreover, the strong relationship between national income and carbon emissions highlights the need to incorporate environmental sustainability into economic growth policies. In this regard, investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable development goals are crucial.

In order to achieve sustainable development goals, Türkiye must integrate environmental sustainability into its economic growth policies. Considering the affirmative export quality-carbon emissions relation, as well as the bidirectional and mutually reinforcing relationship between carbon emissions and economic growth, the findings suggest that export quality is the key determinant of a country's competitiveness, sustainability, and innovation in international markets. Export quality encompasses both the value-added and technological content of products. In light of this, valuable insights can be drawn from the practices of countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, and South Korea, and applied to Turkey. Products produced using renewable energy could be enhanced with international certifications such as the Carbon Trust, creating higher value-added products that can be sold at premium prices. In this context, Turkey could adopt Germany's "Energiewende" policy, reducing dependency on solid waste while simultaneously increasing the competitiveness of export products produced with renewable energy in international markets. In reality Türkiye is in a highly advantageous position, with considerable potential to leverage renewable resources such as wind, solar, and hydroelectric power. Similar to Germany's approach, the Turkish government should support renewable energy projects through incentives and subsidies. For example, Germany's "Feed-in Tariff" (FiT) model, which guarantees renewable energy producers the ability to sell energy at a fixed price for a designated period, has proven effective in fostering investment in the sector. Türkiye could adopt a similar strategy by providing long-term guaranteed pricing, thus encouraging private sector investment in renewable energy projects. A phased reduction in fossil fuel dependence could be pursued, but this transition must be carefully considered due to Türkiye's reliance on coal and natural gas. To mitigate the social and economic consequences of this shift, workforce retraining and transformation programs should be implemented. Türkiye's youthful population offers a unique opportunity to create jobs in advanced sectors such as renewable energy technologies. However, Türkiye's current energy infrastructure is inadequate to support the increased integration of renewable energy, requiring substantial financial resources for new infrastructure investments and grid enhancements. Although low-interest loans or grants can be obtained from transnational entities such as the World Bank and

the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), an effective approach would be to channel these funds through public-private partnerships, supplemented by government-backed incentives. Moreover, instead of relying solely on conventional methods, issuing green bonds could establish a cost-reducing, profit-generating incentive mechanism within the domestic market, simultaneously opening the Turkish market to foreign investors under well-structured, robust legal frameworks.

In addition, Türkiye could draw inspiration from the Netherlands' organic farming and smart agriculture practices for environmentally friendly industrial production. Given the current production processes and firm preferences in Türkiye, the rapid adoption of green chemistry, clean production techniques, or biological pesticides in place of conventional ones—as seen in the Netherlands—may not be immediately feasible. Nevertheless, the integration of digitalization and industrial simulation techniques, such as sensors and smart production systems, could aid in reducing the use of chemicals in production processes. The success of waste recycling initiatives in Türkiye's automotive sector, particularly in the context of green production and waste management, can serve as a model for larger-scale waste minimization strategies. The Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change could expand its "Zero Waste" initiative into a more substantial government-supported waste management grant program. Municipalities, alongside the Ministry of Environment, could provide financial assistance for establishing recycling systems, while offering tax incentives for those participating in the initiative and imposing penalties on non-compliant entities. Furthermore, central and local governments could implement green city models inspired by Copenhagen, which would not only increase green spaces, parks, and eco-friendly living areas but also introduce smart water grid solutions. These systems would enable real-time monitoring of water consumption and pressure, helping to identify leaks and losses quickly, thereby enabling effective intervention and generating industrial outcomes. Finally, increasing investments in education and technology could help foster an innovation ecosystem similar to South Korea's technological advancement. While this approach is both long-term and challenging, it remains the most realistic and sustainable path toward achieving enduring economic growth. Future research should aim to further explore these relationships in greater depth and provide data that can support more informed policymaking.

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Job Security Perception of Remote Workers in Turkey

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine whether remote working triggers an increase in job insecurity in Turkey. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied in the study. In this study, a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, was adopted. The quantitative method was implemented to measure the perception of job security among remote workers. To enhance the reliability of the findings, qualitative methods were also utilized. In the quantitative method, 235 people working in the private sector having experience in teleworking were selected as a sample. Data were collected by the questionnaire method. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data. The qualitative method selected

twenty people working as experts and managers having prior experience on remote working as a sample. The content analysis method was used to analyze the data. Organizations aspiring to gain a competitive advantage should consider flexible working models and the concept of job security and implement the assured flexibility model. In this respect, they ought to implement the necessary human resources policies to ensure that employees have positive perceptions of their job security.

Keywords: Flexible Work, Job Security, Labor Market, Remote Work, Remote Workers.

JEL Codes: J100, J10, J00

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1. Introduction

Since the 1970s, job insecurity has risen due to preferred economic policies, rising unemployment rates, and changing working models (Green, 2003). In a survey conducted by the PWC, more than half of the employees stated that their workload had increased at the workplace, and that they experienced uncertainties regarding job security and financial difficulties (PWC, 2019). At the same time, the surge in the number of self-employed, non-standard working models has also led to a rise in precariousness (ILO, 2024). On the other hand, increasing job insecurity, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic and the fear of unemployment throughout the world, adversely affects physical and mental health (Green, 2020). Despite a decrease in job insecurity in 2024, due to economic developments in remote work and the increase in artificial intelligence, it can be said that employees still feel precarious due to economic conditions. In universal perspective, the job insecurity rate is 18% in China, 25% in India, less than 20% in Canada, 24% in the USA, and 18% in Chile.

Concurrently, the recession in the Netherlands and economic difficulties in the UK have prevented workers from being secure (ADP, 2024). The loss of job security causes workers' future employment rates to fall and their wages to remain low (Jarosch, 2021). Job insecurity also leads to family conflicts (Richter, 2011).

Accordingly, job security comes to the fore in the context of decent work, which has gained importance with the change in how work is conducted and working models. Today especially, the fact that work can be executed anywhere in the world can bring with it the precarious dimension regarding the working conditions.

2. Literature

Globalization, urbanization, and technological advances have changed human resource practices since the 1980s. Since the late twentieth century, the traditional employer-employee relationship has been replaced by the concept of precarity and non-standard working arrangements characterized by precarious work (Kiran, et al., 2022).

Job insecurity has gained importance, and many studies have been conducted based on job insecurity due to changes in economic systems and an increase in temporary contracts. At the same time, the increase in remote working arising from the COVID-19 pandemic has made the job insecurity even more prominent. Teleworking is a form of work organized and performed using information technology in the context of an employment contract/relationship, performed at the employer's workplace (ILO, 2020). Changes in working models also increase job insecurity. In the Sverke and Hellgren

Model of job insecurity, the employment contract, labor market characteristics, and uncertainties are considered objective conditions. In this context, it can be stated that individuals who find themselves in employment types and organizations classified as precarious experience more job insecurity than individuals enjoying a 'more secure' type of employment (Sverke et al., 2006).

Job security can be perceived as a threat to the future continuity of a profession, or it can be defined as an involuntary, basic perception of job loss depending on the potential and subjective perception of the continuity of the current job (Witte, 2005). Job insecurity can be defined as the threat that people feel regarding their jobs, the powerlessness they feel concerning the pursuing of the job and feeling threatened in general (Greenhalgh et al., 1984). According to another definition, job insecurity is the personal experience of facing the threat of losing a job or its valuable features (Khawli, et al., 2022). As can be perceived from the definitions, job insecurity is a concept affiliated with an individual's perception. This concept is affected by the labor market conditions as well as the country's economic conditions.

On the other hand, it has been determined in the literature that different factors affect the concept of job insecurity. Demographic, individual, cultural, and work organization related factors are among them (Selvi et al., 2017). Although it is a concept that stringent upon different factors and employees' perceptions, organizations consisting of employees with a perception of job security are advantageous in achieving competitive edge. Research conducted by Karakılıç (2023) reveals that there are statistically significant relationships between the job security variables and performance variables. Although only a few studies examine the relationship between remote work and jobs, it is possible to come across studies on the effects of remote work. In a study conducted on remote workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, decreased productivity, emotional burnout, job insecurity, work-related stress and intense burnout, physical and emotional burden, psychological fatigue, emotional pressures, and the excessive workload it brings with it heightened professional burnout (Costin et al., 2023). Another study on remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic found that employees perceived remote working negatively. Accordingly, employees caught in the COVID-19 pandemic still had to work remotely to perform their duties since they were concerned about job insecurity and lack of social protection (Wontorczyk et al., 2022). Another study similarly found that telecommuting contributed to job insecurity in the COVID-19 pandemic and that there is a strong, statistically significant, and positive correlation among these aspects (Nemteanu & Dabja, 2023). Lim (2020) found that individuals with a higher perception of job insecurity would prefer remote work less than

those who perceive it as less advantageous for themselves and their organizations. In another study on teleworking, although positive outcomes such as providing flexibility to labor markets, reducing costs, contributing to the improvement of environmental conditions, preventing time loss, increasing productivity, and work-life balance were identified, negative results such as failure to achieve a work-life balance, difficulty in unionization, limited career opportunities, lack of social security and job security, occupational health and safety problems were also identified (Metin & Yıldız, 2021).

Another study on teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic argues that employer surveillance and demands for workers to be accessible by employers increased. Although advancements in IT technology have allowed workers to continue to work away from the employer's workplace, for some teleworkers, the fact that work can be conducted from anywhere raises concerns regarding job security and that the work can be conducted by anyone (ILO, 2021).

In a study on the negative effects of remote working on job insecurity, work-life conflict, and employee behavior, Nemteanu & Dabija (2023) found that remote working during the pandemic period contributed to job insecurity, work-life conflict, and professional isolation.

In a study conducted by Radu et al. (2024) on how teleworking is perceived and its effects on psychological safety and job performance, a positive rela-

tionship was revealed, particularly in regard to teleworking and job performance. Investigating whether the effects of remote work affect job satisfaction performance, Jamaludin and Kamal (2023) revealed that job satisfaction increased with the perception of autonomy of remote work. In a study on the effects of job insecurity on job performance and alienation of full-time hospitality and tourism sector employees, Abouelenien et al. (2024) found a positive relationship between job insecurity and alienation and a negative relationship between job insecurity and performance. In another study on the subjective perception of job insecurity in Italy in the pandemic period, it was found that worsening household economic conditions, increasing the number of employees at home, having a temporary contract, and working in the private sector were also associated with increased job insecurity (Nappo et al. 2023).

Although there is no individual study in the literature on the perception of job security of remote workers, it can be said that the existing studies are generally concerned with the results of remote working. The results of the studies reveal that remote work leads to job insecurity. On the other hand, there are studies on job security and the perceptions of remote workers. No study was found, and temporary work was found to be related to job insecurity. This study used qualitative and quantitative methods to reveal the direct relationship between remote work and job insecurity.

2.1. Research Model-Hypothesis and Research Questions

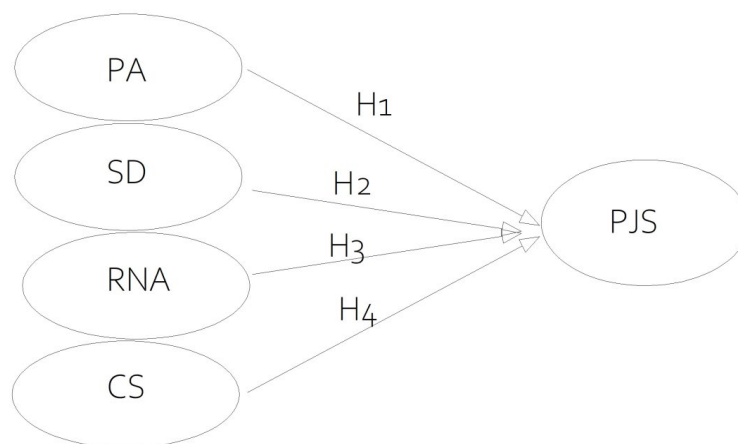


Figure 1. Research Model

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

H1: There is a relationship between the positive attitude dimension of teleworking and the perception of job security.

H2: There is a relationship between the skill development dimension of teleworking and the perception of job security.

H3: There is a relationship between the resistance to negative attitudes dimension of teleworking and the perception of job security.

H4: There is a relationship between the organizational support dimension of teleworking and the perception of job security.

Figure 1 illustrates the hypotheses of the structural equation model. Structural equation modeling was used to test these hypotheses in the study. Structural equation modeling is a multivariate statistical method that estimates parameters for a system of simultaneous equations (Stein, 2012). At the same time, this method is directed toward theoretical constructs represented by latent factors (Hox et al., 2017). The Table 1 depicting the fit of the collect-

ed data with the model is given below. Accordingly, GFI, RMSEA, AGFI, CFI, and NFI values are within the ideal fit value ranges and, therefore, the model is valid. At the same time, the chi-square/sd value showing the model's fit was found to be 2.14. The chi-square's degrees of freedom being less than three indicates that the model's overall fit is acceptable.

Table 1. Fit Indices

Fit of the model		
GFI	0.90 ≤ GFI- 0.85≤GFI	0.90
AGFI	0.90 ≤ AGFI-0.85≤AGFI	0.86
RMSEA	RMSEA≤0.05- RMSEA≤0.08	0.06
NFI	0.95≤NFI -0.90≤NFI	0.95
NNFI	0.95≤NNFI -0.90≤NNFI	0.96
IFI	0.95≤IFI -0.90≤IFI	0.97
CFI	0.97≤CFI -0.95≤CFI	0.97

Source: (Karagöz, 2019).

This study was conducted to determine whether telecommuting causes an increase in job insecurity.

In line with this purpose, the study sought answers to the following:

- How remote workers perceive the right to job security in their organizations,
- How remote workers are dismissed in their organizations,
- Whether remote workers are subject to arbitrary dismissal in their organizations.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Methodology

A mixed method research in which qualitative and quantitative methods are used together was deemed appropriate as a research model. Mixed method research is research through which the data collected by different methods are brought together and compared, thereby increasing the credibility of the results. In this research design, qualitative and quantitative data of equal importance have been collected simultaneously and analyzed using different methods. In the last stage, the similarities and differences between the findings are compared and interpreted (Harrison et al., 2020). Accordingly, in this study, the data obtained from the job security and remote working scale were analyzed using the quantitative research method, and the data obtained from the semi-structured interview form on job security perception were analyzed using the qualitative research method. Ethics approval for the research was

obtained from the Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Board. Participants were informed about the research and its confidential conduct.

3.2. Participants

The quantitative part of the study group consists of 235 people who have worked remotely in the private sector. At this stage, the convenience sampling method, one of the non-random sampling methods was used. The convenient sampling method covers the sample elements that the researcher can conveniently access and is implemented in cases where it is difficult to access the samples (Monette et al., 2005). While calculating the sample size, the qualifications of structural equation modeling regarding sample size were considered. Ding et al. (1995) state that the sample size should be 100-150 in a study to be estimated with the maximum likelihood estimator. The sample of 235 people formed for this study was sufficient in this respect. The study group of the qualitative part of the research consisted of twenty people having prior experiences in the private sector. The qualitative study group was formed separately from the quantitative study group. In qualitative research, small groups that can provide detailed data corresponding to the research purpose are formed instead of large groups. The depth of these small groups' data will contribute to the research (Patton, 2005). The qualitative study group in this direction was formed using the typical case sampling method. Typical case sampling refers to

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groups containing information that can explain the event or phenomenon under consideration among many similar in the universe (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Demographic data regarding the study sample groups are given in Table 2 in the Findings Sec-

tion. Accordingly, 65% of the participants worked as managers and 35% as experts. While 70% of the participants had eleven years of experience or more, 20% had six to ten years of experience, and 5% had one to five years of experience.

Table 2. Demographic Data

Fit of the model		
Participants	Demographic Characteristics	Total
Experience	1-5 years	4
	6-10 years	20
	11 years and above	14
Title	Manager and Administrator	16
	Expert	4

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

3.3. Data Collection Tools

Two different scales were used to collect the study's quantitative data. These were the remote working attitude scale and the job security perception scale. In the qualitative data collection phase of the study, the researcher developed a semi-structured interview form. The remote working scale is the scale developed by Başol and Çömlekçi (2022); a 'Validity-reliability study of a remote working attitude scale.' The factor loads of the items in the scale are between 0.698 and 0.909, and the total variance explained is 80.39%. According to the results of confirmatory factor analysis, the distance working attitude scale (Chi-square/freedom value: 2.17; RMSEA: 0.06; NFI: 0.97; NNFI: 0.98; CFI: 0.99; GFI: 0.92 and AGFI: 0.89) consists of four factors and sixteen items. The scale's internal consistency was calculated as 0.91, and the item-total correlations were between 0.330 and 0.812. It was prepared on a 5-point scale, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. The perception of the job security scale was taken from Yilmaz's (2020) unpublished doctoral dissertation, 'The Mediating Effect of Organizational Opposition on the Relationship between Classroom Teachers' Perceptions of Job Security and Professional Self-esteem.' It consists of six questions and a 5-point Likert scale applied. The terms strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree were used.

3.4. Job Security Perception Semi-structured Interview Form

A literature review was conducted creating the open-ended questions in the semi-structured in-

terview form. The nine-question semi-structured interview form was presented to eight field experts. At this stage, the content and face validity of the semi-structured interview form was analyzed. Lawshe's (1975) technique was used for the content and face validity (Elçi & Uzunboyly, 2020). In the Lawshe technique, six steps were followed: 1. forming a group of field experts; 2. I am preparing the candidate form; 3. obtaining expert opinions; 4. obtaining content validity ratios; 5. obtaining content validity indices; 6. forming the final form according to the content validity ratios/index criteria. Expert opinions for each question in the semi-structured interview form are graded as the question measures the targeted construct, and the question is related to the construct. However, it should be improved, as the question does not measure the targeted construct. The Lawshe content validity rate calculation was used to calculate the content validity rates of the questions. Eight experts' minimum content validity criterion (CVR) is 0.78 (Yeşilyurt; Çapraz, 2018). $KGO = \frac{Nu}{N} - 1$ or $KGO = \frac{Nu - N/2}{N/2}$ Nu in the formula indicates the number of experts who say the question measures the targeted construct, and N indicates the number of experts who expressed an opinion. The calculated content validity rate is given in Table 3. The CGI value obtained from the semi-structured interview form with the opinions of eight experts was 0.91. This value is above the content validity criterion of 0.78. Questions 4, 6, and 7 were rearranged in line with expert opinions. A semi-structured interview form consisting of three questions concerning demographic information and nine open-ended questions regarding the scope of the research was used.

Table 3. Content Validity Rate

Question	The question measures the targeted construct	The question is related to the structure but should be improved	The question does not measure the targeted construct	KGO
1	8	0	0	1.00
2	8	0	0	1.00
3	8	0	0	1.00
4	7	1	0	0.75
5	8	0	0	1.00
6	7	1	0	0.75
7	7	1	0	0.75
8	8	0	0	1.00
9	8	0	0	1.00
Total Number of Experts: eight				
Content validity measure (CVM): 0.78				
Content Validity Index (CVI):0.91				

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

3.5. Data Collection

Interviews were conducted digitally or one-on-one by phone. They were conducted in July 2025. The interviews each lasted for approximately 25-30 minutes.

3.6. Data Analysis

The Content Analysis method was used to analyze the study's qualitative data. Content analysis provides a detailed analysis of the data obtained and reaches the concept categories and themes that explain these data. In content analysis, codes are extracted from events and phenomena frequently repeated in the data set or emphasized by the

participants, from codes to categories and from categories to themes. These data are depicted in Table 4. Data (codes) that are found to be related to each other are interpreted by going from specific to general within the framework of certain concepts (categories) and themes (Bengtsson, 2016). In this direction, the responses of the remote workers to the semi-structured interview form were coded separately by an expert and a researcher by creating a coding key. The reliability of the data was calculated using Mileess and Huberman's (1994) Reliability Formula, which resulted from the coding made by two people. Reliability = consensus / (consensus + disagreement) reliability coefficient was 0.94. The result obtained here was considered reliable.

Table 4. The Reliability of Job Security Perception

Article	Code	Category	Theme
1	2	2	1
2	2	2	2
3	2	2	1
4	2	2	2
5	2	2	2
6	2	2	2
7	2	2	1
8	2	2	2
9	2	2	2

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

4. Results

Demographic information regarding the participants is presented in Table 5. Accordingly, 57% of the participants were female and 43% were male. While 66% of the participants worked in domestic companies, 34% worked in international companies. In respect to analyzing the seniority of the participants, 40% had been working for more than sixteen years, 31% between eleven and fifteen years, 18% between six and ten years, and 11% for five years or less. Regarding education level, 9% of the par-

ticipants had a PhD, 24% had a master's degree, 55% had a bachelor's degree, 9% had an associate's degree, and 3% had a high school diploma. 21% of the participants worked in education, 15% in technology, 10% in retail, 9% in textiles, 7% in banking and finance, and 5% in manufacturing. 34% worked in sectors other than these. When the titles of the participants are analyzed, 43% were experts responsible, 28% were managers, 18% were managers/chefs/assistant managers, and 11% were assistants/personnel/assistant specialists.

Table 5. Descriptive Findings Regarding the Participants

Group	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Gender		
Female	135	57.4
Male	100	42.6
Business Type		
National	156	66.4
International	79	33.6
Seniority (Years)		
16 ≥	95	40.4
11-15	72	30.6
6-10	42	17.9
5 ≤	26	11.1
Educational Status		
License	130	55.3
Master's Degree	57	24.3
Associate Degree	22	9.4
PhD	20	8.5
High School	6	2.5
Sector		
Education	49	20.9
Technology-Information Processing	34	14.5
Retail	24	10.2
Textile	20	8.5
Banking - Finance	17	7.2
Production - Manufacturing	11	4.7
Other	80	34.0
Title		
Expert-Responsible	102	43.4
Director	65	27.6
Manager-Chief-Deputy Manager	42	17.9
Assistant-staff-assistant specialist	26	11.0
Total*	235	100

*is the sum of each group

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

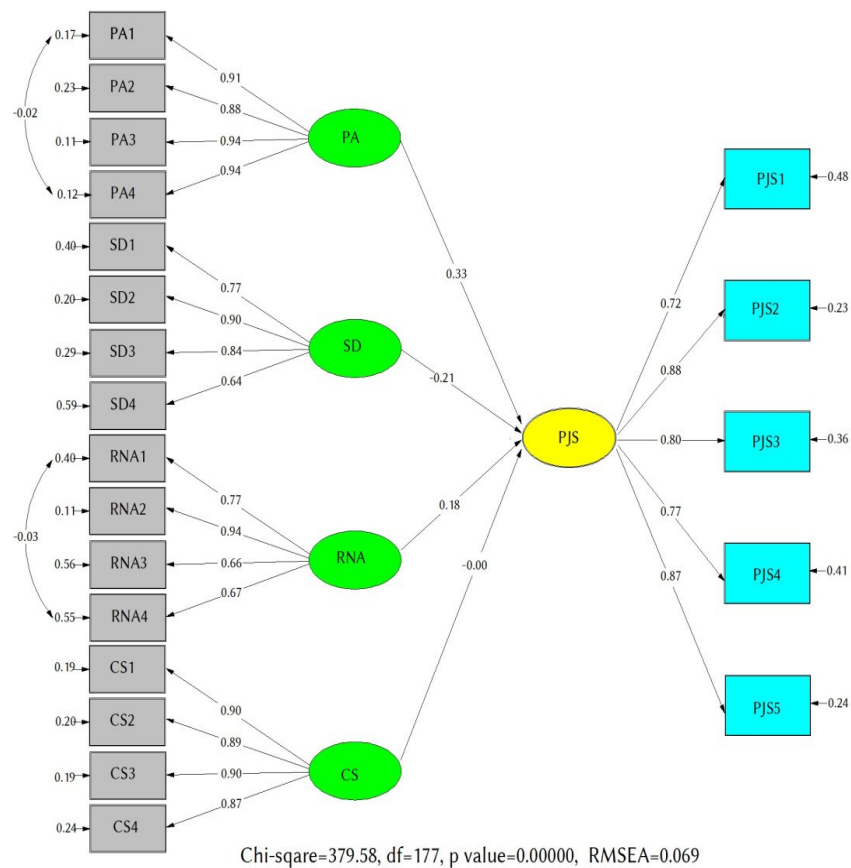


Figure 2. Structural Equation Model

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

The hypothesis values of the research model are shown in Figure 2. There are findings regarding the relationship between job security perception and

positive attitude, skill development, resistance to negative attitude, and corporate support dimensions. Table 6 includes the evaluation of the Research

Table 6. Evaluation of Research Hypotheses, AVE, and Construct Validity Findings

Factors/Statements	Lambda (λ)	t-value	R2	AVE	Building Reliability
Positive Attitude (PA)	0,91	18,02	0,828	0,842	0,955
	0,88	17,05	0,774		
	0,94	19,23	0,883		
	0,94	18,90	0,883		
Skill Development (SD)	0,77	13,77	0,592	0,629	0,870
	0,90	17,21	0,810		
	0,84	15,66	0,705		
	0,64	10,59	0,409		
Resistance to Negative Attitudes (RNA)	0,77	13,47	0,592	0,590	0,849
	0,94	18,18	0,883		
	0,66	11,02	0,435		
	0,67	11,12	0,448		
Corporate Support (CS)	0,90	17,56	0,810	0,792	0,938
	0,89	17,28	0,792		
	0,90	17,62	0,810		
	0,87	16,71	0,756		

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	0,72	9,71	0,518	0,767	0,819
	0,88	13,01	0,880		
Perception of Job Security (PJS)	0,80	11,91	0,800		
	0,77	11,43	0,770		
	0,87	12,96	0,870		
H1 : PA → PJS	0,33	1,77*	Supported		
H2 : SD → PJS	-0,21	-1,08	Rejected		
H3 : RNA → PJS	0,18	1,72*	Supported		
H4 : CS → PJS	-0,00	-0,04	Rejected		
* $p < 0.100$ ($t > 1.65$)					

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

Hypotheses, AVE and construct validity findings. In light of the data obtained, the following can be said:

H1: There is a relationship between the positive attitude dimension of teleworking and the perception of job security. There is a significant relationship, and the hypothesis is accepted.

H2: There is a relationship between the skill development dimension of teleworking and the perception of job security. The hypothesis is rejected.

H3: There is a relationship between the resistance to negative attitudes dimension of teleworking and the perception of job security. There is a significant relationship, and the hypothesis is accepted.

H4: There is a relationship between the organizational support dimension of teleworking and the perception of job security. The hypothesis is rejected.

5. Qualitative Method Findings

This section includes the responses of the research participants to the questions in the semi-structured interview form.

Table 7 shows the participants' views on the concept of job security. According to the study, 65% of the participants worked as managers and 35% as experts. While 50% of the participants had sixteen years of experience or more, 25% had eleven to fifteen years of experience, 20% had six to ten years of experience, and 5% had one to five years of experience. Both managers and experts expressed the concept as giving legal rights, not being arbitrarily dismissed unfairly, and not experiencing the fear of dismissal. In addition, the managers also expressed that the protection of legal rights meant job security.

Sample statements of the participants are as follows;

Table 7. Meaning of Job Security

Category	Theme	Total %
For Managers	Protection of legal rights	14
	No unjustified arbitrary dismissal	4
	No fear of dismissal	2
	Granting legal rights	1
From the Experts' Perspective	Granting legal rights	2
	No unjustified arbitrary dismissal	1
	No fear of dismissal	1

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

P1: Protection of workers' legal rights in a sustainable environment.

P2: It is the person not unfairly dismissed.

P3: Regulations were made to ensure the worker's protection and regularity.

Table 8. shows the participants' views on their job security rights in their organization. It has been determined that managers and experts have the right to job security, and those who do not.

Sample statements of the participants are as follows:

Table 8. Right to Job Security

Category	Theme	Total %
For Managers	I have job security	14
	I have no job security	2
From the Experts' Perspective	I have job security	3
	I have no job security	1

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

P11: If you make a proper impression and do your job correctly and on time, you have job security.

P12: There is no job security. They think they have rights in the exits made by giving them compensation.

P13: Employment contract can be terminated under any circumstances. Therefore, it is possible to be dismissed at any time.

Table 9. Exit Process

Category	Theme	Total %
For Managers	By mutual agreement	7
	Giving the employer termination rights	3
	Warning-warning exit	3
	Exit as a last resort	2
	Termination during the trial period	1
From the Experts' Perspective	Giving the employer termination rights	3
	By mutual agreement	1

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

Table 9 shows the participants' views on the exit procedures in their organizations. Both managers and experts stated that the termination is by mutual agreement, and the employer gives the right to terminate. Managers also stated they would exit after warning and disciplinary processes, exit as a last resort, and terminate during probation.

Sample statements of the participants are as follows:

P10: If there is a just cause, they can dismiss. Generally, dismissals are made by mutual agreement to protect the company.

P14: Verbal and written warnings are given; if there is no improvement after warnings, the employee is dismissed.

P15: It is a last-applied solution; usually, an attempt is made to save them.

Table 10. Dismissal from Employment with Valid Reason in the Organization

Category	Theme	Total %
For Managers	No dismissal without a just cause	14
	Dismissal without cause is available	2
From the Experts' Perspective	No dismissal without just cause	2
	Dismissal without cause is available	2

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

Table 10 sheds light on the evaluations of the participants of the study regarding dismissals without giving a reason or for non-valid reasons in the organization they work in. Among the managers and experts, a few stated that there were no dismissals without a valid reason, and others stated that there were dismissals without a valid reason.

Sample statements of the participants are as follows:

P3: One of our employers dismissed a friend from the planning department, who was also young, for reasons related to his personal life. He was a friend who did his job correctly. He was dismissed without a reason, saying I do not want to work with you anymore.

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P4: There can be dismissals for absurd reasons, such as our friend in the call center responding late to a call, missing an incoming call, or the low price.

P2: There were no dismissals for non-valid reasons. They prioritized the people they wanted to dismiss.

Table 11. Arbitrary Dismissal of a Person

Category	Theme	Total %
For Managers	My arbitrary dismissal without giving a reason	14
	I am arbitrarily dismissed without cause	2
From the Experts' Perspective	My arbitrary dismissal without giving a reason	2
	I am arbitrarily dismissed without cause	2

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

Table 11 presents the participants' evaluations regarding the possibility of being arbitrarily dismissed without giving a reason in their organization. Among the managers and experts, a number thought that they would not be dismissed without a valid reason, and others thought they could be dismissed without a valid reason.

Sample statements of the participants are as follows:

P14: I have proven myself to my managers and employer with my work discipline in all the companies I have worked in.

P15: I can be dismissed without a valid reason due to the ego problems of the top managers in our office.

P17: I am not dismissed without a valid reason.

Table 12. Fear of Unemployment

Category	Theme	Total %
For Managers	I have no fear of unemployment	14
	Executive - sourced from top management	1
	Due to the economic situation	1
From the Experts' Perspective	I have no fear of unemployment	2
	Because of my lack of self-development	1
	Due to the economic situation	1

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

Table 12 shows the participants' views on the fear of being unemployed in their organization. Managers and experts stated that they had no fear of being unemployed and that they had a fear of being made unemployed due to the economic situation. Managers also feared being unemployed due to reasons arising from managers and senior management. In contrast, the experts feared being made unemployed due to a lack of self-development.

Sample statements of the participants are as follows:

P5: In case the company is sold, organizational changes may come to the agenda, and downsizing may occur in cases of financial problems.

P6: I can leave my company because of the economy. The world is generally subject to stagnant downsizing.

P7: Changes in senior management cause changes, especially in the management team, so I am afraid of being made unemployed.

Table 13. The Relationship Between the Exit Process and Performance

Category	Theme	Total %
For Managers	Performance is not a factor in the decision to quit	7
	Performance influences the decision on dismissal	6
	Rarely dismissed as a result of performance	3
From the Experts' Perspective	Performance influences the decision on dismissal	3
	Performance is not a factor in the decision to quit	1

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

Table 13 shows the participants' views on the relationship between the performance of the employees in the organization they work for and their dismissal status. Both managers and experts believe that performance is effective in the decision of dismissal, as well as those who believe that performance is ineffective. In addition, a number of managers stated that dismissals rarely occur due to performance.

Sample statements of the participants are as follows:

P2: Performance mainly affects the raised rate; I have not come across any dismissals due to performance; employees are gained by providing necessary feedback and training.

P11: Performance studies are not conducted; sometimes evaluations are made for show.

P12: Dismissals are not always based on performance. Sometimes, people who perform exceptionally well can also be dismissed.

Table 14. Dismissal Compliance with Labor Law

Category	Theme	Total %	
For Managers	Dismissals are made in compliance with the Labor Law	15	80
	Dismissals are not carried out in compliance with the Labor Law	1	
From the Experts' Perspective	Dismissals are made in compliance with the Labor Law	4	20

Source(s): Prepared by the Authors

Table 14 presents the participants' views on the compliance of the dismissals in their organizations with the Labor Law. Among the managers and experts were those who stated that the dismissals complied with the labor law and those who stated that they were not in compliance with the labor law.

Sample statements of the participants are as follows:

P3: It is easy to comply with the labor law.

P4: It is sometimes not complied with, but generally, it is behaved appropriately.

P5: It is often by the law, but there are exceptions.

6. Discussion

Four different hypotheses were formulated in the quantitative part of the research. Hypotheses 1 and 3 were accepted, while hypotheses 2 and 4 were rejected. Based on the accepted hypotheses, it can be said that remote workers' perceptions and attitudes regarding the remote work model influence their perception of job security. If remote workers have positive work attitudes, their perception of job security is positively affected, and if not, their perception is negatively affected. A study has also shown that working in virtual teams more effectively using remote work increases their perception of psychological safety and reduces job insecurity (Demirbağ et al., 2021). The study also reveals that the transition to remote work affects the perception of job quality but not job security (Pereira, et al., 2024). This result can be explained by the differences in demographic, organizational, and social variables among the participants.

According to the quantitative method data, a positive relationship was found between the positive attitudes of teleworking experience, including job satisfaction, professional development, motivation,

performance, and skills, and the perception of job security. On the other hand, a positive relationship was also found between the dimensions of telecommuting, which creates stress, negatively affects psychology, disrupts work-life balance, and affects physical health and job insecurity. Similarly, in a study conducted for public institutions, a positive and significant effect of telecommuting experience on job security, job flexibility, organizational performance, and general productivity of employees was determined; it was determined that the perception of job security is a situation that emerges as a result of the employee's evaluation of him/herself regardless of the organization. At the same time, it has been revealed that working styles also affect this perception (Khodaparasti, 2023).

In the qualitative research, managers and experts expressed job security as protecting legal rights, not being unfairly and arbitrarily dismissed, not experiencing fear of dismissal, and being given legal rights. Similarly, in the literature, job security is the perception of employees that their job or an essential part of the job is safe. Although this perception seems subjective, it is measured by asking about the possibility or fear of losing their job in a specific reference period (Burchell, 2022).

It can be seen that both managers and experts participating in the research generally have job security in the organization they work for. It has been determined that they have no fear of unemployment, but this may be possible due to economic conditions or managerial changes. Similarly, Mola et al. (2018) found that 73.6% of employees were satisfied with the stability and job security they perceived at work, while 26.2% were undecided and not satisfied with job security. A study with teachers working in the public sector revealed that job security was present (Yilmaz & Aydin, 2023). In a different study conduct-

ed on employees with German standard employment, it was found that East Germans generally have a lower perception of job security due to their decreased trust in the information policies of their employers (Bernhardt et al., 2014).

The managers and experts who participated in the research stated that the dismissal processes were by mutual agreement, and in case of termination by the employer, their rights were given. Managers also stated that dismissal was made after warnings, dismissal was made as a last resort, and dismissal was made with termination during the probationary period. On the other hand, the termination process of the employment contract varied according to the labor legislation of the countries. In Uzbekistan, in order to terminate an employment contract, there must be a written termination and an agreement must be reached with the union committee; in certain cases, the employer can use the right of termination on its initiative for a number of workers, in a few cases, instead of the right of termination, the condition of placing the worker in another job must be complied with, disciplinary sanctions must be taken into account in dismissals, and the right to preferential dismissal must be observed in worker reductions (Soyipov, 2024). In France, on the other hand, it can be seen that with the reform made in 2008, resignations by agreement have increased. (Batut & Maurin, 2020). However, the exit process in Poland can terminate fixed and indefinite-term employment contracts for just cause (<https://www.legal500.com/guides/wp-content/uploads/sites/1/2024/03/employment-poland.pdf>,2).

According to Turkish Labor Law, the employer's reason for termination of employment needs to be valid or justified. The legal consequences of termination for justified or valid reasons differ. While an employer who dismisses an employee by Article 25/2 for justified reasons does not pay severance and notice pay to the employee, he/she has to pay severance and notice pay or run the notice period for the dismissals for valid reasons (<https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.4857-20140910.pdf>).

Managers and experts who participated in the research stated that there is generally no dismissal without a valid reason/without giving a reason in the organizations they work in. On the other hand, in EU countries, there are countries where the employer is obliged to provide a valid reason for dismissal, and there are countries, for example Greece, where there is no obligation to provide a valid reason for dismissal (Papadopoulos, 2022). In Turkish labor law, reasons arising from the employee's behavior and incompetence and reasons arising from the workplace and the enterprise are considered valid. The valid reason requirement is a condition introduced to prevent arbitrary dismissals.

While the managers who participated in the research generally think they will not be dismissed ar-

bitrarily, it has been determined that some believe they can be dismissed arbitrarily among the experts and those who do not. In the study conducted on the subject, it was revealed that unfair dismissals without justifying dismissals will turn into a desire to take revenge in court and may negatively affect the financial status and performance of organizations (Ezeabaogu et al.,2019).

It can be said that the managers and experts who participated in the research generally do not experience fear of unemployment. Nevertheless, it is observed that the fear of unemployment has been on the rise since 2008 across Europe. It has been found that fear of unemployment is related to individuals' perceptions of the economic situation, household income, employers' perceptions of employment in the coming months, and consumer expectations (Blanchflower & Bryson, 2022). Among the managers and experts who participated in the research, it was determined that a number associate the reasons for dismissal with performance, while others do not. Supporting the study's findings, Mohammed (2021) found a weak relationship between termination of the employment contract and performance evaluation in a study conducted on private hospitals. This situation can be explained by a lack of a performance appraisal system in the organizations where the participants in the study work or a lack of fair implementation.

The managers and experts participating in the research generally believe that the dismissals in their organizations are under the Labor Law. Contrary to the research findings, a study conducted in Turkey found that layoffs do not comply with the Labor Law (Yeyin, 1998). However, the research was conducted before the current Labor Law enacted in 2003. In 2003, a job security clause was added, and employers are now obliged to provide valid reasons for dismissals. Amanawa (2023) found a positive relationship between compliance with labor laws and the reduction of involuntarily forced resignations, unjustified resignations without compensation, and mutually agreed resignations concluding that compliance with labor laws is a tool that organizations can use to reduce their burden.

As can be seen, it can be said that remote workers generally have a perception of job security in both quantitative and qualitative methods. This can be explained by the working conditions provided by their organizations, years of experience, qualification levels, and positions.

7. Theoretical Implications

The theoretical contribution of this study is to reveal the relationship between remote working and the concept of job security and to contribute to the gap in the literature on the perceptions of job security of remote workers.

8. Practical Implications

Practical contribution is that the perception of job security is personal and that the perception of job security is formed depending on workplace practices rather than working models. When organizations strive for a positive perception of job security for their employees, they will encounter results such as increased productivity and performance and reduced court costs. For this reason, organizations that want to gain a competitive advantage in today's competitive conditions should consider flexible working models and the concept of job security and implement the assured flexibility model. In this direction, they should implement the necessary human resources policies to ensure employees have positive perceptions of their job security. Human resources policies should be organized, transparent, lawful, and ethical. This section is not mandatory but may be added if there are patents resulting from the work reported in this manuscript. At the same time it can be recommended that organizations act according to the Labor Law in the exit processes to reduce court costs and increase productivity, job satisfaction, and performance that fair policies will bring.

The increasing prevalence of remote work models need to be integrated into human resources policies. When human resources management develops fair, transparent, ethical policies for remote workers and eliminates implementation issues, employees' perception of job security will be positively impacted. Therefore, positive perception will lead to productive and satisfied employees. Desired outcomes such as employee engagement and satisfaction will also emerge based on these policies.

9. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Since a great number of the participants held managerial positions, it can be said that they evaluated the research from an institutional perspective rather than an individual perspective. Remote work opportunities were not considered. The research was conducted with limited opinions of employees working in managerial and expert positions in the private sector of the Turkish labor market. Perception of job security is a subjective matter; different results may be attained when the sample size is subject to change. It is recommended that the study be evaluated with the opportunities provided to remote workers in different sectors. It is recommended that the study be repeated with individuals with different seniority, experience, title, and demographic characteristics.

10. Conclusion

Remote working, one of the flexible working models, has become widespread, especially with the

COVID-19 process, and continues in organizations that have adopted the hybrid model. With the flexibilization of working models, the problem of precarity has come to the agenda. Although flexible working models are claimed to be precarious, the study reveals that remote workers' perceptions and attitudes towards the remote working model affect their perceptions of job security. If teleworkers have positive work attitudes supported by their organizations, their perception of job security is positively affected; if not, it is negatively affected. According to the qualitative data, it was determined that remote managers' and experts' perceptions of job security were generally positive. For a valid reason, exit processes were carried out following labor law. Therefore, it can be said that the exit processes and practices in organizations effectively form employees' perceptions of job security. At the same time, this can be explained by the level of qualification and seniority of the employees. Moreover, it can be associated with the perception, support, attitudes, and human resources policies of the organizations they work for toward remote workers. On the other hand, different results can be obtained when the research sample is changed.

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Media Literacy: Deception or Redemption?

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Abstract

The research uses autoethnography to study how digital capitalist systems and the "post-truth" era influence the development of media literacy skills. The research began with optimistic views about media literacy, believing it teaches people to think critically and make rational decisions which helps them fight against false information. The results of my doctoral research showed that people with higher media literacy skills demonstrated higher trust in social media platforms than expected which ran counter to the predicted critical thinking outcomes of media literacy education. The research through autoethnography investigates how digital capitalist systems together with the "post-truth" period shape the acquisition of media literacy competencies. The research began with optimistic views about media literacy because it teaches people to think critically and make rational decisions which helps them fight against false information. My doctoral study produced an unexpected result which showed that people with strong media literacy abilities still placed trust in social media platforms at higher levels than expected despite the expected negative effects of media literacy. The research employs reflexive narrative to establish links between personal life experiences to the three dominant ideological frameworks which consist of liberal theory and Marxist theory and postmodern theory. The evaluation shows that liberal approaches focus on personal evaluation yet

they fail to address fundamental issues with algorithmic discrimination and data control. The author used Marxist analysis to demonstrate how media institutions preserve capitalist systems yet faced difficulties when teaching students to apply their critical understanding toward real social change. Through autoethnographic research the author created a personal story about intellectual development which showed how personal choices interact with organizational obstacles. The research combines liberal agency principles with Marxist structural analysis through Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and hope concepts to create a fresh educational framework. The method teaches media literacy through practical activities which enable people to fight against institutional power structures while building their personal strength. The study contributes to media literacy research by revealing current ideological disputes and establishes a teaching method which unites reflective learning with political awareness and constructive educational approaches for the modern algorithmic information space.

Keywords: Media Literacy, Marxist Media Literacy, Liberal Media Literacy, Media Literacy in Post Truth Era, Autoethnography.

JEL Codes: D83, L86, I23, I21

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1. Introduction

I began this research using autoethnography, a method that blends personal experience with cultural critique to make the intellectual transformation transparent, as Adams, Jones, and Ellis (2015) described it as a way to connect individual stories to broader social issues. I focused my doctoral research with a focus on media literacy and trust in media—two concepts that initially appeared to promise clarity and empowerment in an increasingly complex and chaotic information landscape. This started in 2018, during my doctoral years at Ankara University, when the Turkish elections highlighted how misinformation on platforms like X could sway public opinion, sparking my curiosity about media's role in democracy. A genuine sense of urgency along with curiosity led me to investigate how people should identify reliable information sources. This urgency arose in a world filled with misinformation and algorithmically arranged content and digitally manipulated realities. The process of deciding which information to trust and which sources to believe is a major challenge for them, as seen in recent EU-led trainings in Turkish universities that aim to combat disinformation through practical exercises.

The inquiry was not limited to scholarly research. Every day I faced personal disorientation from the overwhelming amount of conflicting statements and emotional content and sensational headlines which filled my screens. The situation became like walking through a hall of mirrors where all reflections were distorted and all signals were lost in noise. Modern culture shows diminishing distinctions between factual accounts and fabricated entertainment while both genuine and artificial presentations blend together, a trend amplified in Türkiye by state-regulated media and AI-generated content, as noted in Harsin (2018) on post-truth communication.

I placed my confusion in the context of cultural and philosophical concepts while I attempted to understand it. I experienced the same level of disorientation as millions of others living through the post-truth period which brings together reality erosion alongside narrative destruction and emotional persuasion. This feeling was particularly acute in Türkiye's polarized media environment, where political events like the 2023 earthquake coverage exacerbated echo chambers on social platforms. Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality describes the current media environment because it uses artificial simulations to replace genuine experiences while information speeds through the system before being discarded as Lyotard (1984) predicted the collapse of universal knowledge structures.

The attention-based economy and algorithmic design structure a system which generates unproductive shallow media interactions at every stage of

content creation and audience engagement. I needed to study media literacy because my teaching and research duties demanded an understanding of its role in helping people navigate contemporary information systems. Media literacy has merged with the systems it critiques through liberal approaches that fail to confront corporate power in Turkish social media thus creating trust in biased information sources. When I initiated my research on "*The effect of new media literacy level on the perception of trust in social media*" I grew concerned about my findings. The conventional approach to teaching media literacy showed a positive relationship between media usage and student engagement yet failed to develop critical thinking abilities. The research outcomes showed that students who demonstrated higher media literacy tended to have stronger faith in media sources (Devrim, 2023). The first realization of this discovery left me perplexed. Shouldn't media literacy education create students who doubt information sources while thinking critically about media content? This moment in 2020 marked a key stage in my journey, shifting from liberal optimism to questioning its foundational assumptions in the context of Türkiye's neoliberal education system.

The discovery of a contradiction in media literacy principles led me to study its core educational goals along with its theoretical base and underlying beliefs. Graff (1979) showed that modern media systems with corporate control and platform biases remain unaddressed by current liberal humanist-based media literacy approaches which fail to tackle structural inequalities in Turkish higher education.

The study progressed from its starting point of media literacy and trust development into an intricate multifaceted research investigation. The research tracks my academic growth and emotional development and existential transformation through my extensive fieldwork activities. My understanding of media education shifted from liberal optimism to critical poststructuralist analysis through Marxist critique and political economic analysis which developed across three stages from 2018 doctoral optimism to 2020 disillusionment and 2023 postdoctoral Freirean hope incorporation.

The study examines the mental battles and new understandings and moments of uncertainty that appeared during this intellectual shift. The research extends beyond media literacy analysis to study how people encounter and handle their media beliefs and knowledge trust in everyday life especially for educational professionals and media users. The research aims to improve current knowledge about media literacy in digital capitalism and disinformation while investigating its potential future growth. The research uses personal reflection to study media literacy's ideological conflicts and teaching principles which leads to better theoretical understanding

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of media literacy in real-world contexts and provides recommendations for Turkish media literacy programs such as RTÜK's child media literacy initiatives. I weave these questions implicitly through the autobiographical and analytic scenes rather than treating them as a checklist, prioritizing experiences from my doctoral work, classroom teaching, and post-doctoral reflections based on their relevance to ideological tensions, as per Chang's (2008) criteria for autoethnographic inclusion.

2. Theoretical Background

Media literacy represents a contested concept which Buckingham (2003) explains as the capacity to access and evaluate media content alongside its creation and analysis. The two ideological approaches differ between liberal democracies that focus on individual media skills and liberal democratic participation and Marxist views which regard media as capitalist power mechanisms (McChesney, 2008). Media literacy functions as a "discourse-generating problematic" according to Druick (2016) because although it promises empowerment its implementation aligns with neoliberal governance. Harvey Graff (1979) criticized the belief that literacy development fails because of the fundamental barriers such as social and economic inequality, limited access, misconceptions about literacy's power. The same fundamental barriers still continue in the digital contexts because the same economic, social and cultural structures continue to exist in digital platforms. The existing disputes between liberal and Marxist views on media literacy formed the basis for my personal exploration. This exploration started with optimism toward liberal ideas but advanced to Marxist perspectives about the "post-truth" age and social media algorithms. This progress unfolded in stages: my 2018 doctoral optimism rooted in individual empowerment, the 2020 disillusionment from research findings, and a 2023 shift toward Freirean hope for structural change in Turkish contexts.

2.1. Liberal Media Literacy Theories

Media literacy under liberal principles means that people can analyze media sources effectively while assessing their origin and learning to become informed citizens (Hobbs, 2011). The philosophy of liberal humanism supports education as an unbiased instrument which enables personal empowerment (Potter, 2010). The five key questions developed by Thoman and Jolls (2003) at the Center for Media Literacy form a fundamental component. 1. Who created this message? 2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention? 3. How could multiple viewers interpret this message in unique ways? 4. The message contains which values together with

lifestyle and viewpoint elements as well as omitted content? 5. What is the purpose behind sending this message to me? These questions encourage deconstructing media messages, such as analyzing a news article's source or an X post's persuasive intent, aligning with rational agency (Thoman & Jolls, 2003). This resonated with my early optimism where I initially embraced these questions in teaching. Thoman and Jolls' (2003) key questions guide deconstruction but as Graff (1979) argued, overlook corporate control and algorithmic biases (Graff & Duffy, 2008).

Druick (2016) demonstrated that liberal media literacy creates neoliberal subjects who support communicative capitalism. Len Masterman (1985) stated that liberal media literacy methods focus more on technical competencies than ideological analysis thus neglecting capitalist framework examinations. The authors Kellner and Share (2007) advocated the development of critical media literacy which fights for social justice and demonstrates potential within liberal educational systems (Kellner & Share, 2007). To enhance this, Mihailidis (2018) emphasized civic media literacies for intentional engagement, a concept I incorporated in my teaching to address gaps in liberal models. According to my doctoral research findings (Devrim, 2023) people with higher media literacy skills demonstrated stronger trust in media sources while this correlation supports Graff's argument. The algorithm-driven amplification of misinformation led to my growing disillusionment with liberal media literacy and caused me to adopt a Marxist perspective, particularly in Türkiye, where state-regulated platforms like those monitored by RTÜK amplify corporate biases, as seen in the Ministry of National Education's 2024 guidelines that prioritize individual skills over systemic critique.

This liberal framework, while promising, often overlooks how media literacy can perpetuate myths in contexts like Türkiye's, where economic inequalities limit access to critical tools. Drawing on Freire's pedagogy in Brazil, which empowers communities to critique societal narratives (Freire, 1970), I recognize the need for a balanced hybrid approach that integrates liberal agency with Marxist structural analysis.

2.2. Marxist Media Literacy Theories

In Marxist media literacy, the media functions as capitalist hegemony tools that reproduce profit-serving ideologies for control purposes (Hall, 1980). According to Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman (1988) the propaganda model demonstrated how media content goes through five distinct filters which include ownership and advertising and sourcing and flak and ideology. The work of Chomsky and Herman (1988) shows how media systems follow corporate interests which matches my observations of social media algorithms boosting divisive content

for financial gain. For instance, X's algorithm gives preference to sensational content which supports both advertising and ideology filters.

The literacy myth theory developed by Harvey Graff (1979) supports this idea because he demonstrates that literacy education functions to maintain hegemonic power structures that support capitalist systems. Christian Fuchs (2014) built upon this work by stating that social media platforms exploit user data which damages critical media literacy skills. Dallas Smythe (1981) developed audience commodity theory explains how advertising platforms use their platforms, including X, capture users for commercial exploitation. Mark Andrejevic (2013) identified surveillance capitalism as a significant problem because it prevents users from developing their critical thinking abilities. This perspective gained traction in my doctoral research when I realized X's algorithmic bias, a turning point which shifted my focus from liberal optimism to Marxist critique. Druick (2016) identified two main barriers to implementing Marxist media literacy because neoliberal restrictions limit educational systems to focus on market-based outcomes. Graff (1987) reinforced Druick's argument about media literacy by showing how literacy education systems follow capitalist principles which hinders the development of radical critique. The concept of determinism within Marxist approaches faces a limitation because it disregards human decision-making power as described by Laclau and Mouffe (1985). The algorithm-driven presentation of divisive content on social media platforms led me to adopt Marxist principles, aligning with Graff and Chomsky's ideas. Yet, I struggled to apply critical media literacy skills because of digital surveillance which became more challenging after the Turkish Ministry of Education in Türkiye introduced 2024 guidelines that focus on individual competencies instead of system analysis in 2023.

2.3. Postmodern Perspectives and Freire's Critical Pedagogy

The post-truth period with its multiple conflicting realities makes it harder for media literacy to achieve its goals (Harsin, 2018). Jean Baudrillard (1983) argued that hyperreality emerges when simulations replace actual reality because media generate artificial realities. This concept suggest that media literacy education must move beyond basic truth-falsehood identification because modern media creates self-referential loops that make it difficult for educators to develop appropriate critical analysis techniques. The postmodern condition described by Jean-François Lyotard (1984) shows how the breakdown of metanarratives leads to knowledge fragmentation, disrupting the stable understanding frameworks that media used to have. The

breakdown of shared knowledge systems through media fragmentation makes it harder for people to evaluate content. This is because multiple conflicting stories spread without any common truth to reference. The media environment described by Lyotard demands students to develop new skills for understanding media constructs because traditional decoding methods no longer work in a world where authority and meaning shift constantly.

The social media platform X illustrates how realities emerge through algorithmic or manual processes that spread across echo chambers. During the 2023 Türkiye earthquake, when X displayed unverified emotional content received more attention than factual updates while showing signs of state-controlled media operations under RTÜK oversight. Lyotard (1984) explained in his postmodern condition theory that the breakdown of metanarratives leads to knowledge fragmentation which makes it difficult for media literacy to fulfill its purpose. Media literacy depending on a fixed reality is problematic in my doctoral research because it failed to account for Türkiye's divided media environment (Devrim, 2023).

Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy (1970) provided a solution to these problems by uniting different educational approaches. The "banking model of education" receives criticism from Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) as he promotes problem-posing education through dialogue and conscientization. Through conscientization, students develop critical thinking abilities to recognize how X's profit-oriented algorithms function as tools of power maintenance (Freire, 1970; Fuchs, 2014). The classroom becomes a collaborative environment through dialogue which surpasses individualistic questioning methods described by Thoman and Jolls (2003) (Shor & Freire, 1987). Harvey Graff's (1979) literacy myth aligns with Freire, critiquing media literacy's false promises of empowerment and urging structural analysis, resonating with my recognition of social media's limitations, a realization deepened in my 2023 teaching when students struggled to critique X's biases despite training.

Freire's (1994) critical hope, from *Pedagogy of Hope*, is key: it drives transformation with a balance of realism and optimism. This inspired my hope for a hybrid media literacy approach, combining liberal agency (Hobbs, 2011) with Marxist critique (Chomsky & Herman, 1988). Freire's praxis—reflection and action—suggests media literacy can empower learners to create counter-narratives or advocate for regulation, aligning with Druick's (2016) call for reimagining media literacy (Mihailidis, 2018). Graff's (1987) critique reinforces Freire's, urging media literacy to address structural barriers, shaping my vision for its future in the "post-truth" era. In 2023, I piloted this in my classroom with a dialogic exercise inspired by Brazil's Freirean narrative critique, adapting U.S. civic

resistance models (Mihailidis, 2018) to help Turkish students challenge the Ministry of Education's 2024 guideline focus on individual skills.

3. Method

I employ analytical/evocative autoethnography (Adams, Jones, & Ellis, 2015) to trace a trajectory of conceptual change. This method was adopted in 2018 during my doctoral research at Ankara University to explore my evolving media literacy understanding. The approach is theory-driven: Debates in liberal, critical/Marxist, and post-structural media literacy provide sensitizing concepts that guided—but did not rigidly determine—coding. The corpus comprises (a) reflective research journals (doctoral and post-doctoral, 2018–2024); (b) annotated drafts of my doctoral dissertation chapters; (c) teaching preparation notes and reflective memos from undergraduate media literacy and translation courses (2021–2024) at Kastamonu University; (d) conference presentation slide decks and peer feedback notes; (e) published and in-review articles and their peer review reports; (f) a selective archive of personal social media posts and private messages expressing theoretical doubt or pedagogical concerns (ethically anonymized), including polarized X posts from Türkiye's 2023 earthquake; and (g) field notes from seminars delivered on media literacy and critical thinking. All personally identifiable information and third-party references in private materials were anonymized or excised. The autoethnographic account centers my professional persona; no vulnerable others are described beyond publicly available scholarly discourse.

Analysis proceeded in three iterative cycles: (1) Open coding: inductive labels (e.g., *'instrumental skill emphasis'*, *'structural pessimism'*, *'critical hope'*) were applied line-by-line to journal and memo excerpts. This process was refined in 2022 after my research findings (Devrim, 2023) challenged liberal assumptions. (2) Axial/theoretical coding: codes were clustered under meta-categories mapped to liberal (access, evaluation, rights), critical/Marxist (ideology, commodification, hegemony), post-structural (subjectivity, discourse, performativity), and pedagogical praxis (dialogue, conscientização) dimensions. (3) Temporal synthesis: a longitudinal matrix tracked the intensities and transitions of categories across years, identifying phases: initial liberal optimism, critical disillusionment, liminal crisis, integrative re-synthesis. Reflexive memos documented analytic decisions, enhancing transparency, capturing my 2023 teaching reflections on students' struggles with X's algorithms. Credibility was addressed through prolonged engagement with the self-data corpus, theoretical triangulation (multiple paradigms), and reflexive audit trails.

Autoethnographic singularity risks idiosyncrasy; however, the case functions analytically (Yin, 2018) to illuminate tensions potentially shared by similarly situated educators in semi-peripheral academic contexts, such as those in Türkiye facing neoliberal pressures in higher education. As Denzin (2014) argues, autoethnography 'turns the researcher's gaze inward and outward,' a dual focus I applied to critique cultural norms like media commodification in Turkish classrooms. Autoethnography is the qualitative research approach that uses the author's personal experiences as primary data to critique cultural norms, practices, and assumptions. This approach seeks to balance methodological rigor with emotional depth and creative expression, ultimately aiming to promote social justice and contribute to making life better by connecting the personal with the political and cultural. In my case, this meant weaving my 2018–2024 journey—marked by teaching at Kastamonu and engaging with polarized X posts—into a narrative that challenges neoliberal capitalism and algorithmic control, aligning with Holman Jones (2005) on the personal-political (p. 765). Autoethnography is particularly apt for exploring my evolving understanding of media literacy, as it enables me to foreground subjectivity while linking personal experiences to systemic issues. By doing so, it facilitates a "personal-political" approach, allowing me to interrogate how my shift from liberal to Marxist perspectives reflects and contests broader technological and ideological discourses (Chang, 2008). This shift, evident in my 2023 seminar notes, was shaped by Brazil's Freirean dialogic success and U.S. reflexive models, offering hope amid Türkiye's media tensions.

Institutional ethical approval was not required because the study involves only the researcher's own reflective materials and anonymized secondary documents; nevertheless, principles of respect, beneficence, and confidentiality were followed. Ethical care extended to anonymizing X post participants, ensuring my focus remained on my professional persona amid Türkiye's data privacy concerns. Resonance and transferability are sought by thick description of dilemmas familiar to media literacy educators. Analytical rigor is communicated via explicit coding phases; coherence is demonstrated by alignment of research questions, theoretical lenses, and emergent thematic model. This coherence was tested in my 2023 teaching, where students' responses to algorithmic biases informed my coding. Future multi-participant comparative work may be able to extend these insights, allowing me to reflect on my emotional and intellectual journey. These strategies collectively sustain analytical transparency while acknowledging inherent constraints of a single-case autoethnography.

4. Findings and Analysis

Through this autoethnographic work, I used my personal experiences as a researcher, educator and a social media user to show how my understanding of media literacy developed from liberal optimism to Marxist critique before reaching a critical hopeful perspective inspired by Paulo Freire. My doctoral research (Devrim, 2023) and my interactions with social media platforms have shown how personal freedom operates against system barriers when people try to understand the complicated media environment of the "post-truth" era. My personal experiences have been analyzed through liberal (Thoman & Jolls, 2003), Marxist (Chomsky & Herman, 1988; Fuchs, 2014), postmodern (Baudrillard, 1983; Lyotard, 1984), and Freirean (Freire, 1970, 1994) perspectives to show both the potential and boundaries of media literacy while demonstrating the dominant ideological and technological elements of digital capitalism. The section combines reflective storytelling with theoretical analysis to show how my educational path both supports and challenges the cultural, political, and pedagogical aspects of media literacy education. This journey that began with my 2018 doctoral optimism at Ankara University, shifted with 2020 research disillusionment, and evolved through 2023 teaching reflections at Kastamonu University.

This narrative prioritizes data from my doctoral research, 2021-2023 classroom teaching, and post-doctoral seminars (per Method's inclusion criteria), critiquing how liberal optimism—embodied in Thoman and Jolls' (2003) individualist questions—faltering in Türkiye's polarized media, where X echo chambers during the 2023 earthquake amplified misinformation under RTÜK's watch. Marxist perspectives, like Chomsky and Herman's (1988) propaganda model, revealed corporate biases in my X interactions, but their structural focus limited agency—a gap I addressed in 2023 by adopting Freire's (1970) conscientization, inspired by Brazil's community-driven critiques. This approach, enhanced by U.S. praxis projects (Mihailidis, 2018), offers a hopeful contribution to Turkish media literacy, challenging the Ministry of Education's 2024 guidelines' neoliberal emphasis on individual skills and fostering resistance to digital capitalism.

4.1. Initial Optimism with Liberal Media Literacy

Media literacy first caught my attention with both enthusiasm and intellectual interest, sparking my 2018 teaching at Kastamonu University where I introduced students to its potential while teaching English (*employing Content Based Method*). The fundamental essence of media literacy provided people with the power to understand media messages while also

learning how to interpret them and how to critically analyze them, drawing my intellectual and moral interest as I explored RTÜK's visual age warnings on TV screens. The approach provided a sense of control which attracted both intellectual and moral interest. The early/basic media literacy studies focused on the visual age warnings on TV screens and how to read and understand them. I now understand that the liberal media literacy approach which relied on liberal individualism functioned to shield audiences -primarily children- from harmful TV content. This focus I initially embraced in my classroom but later saw as limited by its safety-first design.

Social media maintains its original reasoning model from my first understanding of this concept which became apparent through my 2019 X interactions showing students prioritized content generation over structural analysis. The main focus shifted from media content accessibility methods to responsible media production techniques. The Anglo-Saxon media literacy standards based on liberal ideologies continue to serve as the foundation for current educational standards. People need to learn about algorithmic control detection and false news identification and content selection according to this method. The concept presents a deceptive view of its scope. The wide appearance of this concept conceals its inability to study political elements together with ideological and socio-cultural factors which influence media creation and audience reception. The method treats media as personal property which teaches individual survival skills instead of encouraging people to study media systems as a whole (Devrim, 2023) when students accepted biased Turkish media sources after receiving training. The method fails to study the core power systems which combine with ownership systems and social inequalities to determine media environments.

My initial understanding of media boundaries remained undetected because of my positive outlook during my first TV analysis work in 2018. I thought that teaching students about content analysis and implicit message detection and production techniques would be enough. The media literacy education I received lacked critical thinking skills according to Masterman (1985) who pointed out its technical approach failed to reach ideological depths. The media ownership system remains unaddressed in current discussions while the discussions fail to determine which groups receive advantages from these media systems. Whose interests are being served? What ideologies are being naturalized? The research examined content assessment only while treating viewers as customers who needed better technical skills instead of social understanding. Media operates as a space where social classes compete for dominance alongside gender politics and cultural power dynamics. My positive media litera-

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cy perspective from 2022 research and 2023 teaching activities in Türkiye's media polarization period transformed when I learned media literacy operates as a survival system within existing power structures instead of a tool for boundary expansion. Media literacy power that I initially discovered proved to function as a survival mechanism for staying within established systems instead of enabling challenges to their boundaries. The critical media literacy education I received adopted neoliberal individualistic principles through its methods which matched the 2024 Ministry of Education guidelines that emphasize personal competencies above system analysis. Media literacy education focused on teaching people to become more effective media users instead of teaching them to become active citizens. Media content analysis for social hierarchy reproduction and media ideologies received no attention during the discussions. Media literacy needs to transform into a practice which enables resistance and intervention for transformational purposes as demonstrated by U.S. civic engagement projects (Miha-ilidis, 2018). My initial media literacy enthusiasm transformed into a more mature approach which acknowledges both doubt and uncomfortable emotions and radical analysis to create positive change in Turkish education by fighting against neoliberal influences.

4.2. Shift to Marxist Critique and Doctoral Insights

My doctoral research data from early 2020 demonstrated an unexpected finding which showed students with better media literacy skills became more trusting of social media platforms (Devrim, 2023). The discovery of this unexpected pattern during my 2020 research at Kastamonu University with my students marked a turning point because it revealed their growing trust in social media platforms. The study of digital capitalism by Christian Fuchs (2014) revealed how dominant media systems use fake participation features to enforce ideological conformity which I observed during my 2023 teaching at Kastamonu University when students interacted with X's algorithmically influenced content during the 2023 earthquake. Chomsky and Herman's (1988) propaganda model helped me understand how capitalist interests operate through ownership and sourcing filters and Türkiye's state-controlled media under RTÜK. However, students maintained liberal beliefs about personal freedom because of Graff's (1979) "literacy myth". The educational methods of literacy that focus on personal skills development serve to preserve the existing social hierarchy according to Graff (1979). Graff supports this view by showing how literacy education that teaches individual skills helps maintain dominant power structures

by concealing the political and economic elements that control media environments as the Ministry of Education demonstrated in their 2024 guidelines by emphasizing skills over system analysis.

The platform economy operates through surveillance capitalism according to Andrejevic (2013), because it exploits power differences to limit users' critical thinking abilities as I observed in 2023 when students' X data usage limited their analytical potential. Students showed trust in digital media yet their literacy education did not develop genuine critical thinking abilities. Paulo Freire (1970) developed *conscientização* as a revolutionary teaching method which enables students to identify institutional oppression while creating liberating knowledge according to Brazil's community-based critiques that I examined in a 2023 seminar. The theoretical transformation brought an end to my initial optimism as I began my continuous fight to unite classroom practice with systemic analysis which could solve Türkiye's fragmented media landscape.

4.3. The Condition of Postmodernism and Media Literacy

The postmodern condition with its fragmented grand narratives and unstable knowledge systems creates a significant obstacle for media literacy education according to my 2020 research (Devrim, 2023) which analyzed how the students navigated using their media skills in the polarized media landscape of Türkiye. The media environment which merges simulated content with emotional triggers and self-referential elements creates difficulties in identifying actual events from their media representations. Baudrillard's (1983) concept of hyperreality demonstrates how media images have replaced actual reality so that conventional methods for detecting bias and evaluating sources become ineffective. Modern media texts create more than distorted representations because they actively shape the reality we perceive. Social media generates a digitally managed environment that uses algorithmically designed content to support personal beliefs, thus strengthening post-truth perspectives, a trend I analyzed in my 2023 teaching when students echoed X's polarized narratives. I struggled to determine the boundaries of rational critique within this situation. What methods should we use to teach critical thinking since emotional engagement and viral content frequently surpass factual evidence? What does it mean to decode media in a world where there may be no "real" to return to? The questions have led me to transform media literacy from a truth-falsehood detection method into a practice which builds epistemological humility and reflexive skepticism. I focused on teaching students to question their knowledge by helping them understand their technological reality and

their position within media systems, implementing this in my 2023 classroom with a mapping exercise at Kastamonu University. My goal is to develop media users who possess ethical awareness and ontological understanding to navigate the postmodern mediascape uncertainties.

I began studying an educational method that unites critical postmodern theory with Freirean principles because Brazil achieved success through dialogic approaches to develop student self-determination (Freire, 1970). The development of media literacy through critical contextualization practices represents an educational method which shows promise. Students need to grasp the position of media texts in social technical systems to properly analyze both message content and distribution frameworks and operational structures. Paulo Freire (1970) developed methods which help students recognize media tools as instruments of power and ideological tools through conscientização. The fundamental teaching method of Freire requires students and teachers to engage in equal dialogue for shared exploration of the world. Teachers must surrender their authority to deliver information so students can create media reflection spaces for experience-based learning while they work together to break down dominant narratives and build new knowledge. Students learn about platform and interface ideological operations through media journaling combined with counter-narrative development and collaborative media mapping activities. Students learn purposeful media use through the principles of "slow media" developed by Honoré (2004) and Volland (2015), which help them build reflective thinking and emotional connections instead of mindless algorithm-driven fast scrolling. These educational approaches help students take back control of their presence when they navigate through the overwhelming media landscape. Media literacy education needs a complete political transformation to directly confront power systems and surveillance methods and ideological frameworks and work environments. Educators must assist students to understand contradictions and systems while developing their ability to envision new alternatives instead of attempting to restore a fictional objective reality, a goal aligned with Türkiye's need to counter polarized media narratives. The path toward critical consciousness through dialogue needs to become a permanent dedication because it continues indefinitely without reaching a definitive conclusion between optimistic and pessimistic approaches.

5. Conclusion

Integrating liberal and Marxist frames suggests a pedagogy that (a) retains liberal emphases on access, verification and participatory rights, while (b)

embeds structural critique of political economy and platform capitalism, and (c) cultivates Freirean critical hope to prevent pedagogical paralysis. Curriculum modules should therefore sequence: foundational operational literacies → critical political economy of media infrastructures → reflexive identity/subjectivity work → praxis projects that design collective interventions (e.g., student-led fact-checking, platform policy critiques).

This research documents my intellectual and emotional transformation starting with liberal media literacy optimism until it evolved into Marxist perspectives which evaluate the strengths and constraints of media literacy in our present "post-truth" society. The beginning of my journey included perceiving media literacy as a system which teaches rational skills to fight manipulation while fostering democratic engagement (Hobbs, 2011). Social media algorithms and data exploitation and ideological preferences along with research results indicating increased media trust among media literacy participants (Devrim, 2023) exposed the weak points of liberal media literacy theory. The Marxist critiques of Chomsky and Herman (1988) and Fuchs (2014) exposed the capitalist nature of media which transformed my beliefs into skepticism. Autoethnography enabled me to create a personal-political account (Holman Jones, 2005, p. 765) by visualizing the transformation between my feelings of hopelessness and new perspectives and the wider technological and ideological frameworks.

The exploration of social media revealed that its features make the evaluation of media literacy's possibilities more difficult. X and other social media platforms utilize algorithms that seek engagement rather than truth which leads to echo chamber effects and communication commodification and thus hinders both liberal and Marxist perspectives (Fuchs, 2014). The liberal literacy approach faces criticism because it fails to address structural inequities (Graff, 1979) yet Marxist approaches remain impractical under neoliberal systems (Druick, 2016). I argue these theoretical frameworks do not have to function against one another. The combination of liberal agency with Marxist structural analysis through a productive tension allows us to advance through the exact path remains undefined.

Paulo Freire (1970) presents his critical hope as the foundation of this vision while advocating for transformation through complex systems. The reflection-action cycle known as praxis drives my redefinition of media literacy as an evolving method which empowers people while confronting institutional power structures (Freire, 1970). This research expands media literacy knowledge through its examination of ideological contradictions. It also supports mixed methods education which teaches students to understand both benefits and constraints

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in digital systems that transform resistance tools into control mechanisms. Through my personal journey of disappointment and guarded optimism I offer others a chance to pause and reflect on how media literacy should evolve in a world full of fragmented truths and pervasive power systems.

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